

WRITINGS OF MARC D CARPENTER

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A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Marc D. Carpenter, compiled for study and devotional reading.

27 Chapters

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S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (1)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (1) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 9/17/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Two weeks ago, I preached a message on THE GOSPEL - WHAT IT IS. We saw that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God. We saw that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel involves two imputations - First, the sins of God's people were charged to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ was punished in the place of God's people. Second, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to God's people. We saw that this is how God is just to justify the ungodly. We saw that the gospel is the good news of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness alone.

Last week, I preached a message on THE GOSPEL - WHAT IT'S NOT. We saw that the gospel is not the entire Bible, it is not an offer, it is not a command, and is not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ considered apart from what the work of Christ accomplished. The gospel is a UNILATERAL, UNCONDITIONAL promise from God to save His people based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. This promise is never thwarted. This week, and in coming weeks, the Lord willing, the subject will be ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE. By "essential," I mean that if you do not have this doctrine, you do not have the gospel. I'm using the word "doctrine" instead of "doctrines," because this is how the Bible emphasizes the unity of all the necessary parts of the gospel. There are different doctrines of the gospel, but they all make up the doctrine.

Now, we shouldn't be intimidated by the word DOCTRINE. It simply means "teaching" or "instruction." The Greek words that are translated "doctrine" are didaskaleia (did-as-kal-EE-a) and didace (did-AH-kay), which both come from the same root. That root is also found in didaskalos (did-AS-kal-os), which means "teacher," and didasko (did-AS-ko), which means "to teach." In the context in which these words are used positively, it means "teaching the truth." So I'm going to be talking about ESSENTIAL GOSPEL TEACHING, or ESSENTIAL GOSPEL TRUTH.

Let's think about the definition of the gospel again. It is good news, and the only way it can be good news is if it is a unilateral, unconditional promise from God. So it is a PROMISE from God to save His people based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone.

Now let's think about what are the necessary truths that are part of the gospel. Well, we've gone over some of them already. Imputation is a necessary truth; in fact, double imputation is a necessary truth. Justification, redemption, and propitiation are necessary truths. Substitution and satisfaction are necessary truths. And some of the truths that we're going to go into a little more detail on overlap with these truths, and this is necessarily so; because these truths are so intertwined, that you cannot destroy one without destroying all.

Now let's get into more of the necessary truths that come from the gospel. Again -- the gospel is God's promise to save His people based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus

Christ alone. So what do we see in the first word of this definition? We see GOD. The existence of God is an essential gospel doctrine. If you don't have God, you don't have the gospel. And if you don't have the gospel, you don't have salvation, as we've already seen. But the gospel doesn't just stop at God's existence. What does God do? God PROMISES. And the only way the gospel can be good news is if God HAS THE POWER TO KEEP ALL HIS PROMISES WITHOUT EVEN A SINGLE FAILURE.

What does the Bible say about the ability of God to keep His promises? Let's turn to some Scripture passages. We're going to be spending some time here. As I was preparing this message, I saw again how full the Scripture is not only of God's promises but His fulfilling of these promises. Let's spend some time in these verses and meditate on and rejoice in God's faithfulness to keep His promises. These are precious truths to God's people.

Deu 7:8-10 : But because Jehovah loved you, and because He kept the oath which He swore to your fathers, Jehovah has caused you to go out with a strong hand, and redeemed you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Because of this, know that Jehovah your God, He [is] God, the faithful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commands, to a thousand generations; and repaying to his face those that hate Him, to destroy him; He will not delay, He will repay him who hates Him, to his face.

Jos 21:44-45 : And Jehovah gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood before them. Jehovah delivered all their enemies into their hand. Nor did fail a word from any good word which Jehovah had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

Jos 23:14 :

And, behold! Today I [am] going in the way of all the earth, and you know with all your heart and with all your soul that there has not failed one thing of all the good things which Jehovah your God has spoken concerning you; all of it has come to you; there has not one thing failed of it.

2Sa 23:3-5 : The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: One ruling over man righteously, who rules [in] the fear of God, is as the light of the morning, as the sun shines; a morning without clouds; through shining after rain the tender grass [sprouts] from the earth. For [is] not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things, and sure; for all my salvation, and all my desire, will He not make it grow?

Psa 89:24-37 : But My faithfulness and My mercy [is] with him; and his horn shall be exalted in My name. And I will set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry to Me, My Father, You [are] my God, and the rock of my salvation. And I will make Him [My] first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. I will keep My mercy for him forever, and My covenant shall hold fast with him. And I have established his Seed forever, and His throne as the days of the heavens. If his sons forsake My Law, and do not walk in My judgments; if they profane My statutes and do not keep My commandments; then I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their sins with stripes. But I will not annul My mercy from him, and I will not be false in My faithfulness. I will not profane My covenant, nor change what goes from My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His Seed shall be forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. Like the moon, it shall be forever; and a faithful witness in the sky.

Psa 132:11 :

Jehovah has sworn to David [in] truth; He will not turn from it; I will set [one] of the fruit of your body on the throne for you.

Isa 45:23 :

I have sworn by Myself, the Word has gone out of My mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

Isa 46:9-11 :

Remember former things from forever, for I [am] God, and no one else [is] God, even none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past those things which were not done, saying, My counsel shall rise; and, I will do all My desire; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My counsel from a far off land. Yes, I have spoken; yes, I will cause it to come; I have formed; yes, I will do it.

Isa 54:9-10 : For this [is] the waters of Noah to Me; [for as] I swore [to refrain] from passing over the waters of Noah over the earth again, so I have sworn from being angry with you and rebuking you. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My mercy shall not depart from you; nor shall the covenant of My peace be removed, says Jehovah who has pity on you.

Jer 33:20-21; Jer 33:25-26 : So says Jehovah, If you can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and there should not be day and night in their time, [then] My covenant with My servant David may also be broken, that he should not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. ... So says Jehovah, If My covenant [is] not with day and night, [and if] I have not appointed the ordinances of the heavens and earth, then I also will reject the seed of Jacob, and My servant David, not to take of his seed [to be] rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will bring back their captivity and have pity on them.

Acts 13:32-33 : And we preach the gospel to you, the promise made to the fathers, that this God has fulfilled to us, their children, raising up Jesus; as also it has been written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You."

Rom 15:8-9 : And I say, Jesus Christ has become a minister of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers, and for the nations to glorify God for mercy, even as it has been written, "Because of this I will confess to You in the nations, and I will give praise to Your name."

2Co 1:19-20 : For Jesus Christ the Son of God, the [One] proclaimed among you by us, through me and Silvanus and Timothy, did not become Yes and No, but has been Yes in Him. For as many promises as [are] of God, in Him [they are] yes, and in Him [are] Amen, for glory to God through us.

1Th 5:24 :

Faithful is the [One] calling you, who also will perform [it].

Tit 1:1-3 :

Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to [the] faith of [the] elect of God and full knowledge of [the] truth according to godliness, on hope of eternal life which the God who does not lie promised before [the] eternal times, but revealed in its own times in a proclamation of His Word, with which I was entrusted by [the] command of our Savior God;

2Pe 3:9-13 : The Lord of the promise is not slow, as some deem slowness, but is long-suffering toward us, not having purposed any [of us] to perish, but all [of us] to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in [the] night, in which the heavens will pass away with rushing sound, and having burned [the] elements will be dissolved, and earth and the works in it will be burned up. Then all these being [about] to be dissolved, [of] what sort ought you to be in holy behavior and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God, through which [the] heavens having been set afire will be dissolved; and burning, [the] elements will melt? But according to His promise, we look for "new heavens and a new earth," in which righteousness dwells. And then let's go to Heb 6:13-20 : For God having made promise to Abraham, since He had no [one] greater to swear by, "[He] swore by Himself," saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, being long-suffering, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath to make things sure [is] to them the end of all gainsaying. In which way, desiring to more fully declare to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His counsel, God interposed by an oath, that through two unchangeable things, in which [it was] not possible [for] God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, those having fled to lay hold on the hope set before [us], which we have as an anchor of the soul, both certain and sure, and entering into the inner [side] of the veil, where Jesus entered as forerunner for us, having become a High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

Aren't these precious? We haven't even covered a small percentage of the passages in God's Word that talk of His faithfulness to keep his promises. But I hope this has given you a glimpse into the sure promises of God. If God's promises were not sure to be fulfilled, then all is in vain.

Now how can we be sure that God is able to keep all His promises? Some of the verses we just read mentioned this, and there are a ton of other verses that mention it as well. The reason we can be sure that God is able to keep all His promises is because God is SOVEREIGN. That means he is in total control of all things. He CREATED all things, and He ORDERS all things. There is not a single thing in the universe that is not CONTROLLED by God. If there is anything that is not under God's control, then whatever it is that's not under God's control can get in the way of God's fulfilling His promise. If God promises to do something, yet there are some people around who are not controlled by God, then those people could thwart God's promise. God MUST be in control of EVERY SINGLE THING. And we have so many Scriptures that say this. Let's just turn to a few.

Job 23:13-14 : But He [is] in one [mind], and who can turn Him? Yea, His soul desires, and He does [it]. For He fulfilled my lot, and many like these are with Him.

Psa 115:3 : But our God [is] in Heaven; He has done all that He has pleased.

Psa 135:5-7 : For I know that Jehovah [is] great, and our Lord [is] above all gods. Every [thing] which Jehovah [was] pleased to do, He did, in the heavens and in the earth, and in the seas and all deep places. He causes the vapors to rise from the end of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His storehouses;

Pro 16:33 : The lot is cast into the lap, but all ordering of it [is] from Jehovah.

Pro 21:1 :

[As] streams of waters, the king's heart [is] in the hand of Jehovah; He turns it wherever He desires.

Isa 45:6-7 : that they may know from the rising of the sun, and to its going down, that [there is] none besides Me; I [am] Jehovah, and there is none else; forming light, and creating darkness; making peace, and creating evil. I, Jehovah, do all these things.

Thus, those who believe the gospel believe that God is SOVEREIGN over all things and is thus able and faithful to keep all His promises. If you don't believe that God is sovereign, you don't believe that His promises are sure and certain. If you don't believe that His promises are sure and certain, you don't believe the gospel.

Inseparably connected with the doctrine of God's sovereignty and faithfulness to keep His promises is the doctrine of PREDESTINATION. To "predestinate" means to "determine beforehand." We've already seen that God is in control of everything, meaning that he determines everything. Now the question is, WHEN did He determine everything? Does He determine things based on what His creation does? If He did that, His promises would not be sure and certain, because they could be changed by the will of man. So - if God does not determine things in reaction to His creation, He must have determined things BEFORE creation. God is an infinite God - that means He has no beginning and no end. So when we talk about God determining things BEFORE creation, we're not saying that it is possible to pinpoint a particular TIME before creation, because time did not exist before creation, and because God's determination of all things was in His mind from eternity past. It is enough to say that he determined all things before He created all things. (Just as a side note, we see that the doctrine of God as creator of all things is essential gospel doctrine, because God cannot be in control of that which He did not create, unless some higher being is the one that created and then designated God to be in control. But a God who is in subjection to another being cannot be God. Many Scriptures, when they talk of God's sovereignty, link God's sovereignty with God as creator.)

Let's turn to some Scriptures on God's predetermination of things. Some of these are going to overlap with election, which I will talk about later, the Lord willing. Let's first turn to Isa 42:9. This is God speaking:

Behold, the former things have come to pass, and I declare new things before they happen, I cause you to hear.

Now let's turn to Isa 46:9-10 :

Remember former things from forever, for I [am] God, and no one else [is] God, even none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past those things which were not done, saying, My counsel shall rise; and, I will do all My desire;

Now we'll go to the New Testament. Mat 25:34 :

Then the King will say to those on His right, Come, the blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from [the] foundation of the world.

Acts 13:9 : And hearing, the nations rejoiced and glorified the Word of the Lord. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 17:26 : And He made every nation of men of one blood, to live on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling,

Rom 8:29 : because whom He foreknew, He also predestinated [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be [the] First-born among many brothers.

1Co 2:7 : But we speak [the] wisdom of God in a mystery, having been hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, Eph 1:4-5; Eph 1:11 : even as He elected us in Him before [the] foundation of [the] world, for us to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ... in whom we also have been chosen to an inheritance, being predestinated according to [the] purpose of the [One] working all things according to the counsel of His [own] will,

Eph 3:11 : according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

2Th 2:13 : But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of [the] Spirit and belief of [the] truth,

2Ti 1:9 : the [One] having saved us and having called [us] with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to [His] own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times,

Tit 1:2 : on hope of eternal life which the God who does not lie promised before [the] eternal times,

1Pe 1:20 : indeed having been foreknown before [the] foundation of [the] world, but revealed in [the] last times because of you,

Rev 13:8 : And all those dwelling in the earth will worship it, those of whom the names had not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world. And the Bible says that the most important event in history, even though it was carried out by evil men, was pre-determined.

Luk 22:23 : And he said to Him, Lord, I am ready to go both to prison and to death with You.

Acts 2:23 : this One given [to you] by the before-determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, [you] having taken by lawless hands, having crucified [Him], you killed [Him].

Acts 4:27-28 : For truly both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations and [the] peoples of Israel, were assembled against Your holy child Jesus, whom You anointed, to do whatever Your hand and Your counsel before-determined to be done. And as we'll see in a later message, the Lord willing, God chose a certain number of people before the foundation of the world and predestined that they would be saved by the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. This is called ELECTION, and the people God chose are called the ELECT.

What we have seen today are some of the truths that are revealed in the gospel. We've seen that God is a promise-keeper. He CANNOT, because of His nature, fail to keep even ONE of his promises. God is a sovereign God, one who is in control of everything, one who determined everything before He created the world. He determined the promises, and He determined how, when, and where these promises would be fulfilled. He is true to Himself; He is true to His Word. When God says that something will happen, it will happen. When God promises salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ, that promise is as SURE and as CERTAIN as God Himself. Everyone to whom this promise is given SHALL be saved.

Let's close with Psa 111:1-10 :

Praise Jehovah! I will thank Jehovah with all [my] heart; in the council of the upright, and of the assembly. The works of Jehovah [are] great, sought out by all those desiring them. His work [is] honorable and glorious; and His righteousness [is] standing forever. He has made a memorial for His wonders; Jehovah is gracious and full of pity. He has given food to those who fear Him; He will always remember His covenant. He has shown to His people the power of His works, to give to them [the] inheritance of the nations. The works of His hands [are] truth and all His commandments [are] true, standing firm forever and ever; [they are] done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever; holy and awesome [is] His name. The fear of Jehovah [is] the beginning of wisdom; all who do them [have] a good understanding; His praise is standing forever!

Amen.

S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (2)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (2) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 9/24/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Turn to Rom 6:1-23 if you will. I'm going to read 6:15 to 7:11:

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under Law, but under grace? Let it not be! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves [as] slaves for obedience, you are slaves to whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or obedience to righteousness? But thanks [be] to God that you were slaves of sin, but you obeyed from [the] heart the form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness. I speak as a man on account of the weakness of your flesh. For as you presented your members [as] slaves to uncleanness and to lawless act unto lawless act, so now yield your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free as to righteousness. Therefore what fruit did you have then [in the things] over which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things [is] death. But now having been set free from sin, and having been enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Or are you ignorant, brothers, (for I speak to those knowing Law), that the Law lords it over the man for as long a time as he lives? For the married woman was bound by Law to the living husband; but if the husband dies, she is set free from the Law of the husband. So then, [if] the husband [is] living, she will be called an adulteress if she becomes another man's. But if the husband dies, she is free from the Law, [so as for] her not to be an adulteress [by] becoming another man's. So that, my brothers, you also were made dead to the Law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, to [the One] raised from [the] dead, so that we may bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members through the Law for the bearing of fruit unto death. But now we have been set free from the Law, having died [to that] in which we were held, so as [for] us to serve in newness of spirit, and not [in] oldness of letter. What shall we say then? [Is] the Law sin? Let it not be! But I did not know sin except through Law; for also I did not know lust except the Law said, "You shall not lust." But sin taking occasion through the commandment worked every lust in me; for apart from Law, sin [is] dead. And I was alive apart from Law once, but the commandment came, and sin came alive, and I died. And the commandment which [was] to life, this was found [to be] death to me; for sin taking occasion through the commandment deceived me, and through it killed [me].

Today I'm going to continue to preach on essential gospel doctrine. Let me again give the definition of the gospel: It is God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Last week, we went over the first two words of the definition: GOD'S PROMISE. We went over some essential gospel doctrine that had to do with God and God's promises. God is the sovereign creator and controller of the universe. When God promises, He keeps His promises. The gospel would not be good news if it were a promise from a being who failed even one time to keep His promises.

Now let's go on to the next two words in the definition. In the gospel, what does God promise to do? He promises TO SAVE. Let us consider what it means TO SAVE.

Now, we hear a lot of religious phrases using various forms of this word. They say, "Jesus saves." They say, "I'm saved." They ask, "Are you saved?" But what does it mean to be saved? And what does it mean to SAVE? The Hebrew word that's usually translated "save" is YA-sha, and the Greek word that's usually translated "save" is SO-zo. One of the meanings of these words is to deliver or to rescue. So the gospel speaks of God's promise to deliver or rescue.

First of all, what is the necessary implication of deliverance or rescue? Well, if I'm going to RESCUE someone, does that mean that everything's okay with the person I'm going to rescue? No! It means that there's something terribly wrong. That person is in a situation in which he is in need of RESCUE. And if I'm going to DELIVER someone, it's because that person is BEING HELD or IS BOUND by someone or something. Since the gospel speaks of God saving certain PEOPLE, what is the terrible situation from which these people need to be RESCUED? What are they bound by from which they need to be DELIVERED? The Bible clearly tells us the state of these people before they are rescued and delivered. In fact, it tells us that the state of THESE people - that is, the ones that are mentioned in the gospel - their state BEFORE salvation is no different than the state of EVERYONE WITHOUT EXCEPTION by nature. Let's turn to Eph 2:1-3 : and you being dead in deviations and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom we also all conducted ourselves in times past in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed of the flesh and of the understanding, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest.

What does this say about us, before we were saved? We were DEAD in trespasses and in sins. Now when it says we were DEAD, does that mean that we didn't breathe, or that our heart wasn't beating, or that our brain wasn't working? Well, we can see from Eph 2:2-3 that it doesn't mean that, because it says that we were DOING THINGS. So when we talk about unbelievers being DEAD, we don't mean that they don't do anything. This is a certain kind of death. As Eph 2:1 says, it is a kind of death that is in TRESPASSES and SINS. We were dead IN OUR SINS. Col 2:13 says that we were dead in the offenses and the uncircumcision of our flesh. As John 3:19 says, unsaved people love darkness rather than light, because their works are evil. Rom 6:17; Rom 6:20 says that we were SLAVES of sin. So we were DEAD in sin and SLAVES to sin. This means that everything we did was evil, and we COULD NOT do ANYTHING good. We couldn't even understand the difference between good and evil. In the second part of Rom 6:20, it says that we were "free as to righteousness." This means that when we were slaves to sin, we were WITHOUT righteousness. We did not have a righteousness that answered the demands of God's law and justice.

Let's turn to several passages that illustrate the points I just made.

Rom 3:9-12 :

What then? Do we excel? Not at all! For we have charged both Jews and Greeks before, all [with] being under sin; according as it has been written, "[There is] not a righteous [one], not even one!" "[There is] not [one] understanding; [there is] not [one] seeking God." All turned away, [they]

became worthless together, not [one is] doing goodness, not so much as one!"

1Co 2:14 : But a natural man does not receive the things of [the] Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.

Rom 8:5-8 : For the ones that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh. And the ones according to Spirit [mind] the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit [is] life and peace; because the mind of the flesh [is] enmity towards God; for it is not being subjected to the Law of God, for neither can it [be]. And those being in the flesh are not able to please God.

Another essential doctrine comes from the answer to the following questions: "WHY were we dead in our sins before we were saved, and WHY is EVERYONE dead in their sins who is not saved?" For the answer to this question, we should look at Rom 5:1-21. Let's look at Rom 5:12 and Rom 5:19 :

Because of this, even as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, so also death passed to all men, inasmuch as all sinned. ... For as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many shall be constituted righteous.

Sin entered the world through ONE MAN. Through ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE, the many were constituted sinners. Who is this ONE MAN? The first man ever to be created - Adam. What was this one man's sin? Disbelieving God's promise. What does that have to do with us? Adam's sin is imputed to all whom He represented. How many people did Adam represent? All of Adam's posterity. The doctrine of original sin is essential gospel doctrine. So what is God's attitude toward those who are dead in their sins and who are void of righteousness? Look back at Eph 2:3. What does it say we were by nature? CHILDREN OF WRATH. As we saw in the first message of this series, God will not fellowship with those who have no righteousness. And it goes even further than that. He can ONLY SHOW WRATH to those who have no righteousness. This is why, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, we were children of wrath. We were under God's wrath. And look at the very end of Eph 2:3. It says, "even as the rest." This shows that everyone without exception by nature is a child of wrath. They are under God's curse. Everything they do is under a curse.

Now someone might ask, "Everything they do is cursed? Don't they do at least a little bit of good? Isn't God pleased with some of what unsaved people do? Are you saying that God doesn't bless them or have some kind of mercy upon them?" My answer is, This isn't just my opinion; it's revealed by GOD. And if you have a problem with it, you have a problem with God. Let's see what God says. Turn to Psa 14:2-3 :

Jehovah looked down from Heaven on the sons of mankind, to see if there were any discerning [and] seeking God: they [have] all turned aside; together they have become filthy; [there is] none doing good, not even one!

Part of this is quoted in Rom 3:1-31. There is NONE doing good. Now let's turn to Mat 7:18 : A good tree cannot produce evil fruits, nor a corrupt tree produce good fruits.

What does this say about a corrupt tree? It's very obvious - a corrupt tree CANNOT bring forth good fruit. It is an IMPOSSIBILITY. But someone might ask, "Isn't an unbeliever doing good when he is kind to others? What about if he's kind to the environment or to his animals?" Let's look at Pro 12:10 : The righteous knows the life of his animal, but the mercies of the wicked [are] cruel.

Even the MERCIES of the wicked are CRUEL! His so-called goodness to others is actually CRUELTY in God's sight! Again, there is NONE doing good, and a corrupt tree CANNOT bring forth good fruit. Let's turn to Heb 11:6 : But without faith [it is] impossible to please [God]. For it is right [that] the [one] drawing near to God should believe that He is, and [that] He becomes a rewarder to the [ones] seeking Him out.

It is IMPOSSIBLE for unbelievers to please God. Do you see any exceptions in here? Does an unbeliever's so-called good deeds or acts of kindness please God? God says that is an IMPOSSIBILITY. And if it is impossible for an unbeliever to ever please God, what is God's attitude toward those who do not please Him? ONLY A CURSE. NEVER a blessing. Let's turn to Pro 3:33 : The curse of Jehovah [is] in the house of the wicked, but He blesses the abode of the just. The house of the wicked is CURSED. Is everything he does CURSED? Let's turn to Deu 28:15-19 : And it shall be, if you will not heed the voice of your God, to take heed to do all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, even all these curses shall come on you and overtake you: You [shall be] cursed in the city, and you shall be cursed in the field. Your basket and your kneading-trough [shall be] cursed. The fruit of your body [shall be] cursed, and the fruit of your land, the offspring of your oxen, and the young ones of your sheep. You shall be cursed when you come in, and you shall be cursed when you go out.

Sounds pretty comprehensive, doesn't it?

Now remember - The Bible isn't just talking just about the immoral pervert when it talks about those who are dead in their sins, who are slaves to sin, who are bringing forth fruit unto death, who cannot bring forth good fruit, who cannot please God, and who are under God's curse. It is ALSO talking about the one who is doing his best to obey God and to be moral and dedicated and sincere but who does not believe the gospel. Paul's testimony about himself is the most vivid example. In Philippians 3, he shows that he was not an immoral pervert when he was lost; in fact, he was just the opposite. He was a moral, sincere, zealous, religious person. Yet because he did not believe the gospel then, Paul counted all that but loss. And look what he says in Rom 7:5 : "For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members THROUGH THE LAW for the bearing of fruit unto death." What was Paul's fruit unto death before he was saved? It was his LAW-KEEPING. Paul, although he was moral and religious, was dead in his sins, was a slave to sin, was bringing forth fruit unto death, could not bring forth good fruit, could not please God, and was under God's curse. Pro 15:8 says that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God. It's all an abomination, even if it comes in the name of Christ. The so-called "Christians" of our day who claim to love and worship God but who do not believe the gospel are bringing forth fruit unto death. All of their prayers, all of their preaching, all of their giving, all of their singing, all of their hard work, all of their zeal, all of their outreach to the poor, all of their evangelism, all of their witnessing, all of their pro-life work, all of their anti-homosexual work, all of their morality, all of their dedication, all of their supposed kindnesses to their spouses and their children and their neighbors, all of their religious education, all of their decrying of sex and violence in the media, all

of their decrying liberalism, all of their letters to the editor, all of their volunteering, all of their modesty, all of their abstaining from foul language and fornication and drunkenness and gluttony, all of their tears of joy, all of their tears of remorse, all of their happiness, all of their sadness, all of their home-schooling, all of their home-churching, all of their stands against Roman Catholicism and Mormonism and Buddhism and Islam and the New Age Movement, all of their separating from corrupt churches, all of their proclamations of the doctrines of grace, all of their ENTIRE LIVES are an ABOMINATION to God. They have a zeal, alright, but it is not according to knowledge. They are ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. The state of the religious unbeliever who comes in the name of conservative Christianity, even in the name of the doctrines of grace, is the same as the state of the irreligious, unconcerned, immoral liberal homosexual. In fact, Jesus Christ said that it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the sodomite than it would be for the moral religionist who does not believe the gospel. And speaking of the judgment, I'd like to briefly talk about what sin earns. We've already seen that those who are dead in their sins are under the curse of God, even God's people before they're saved. But what about those who remain under the curse of God until their death? Here we come to another essential gospel doctrine. For if certain people are saved from their sin, they are also saved from the consequence of their sin. Let's look at what the consequence of sin is. Rom 6:23 is something we already read at the beginning, but let's read it again: For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sin earns death. Sin DEMANDS death. Rom 6:16 talks about "sin to death." Rom 6:21 says that "the end of those things is death." And back in Rom 5:1-21, when it speaks of Adam, it speaks of condemnation and death as a result of sin.

Now what is this condemnation and death, which is also spoken of as damnation? Well, the Bible clearly states that it is the state of the wicked after they die in which they are eternally punished for their sins. The place in which they are eternally punished for their sins is called HELL. Let's look at some Scriptures that tell us of the horrible state and place of those who die in their sins.

Isa 33:14 : The sinners of Zion are afraid; terror has seized profane ones; who of us shall tarry [with] consuming fire? Who of us shall tarry with everlasting burnings?

Mat 3:12 : whose fan [is] in His hand, and He will cleanse His floor and will gather His wheat into the storehouse. But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Mat 13:40-42 :

Then as the darnel is gathered and is consumed in the fire, so it will be in the completion of this age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all the offenses, and those who practice lawlessness. And they will throw them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and gnashing of the teeth.

Mark 9:43-48 : And if your hand offend you, cut it off. For it is profitable for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go away into Hell, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not put out. And if your foot causes you to offend, cut it off, for it is profitable for you to enter into life lame, than having two feet to be thrown into Hell, into the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. And if your eye offends you, cast it out. For it is profitable for you to enter into the kingdom of God one-eyed, than

having two eyes to be thrown into the Hell of fire, "where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched."

2Th 1:8-9 : in flaming fire giving full vengeance to those not knowing God, and to those not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will pay the penalty: everlasting destruction from the face of the Lord, "and from the glory of His strength,"

Rev 14:9-11 : And a third angel followed them, saying in a great voice, If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead, or in his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the anger of God having been mixed undiluted in the cup of His wrath. And he will be tormented by fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. And those worshiping the beast and its image have no rest night and day, even if anyone receives the mark of its name.

Rev 21:8 : But for the cowardly and unbelieving, and those having become foul, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the lying ones, their part will be in the Lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

We see from these passages two main truths about hell. First, it is a burning with fire that causes unimaginable pain and agony and torment to all who are there. Second, this burning fire and torment will last for eternity. The fire will never go out, and the pain and agony will never end. What a sobering thought. I cannot imagine hell. Even the worst suffering on earth can't even begin to compare with the torment of hell. But why does hell exist? And why are its occupants tormented forever? Some people say that this is too harsh and that God wouldn't do such a thing. Some people say that God doesn't torment the wicked forever. The reason people say these things is because they don't know who God is. Hell is what it is because God is who He is. God, first and foremost, is HOLY. He is TOTALLY, EVERLASTINGLY, PERFECTLY PURE. God's Holiness means that God is Just. Because of His HOLY and UNCHANGEABLE JUSTICE, all transgressions against His Holy Commandments, which are TOTAL affronts to His infinite Holiness, MUST be punished in proportion to His Holiness. Those who die not having a righteousness that equals the holiness of God CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO PAY for their sins. Sin against an eternally Holy God must be punished with eternal punishment. Those who do not believe in the eternal punishment of the wicked do not believe in the utter sinfulness of sin. They do not believe that sin is that much of an offense to God. And the reason they do not believe that sin is such an offense to the eternal God that the wicked must be punished eternally is because they do not believe the God of the Bible. In conclusion, we have seen that the doctrines of original sin, total depravity, and the wages of sin are all part of essential gospel doctrine. In John 16:8, Jesus Christ says that the Holy Spirit convicts His people concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. If one does not believe that by Adam's sin, all humans are constituted sinners; if one does not believe that the unregenerate have no ability nor desire to come to the true and living God and are void of a righteousness that answers the demands of God's law and justice, and if one does not believe that sin demands everlasting punishment in hell, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit has not wrought a saving work in that person. But thank God that He HAS revealed the truth to His people through His Word and His Spirit, so we know not only that sin demands everlasting death, but righteousness demands everlasting life. And we know that we, in our character and conduct, can never meet up to God's standard of perfect holiness, and

self-generated righteousness demands everlasting death, but the righteousness of Christ, freely imputed to His people, demands their everlasting life in heaven with our Sovereign Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (3)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (3) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 10/1/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to Mat 1:1-25. I'll be reading Mat 1:18-23 : And the birth of Jesus Christ was this way (for His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph) before the coming together of them, she was found having [babe] in womb by [the] Holy Spirit. But her husband [to be], Joseph, being just, and not willing to make her a public example, he purposed to put her away secretly. And [as] he [was] thinking about these things, behold, an angel of [the] Lord was seen by him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary [as] your wife. For that in her is generated by [the] Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. And all this happened so that might be fulfilled that [which was] spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Behold! The virgin will conceive in [her] womb and will bear a son, and they will call His name Emmanuel" (which translated is, God with us).

Today I'm going to continue preaching on the truths that are essential to the gospel. Without these truths, you do not have the gospel. The gospel is God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Even though we can summarize the gospel in one sentence, there are a number of necessary truths that are part of this one sentence, and we're going through some of these truths. Last week, we looked at original sin, total depravity, and the wages of sin. We saw how these are necessary gospel truths, because the gospel is God's promise to SAVE. If the people whom God promises to save are in good shape already, then there is no need to save them. If the people whom God promises to save are able to save themselves, then there is no need for God. But the Bible says that Jesus came into the world to SAVE His people FROM THEIR SIN, which we just read in Mat 1:21, and last week, we saw many verses that show that all whom God saves are, by nature, dead in their sins, slaves to sin, and bringing forth fruit unto death, and who cannot bring forth good fruit, cannot please God, and are under God's curse. We also saw that this is the state of everyone without exception by nature.

Today, we're going to see what this salvation entails, according to God's testimony. What happens to a dead sinner when he is saved?

First, let's get into our minds some of what we've already heard in this series of messages. First, God saves His people under the true gospel, and no other way. Second, those whom God saves are in rebellion against Him by nature and have no ability to come to Him. Third, God is sovereign and does whatever He pleases. So when God appoints a time to save one of His people, there is ABSOLUTELY NO STOPPING IT. And we saw in a previous message that God has appointed everything before the world was created. So - when God, before He created the world, appointed a time to save me, NOTHING could stop it. For every one of His people, God has appointed a specific place and a specific time and a specific circumstance to save each one. We've seen in so many Scriptures that when God decides to do something, it is done. Not even the rebellious person whom God chose to save can stop it from happening! God's saving power is

IRRESISTIBLE. That means that NO MAN can RESIST God's intention to save when the appointed time comes. Let's turn to John 6:37 :

All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me, and the [one] coming to Me I will in no way cast out. Are there any exceptions there? Are there any whom God has given to Jesus who WILL NOT come to Him? Now look at John 6:44 : No one is able to come to Me (that's talking about the total inability of man to come to Christ by nature) unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up in the last day.

What does it mean when it says that God DRAWS a person? Does it mean that God draws a picture of them? No. Does it mean that God says, "Please, please, will you please come to me"? No. The word DRAW here means to DRAG BY FORCE. To show you what this word really means, let's see how it is used in other parts of the New Testament:

John 21:11 :

Simon Peter went up and dragged the net onto the land, full of big fish, a hundred and fifty three. And [though] being so many, the net was not torn. Was Peter PLEADING with the fish net to come ashore?

Acts 16:19 : And seeing that the hope of their gain went out, having seized Paul and Silas, her lords dragged them to the market before the rulers. Did they PLEAD with Paul and Silas to come to the market?

Acts 21:30 : And the whole city was moved, and there was a running together of people. And laying hands on Paul, they drew him outside of the temple, and at once the doors were shut. Did they PLEAD with Paul to come out of the Temple?

Jas 2:6 : But you dishonored the poor one. Do not the rich ones oppress you, and they drag you to judgment seats? Did the rich ones PLEAD with them to come to the judgment seats? As you can see, this word doesn't have anything to do with PLEADING or with PROFFERING or even with ASKING. It is a UNILATERAL, FORCEFUL DRAGGING. A better translation of John 6:44 would be, "No one is able to come to Me unless the Father who sent Me DRAGS him." Does this mean that God DRAGS a person kicking and screaming? Does the person being DRAGGED say, "I don't wanna go! I don't wanna go!" No - God CHANGES their hearts so that they are willingly dragged to Him. Psa 110:3 says, "Your people shall be WILLING in the day of Your power." John 10:27 says, "My sheep HEAR My voice, and I know them, and they FOLLOW me." I'll talk later in more detail about the change of heart that happens at salvation. So we have seen that God drags His people to Himself at the time He appointed through the preaching of the gospel. Now let's talk about the CHANGE that takes place at this time.

There is first a change of STATE before God. We have already seen in last week's message that God's people by nature are in a state of WRATH and CONDEMNATION. They are under God's CURSE. They do not have a righteousness that equals God's righteousness. What happens at salvation to a person's STATE before God? At salvation, the righteousness of Christ is IMPUTED to His people. This means that they are LEGALLY CONSTITUTED RIGHTEOUS - as righteous as God Himself. This is an amazing truth. God, because He is holy, only fellowships with those who are as righteous as He is. And He will admit no one to heaven who does not have a righteousness

that equals His. Imputation is the only way that God can be just to justify sinners.

Because of imputation, there is a change from DEATH to LIFE. We, by nature, in our own righteousness, were dead in sins and could only bring forth fruit unto death. But what does the Scripture say about our state when we are saved?

Eph 2:4-5 : But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love [with] which He loved us, even we being dead in deviations, [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are being saved),

Col 2:13 : And you, being dead in the deviations and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all the deviations, We were dead once, but we were made alive. This making of a new life is sometimes called being born of God.

Let's read John 3:3-8 :

Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, If one is not generated from above, he is not able to see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to Him, How is a man able to be generated, being old? He is not able to enter into his mother's womb a second [time] and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, If one is not generated out of water and Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God. That having been generated out of the flesh is flesh, and that having been generated out of the Spirit is spirit. Do not wonder because I said to you, You must be generated from above. The Spirit breathes where He desires, and you hear His voice; but you do not know from where He comes, and where He goes; so is everyone having been generated from the Spirit.

1Pe 1:23 : being regenerated, not by corruptible seed, but incorruptible, through the living Word of God, and remaining forever.

Regenerate is another word for born again. Generate = born, and re = again. So when we talk about regeneration, we are talking about being born again. As part of being born again, there is a change of HEART. Let's look at Eze 11:19 : And I shall give to them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, And Eze 36:25-36 :

Then I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your defilement and from all your idols. And I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do [them]. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. And you shall be a people to Me, and I will be God to you. I will also save you from all your defilements, and I will call for grain and increase it, and I will not put a famine on you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, in order that you will not any more receive the disgrace of famine among the nations. And you will remember your evil ways and your doings that [were] not good, and you will despise yourselves in your own eyes for your iniquities and for your abominations. Let it be known to you that I am not doing [this] for your sake, states the Lord Jehovah. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. So says the Lord Jehovah: In the day I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities [to be] inhabited,

and the wastes shall be built. And the desolated land shall be cultivated, rather than being a ruin in the eyes of all passing by. And they shall say, This land that was desolated has become like the garden of Eden. And the wasted and desolated and razed cities [are] fortified [and] inhabited. And the nations left all around you shall know that I, Jehovah, built the razed places and planted that which was desolated. I, Jehovah have spoken it and will do it.

Before salvation, God's people have a heart of stone. After salvation, God's people have a heart of flesh. What does this change mean? Does it mean that the heart that's beating inside you used to be made out of stone, and now it's a human heart? No, that's not the way the Bible uses the word in these situations. Let's turn to some passages that show what the heart does. While I'm reading each of these passages, think about what the heart is DOING in each of these.

Gen 6:5 : And Jehovah saw that the evil of man [was] great on the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil all the day long.

Gen 24:45 :

Before I had finished speaking within my heart, even behold, Rebekah was coming out, her pitcher on her shoulder. And she went down to the well and drew. And I said to her, Please let me drink.

Gen 27:41 : And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning [for] my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.

Exo 35:35 :

He has filled them [with] wisdom of heart, to do every work of a smith, and an artisan, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in crimson, and in bleached [linen], and a weaver; doers of every work and devisers of designs.

Exo 36:2 : And Moses called to Bezaleel, and to Aholiab, and to everyone wise of heart, to whom Jehovah had given a heart of wisdom, everyone whose heart had lifted him up to come near the work, to do it.

Deu 15:9 :

Beware that there is no evil thought in your heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release draws near; and your eye [be] evil against your needy brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to Jehovah against you and it be sin to you.

1Ki 3:9 :

Also give to Your servant an understanding heart, to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this, Your great people?

Psa 14:1 : The fool has said in his heart, [There is] no God! They acted corruptly; they did hatefully in deeds; there is none doing good.

Psa 15:2 :

He who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.

Psa 49:3 : My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the thoughts of my heart [shall be] of understanding.

Pro 14:10 : The heart knows the bitterness of its soul, and a stranger does not mix in its joy.

Ecc 7:22 : For also your own heart knows that you yourself have also cursed others many times.

Isa 33:18 : Your heart shall ponder terror: Where is he counting? Where [is] he weighing? Where [is] he counting the towers?

Mat 13:15 : For the heart of this people has grown fat, and they heard heavily with the ears, and they have closed their eyes, that they not see with the eyes, or hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and be converted, and I heal them.

Luk 2:19 : And Mary kept all these words, meditating in her heart.

Acts 8:22 :

Repent, then, from this wickedness of yours, and petition God if perhaps you will be forgiven the thought of your heart.

Rom 10:9-10 :

Because if you confess [the] Lord Jesus with your mouth, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from [the] dead, you will be saved. For with [the] heart [one] believes unto righteousness, and with [the] mouth [one] confesses unto salvation.

Heb 4:12 : For the Word of God [is] living, and powerfully working, and sharper than every two-edged sword, and piercing as far as [the] division of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; Do you know how many verses I skipped over? There are a TON of verses like this in the Bible. They clearly show that the HEART is what THINKS, UNDERSTANDS, KNOWS, and BELIEVES. So a change of HEART is a change of THINKING, UNDERSTANDING, KNOWLEDGE, and BELIEF.

Those who are NOT saved are lacking knowledge and understanding. Let's turn to Isa 45:20 :

Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, escaped ones of the nations; the ones who set up the wood of their carved image, and the ones who pray to a god who cannot save; they know nothing. The KJV reads, "they have no knowledge." What knowledge are these idolaters lacking? Look at Isa 45:21-25 :

Declare and bring near; yea, let them consult together. Who has revealed this of old; [who] has told it from then? Is it not I, Jehovah? And there [is] no God other than Me; a just God and a Savior; [there is] none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I [am] God, and there [is] no other. I have sworn by Myself, the Word has gone out of My mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. He shall say, Only in Jehovah do I have righteousness and strength; to Him he comes; and they are ashamed, all who are angry with Him. In Jehovah all of the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.

These idolaters were lacking the knowledge of the true God, the one who is both a just God and a Savior. They were lacking the knowledge that only in God is there righteousness and strength. They were lacking the knowledge that God is a justifier of His people. Let's turn to Rom 10:2 : For I testify to them that they have zeal to God, but not according to knowledge.

What is this knowledge that they were lacking? Look at Rom 10:3-4 : For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ [is] the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

They did not know about the righteousness of God, which is the imputed righteousness of Christ. Let's turn to 2Co 4:3-4 : But also if our gospel is being hidden, it has been hidden in those being lost, in whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, [so that] the brightness of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God, [should] not dawn on them.

What are these unregenerate people blind to? The brightness of the gospel of the glory of Christ. So we see that those who do not have a knowledge and understanding of the GOSPEL have not been SAVED.

Now let's look at descriptions of those who are saved. John 17:3 : And this is everlasting life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

What is everlasting life? It is KNOWLEDGE of God and of Jesus Christ.

John 8:32 : And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

What is the TRUTH that God's people KNOW that sets them free? It's that same TRUTH that those who do not believe are IGNORANT OF! It is the truth of the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel; the truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ!

Rom 6:17-18 : But thanks [be] to God that you were slaves of sin, but you obeyed from [the] heart the form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness.

What is that DOCTRINE that believers believed when they were made free from sin? Again, it is the same DOCTRINE that unbelievers are ignorant of! 2Jn 1:9 says that those who do not stay in the DOCTRINE of Christ do not have God. It is the DOCTRINE of Christ's PERSON and His WORK. It is the DOCTRINE that I have been preaching on. So we see that upon regeneration, God gives His people KNOWLEDGE. There is not a single regenerate person who does not have KNOWLEDGE. And this KNOWLEDGE is a SPECIFIC knowledge. It is not just ANY knowledge. It is KNOWLEDGE of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. It is knowledge of what I've been preaching and am going to be preaching, the Lord willing. Without this KNOWLEDGE, there is no salvation. Are we making knowledge a condition of salvation? By no means. If we were doing that, we would be lost. We are saying that God UNCONDITIONALLY saves His people based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness alone and UNCONDITIONALLY gives His people a knowledge of the gospel upon regeneration. Those who say that God saves people and leaves them ignorant of the gospel do not believe in the God of the Bible, because the God of the Bible says that all who do not believe the gospel are lost and all who are ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel are lost. IGNORANCE of DOCTRINE, in this case, is a SURE SIGN OF LOSTNESS.

Another effect of the change of heart is REPENTANCE. When God's people are given knowledge of the true gospel, they REPENT of believing a false gospel. This means that they turn TOTALLY away from the false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner and submit to the righteousness of God revealed in the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. They count all their works while believing a false gospel as dung, as dead works, as evil deeds, as fruit unto death. They realize that their belief of a false gospel showed that they were lost. They will NEVER speak peace to their former selves. The Lord willing, I'll be preaching a sermon on judgments based on the gospel, so I won't go into detail on speaking peace at this point. But repentance and judging go hand-in-hand. If one believes that he was lost while believing a false gospel, then he obviously will not think that someone else is saved who believes that same false gospel.

It is important to note the passages in which repentance and belief of the gospel are mentioned together. For example, Mark 1:14-15 : And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent and believe in the gospel.

Acts 20:21 : earnestly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now if repentance is connected with belief, of what does this repentance consist? We are given an example in Php 3:4-9 :

Even though I [might] have trust in flesh; if any other thinks to trust in flesh, I more; in circumcision, [the] eighth day, of [the] race of Israel, [the] tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to Law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the assembly; according to righteousness in Law, being blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss because of Christ. But, no, rather I also count all things to be loss because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count [them to be] trash, that I might gain Christ and be found in Him; not having my own righteousness of Law, but through the faith of Christ, [having] the righteousness of God on faith, When Paul believed in the true gospel of the righteousness of God, he counted his former religion as loss and as trash. He realized that when he believed in salvation conditioned on the sinner, he was bringing forth evil deeds, dead works, and fruit unto death. He realized that now that God has changed his heart to believe the gospel, he would never go back to bringing forth evil deeds, dead works, and fruit unto death. They were on the dung heap. THIS is true gospel repentance. If somebody says that he repented of a false gospel at conversion and then needs to continue to repent of a false gospel as a Christian, then that person is still dead in his sins, because he HAS NO IDEA what true gospel repentance is. True gospel repentance is a one-time occurrence, just as regeneration is a one-time occurrence. This morning we've seen some of the aspects of salvation. We have seen that when God chooses to save someone, that one will be saved. God's people are irresistibly dragged to him at the appointed time by means of the gospel. We've seen that when God saves a sinner, that sinner's state is changed from wickedness to righteousness by imputation. We've seen that God gives new life to the one who used to be dead in trespasses and sins. He gives a new heart, which includes giving knowledge and understanding of the true gospel. We've seen that when God gives a new heart to His people, he gives them repentance, which includes the

knowledge that they were lost while believing in salvation conditioned on the sinner and that everything they did during this time was dung; and includes turning from dead works to serve the true and living God, never to return to the false gospel.

Praise God for His irresistible saving grace by which we are made partakers of Christ and all heavenly blessings. Praise God that He has given us a knowledge of Him, whereby He is glorified in our hearts. Praise God that He has purged our consciences of dead works and has caused us to turn away from believing a false gospel to being constantly submitted to Christ's righteousness. May we do good works out of a love for Him who first loved us. Amen.

S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (4)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (4) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 10/8/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to Php 1:3-6 :

I thank my God on all the remembrance of you, always in my every prayer on your behalf making [my] prayer with joy over your fellowship in the gospel, from [the] first day until now, being persuaded of this very thing, that the [One] having begun a good work in you will finish [it] until [the] day of Jesus Christ;

We are continuing to study the essential doctrine that is part of the gospel. We have, as a basis for this study, the following definition of the gospel: God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Two weeks ago, I began expounding on the phrase TO SAVE. We looked at one of the meanings of "TO SAVE," which is to DELIVER or RESCUE. Two weeks ago, we saw what sinners are delivered or rescued FROM, and last week, we saw what was involved in the person's deliverance and rescue. This week, we're going to be looking at the other primary definition of "TO SAVE," and from this, we will see another essential gospel doctrine. As I said before, yawshah (YA-sha) is the Hebrew word that is usually translated "save," and sozo (SO-zo) is the Greek word that is usually translated "save." These words do not only mean "to deliver" and "to rescue." There is another important meaning to these words. These words ALSO mean "to preserve" "to be safe," and "to do well." So here we see that SALVATION doesn't ONLY have to do with the initial deliverance and rescue from the bondage of sin, but it ALSO has to do with being PRESERVED from evil. Once we are delivered and rescued, we REMAIN in this state FOREVER. So the gospel also includes God's promise to PRESERVE. It is GOOD NEWS that God promises to PRESERVE. What kind of good news would it be if God promised initial regeneration, but then said that these regenerate people can become unregenerated and finally perish in hell? This is not good news at all. In fact, it is a blatant form of salvation conditioned on the sinner, because it says that a person's BAD WORKS can UNDO their salvation. Well, if their BAD WORKS can UNDO their salvation, what do they think will REDO their salvation? Their GOOD WORKS.

Let's turn to some Scriptures that show that God PRESERVES EVERYONE HE SAVES, and that not a SINGLE PERSON whom God saves will return to a state of lostness.

Psa 37:23-28 : The steps of a [good] man are established from Jehovah; and He will delight in his way. Though he falls, he is not cast down; for Jehovah upholds his hand. I have been young and am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread. All the day he [is] gracious and lends; and his seed [is] for a blessing. Turn away from evil and do good and live forever. For Jehovah loves judgment and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever; but the wicked's seed shall be cut off.

Notice that in Psa 37:23, preservation is tied to God's SOVEREIGNTY. God ORDERS our steps, AND He preserves us. This is an important passage, because it shows two things: FIRST, that

God causes us to remain in a state of justification, and SECOND, God causes us to remain submitted to His righteousness. We see both OBJECTIVE and SUBJECTIVE preservation here. God does NOT keep His people in a state of justification while at the same time having them engage in unbelief and denying the gospel. God does BOTH. There is NEVER one without the other. I'll be speaking more on that in a little while, the Lord willing.

Psa 73:23-28 :

Yet I [was] continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. You shall guide me by Your counsel; and afterward [You] will take me [to] glory. Whom have I in Heaven? And I have no desire on earth besides You. My flesh and my heart waste away; God [is] the rock of my heart and my portion forever. For, lo, those who are far from You shall be lost; You have cut off all who go whoring away from You. [As for] me, [it is] good for me to draw near to God; I have made my refuge in the Lord Jehovah, to declare all Your works.

See here that preservation is ALL THE WAY to final glory. And notice again the objective and subjective preservation. God's people are guided by His counsel, AND God takes hold of their hands and takes them to glory.

Psa 121:3-8 :

He will not give your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will not slumber nor sleep. Jehovah [is] the One keeping you; Jehovah [is] your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night; Jehovah shall keep you from all evil; He shall keep your soul. Jehovah shall keep your going out, and your coming in, from now on and till forever.

Take a look at what God is saying here. He is saying that He keeps His people from slipping, keeps them from all evil, and keeps their soul. Isn't that a glorious passage? God keeps our souls SAFE, and not only does He keep our souls safe, He keeps us from slipping! Let me say it this way - God has made it so that it is IMPOSSIBLE for His people to slip! I'm planning to get into more detail as to what it is IMPOSSIBLE for God's people to do, but this is just a little introduction. We CANNOT slip! What does it mean to slip? We'll go into more of that later, the Lord willing. But also remember here that we're talking about a PROMISE from God! Remember when we went over GOD'S PROMISE? Well, here's a PROMISE. God PROMISES that He will not give your foot to slip, that He shall keep you from all evil, and that He shall keep your soul - not only now, but FOREVER! Praise God! And speaking of promises, let's turn to Jer 32:39-40 : And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me all the days, for good to them and to their sons after them. And I will cut an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do good to them. But I will put My fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from Me. Do you see how God's preservation of His people is tied right in to His promise to deliver them and to give them a new heart? God promises that He will put His fear into their new heart and that they will NEVER depart from Him.

John 6:37-40 :

All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me, and the [one] coming to Me I will in no way cast out. For I have come down out of Heaven, not that I should do My will, but the will of Him who sent

Me. And this is the will of the Father sending Me, that of all that He has given Me, I shall not lose [any] of it, but shall raise it up in the last day. And this is the will of the [One] sending Me, that everyone seeing the Son and believing into Him should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

How can you be any clearer than that? Look at John 6:39. How many whom God has given to Jesus will Jesus lose? "I shall not lose ANY of it!" Look at John 6:40. How many who believe in Jesus will have everlasting life? "EVERYONE"! And again, see that this preservation goes all the way from regeneration to final glory.

John 10:28-29 : And I give eternal life to them, and they shall not perish to the age, never! And not anyone shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father who has given [them] to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck out of My Father's hand. Who is able to pluck the sheep out of God's hand? NO ONE! They shall NEVER PERISH.

Now, can anyone or anything STOP or HINDER God's people from being saved eternally? Rom 8:28-30 : But we know that [to] the [ones] loving God all things work together for good, [to] those being called according to purpose; because whom He foreknew, He also predestinated [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be [the] First-born among many brothers. But whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. So when God justifies someone, is there any question as to whether or not he will glorify that person? Rom 8:31-39 :

What then shall we say to these things? If God [be] for us, who [can be] against us? Truly [He] who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up on behalf of us all, how will He not freely give all things to us with Him? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? God [is] the [One] justifying! Who [is he] condemning? [It is] Christ who has died, but rather also [is] raised, who also is at [the] right [hand] of God, who also makes intercession on our behalf. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Even as it has been written, "For Your sake we are killed all the day; we are counted as sheep of slaughter." But in all these things we more than conquer through Him loving us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

NOTHING can separate us from God's love! **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!**

Now what do these verses tell us about God's people once they are saved? It tells us **ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED**. I am not ashamed to say that I believe in **ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED**. The Arminian will ask, "No matter what he does, he remains saved?" And I answer, "Exactly. No matter what he does, he remains saved. Nothing he **HAS** done or **IS** doing or **WILL** do will **EVER** return him to a state of condemnation."

Now we're all thinking of the common objection, aren't we? The objectors say, "So regenerate people can sin any kind of sin, engage in the most wicked perversions, deny the gospel, go off and live a life of irreligion and unconcern, and still be saved?" Let's go over this one for a while. The same objection was raised in Paul's day. Let's turn to Rom 6:1-23. Paul just got finished saying in Rom 5:19 that through the obedience of **ONE**, many were counted righteous. He said that our own

personal obedience has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO with our being counted righteous before God. He said that where sin abounded, grace much more abounded. So here come the objectors. If our salvation has ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO with our obedience and has ONLY TO DO with the obedience of Christ, why can't we just go ahead and sin all we want to, since God's grace through Christ is the only thing that matters in salvation? Look at Rom 6:1 :

What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

Isn't that just like the Arminians who hold to conditional preservation? And isn't that just like the Calvinists who condition final glory on perseverance? They accuse us of antinomianism. They accuse us of believing that it doesn't matter what a Christian does. But pay close attention to how Paul answers the objectors in Rom 6:2-13 :

Let it not be! We who died to sin, how shall we still live in it? Or are you ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from [the] dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be in the resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be nullified, so that we no longer serve sin. For the [one] that died has been justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that also we shall live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from [the] dead dies no more; death no longer lords it over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives to God. So also you count yourselves to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Then do not let sin reign in your mortal body, to obey it in its lusts. Neither present your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as [one] living from [the] dead, and your members instruments of righteousness to God. Does this sound like a license to sin? No - it is just the opposite. Rom 6:2 says that we have died to sin and shall not live in sin. Rom 6:4 says that we should walk in newness of life. Rom 6:6 says that we no longer serve sin. Rom 6:11 says that we count ourselves dead to sin. Rom 6:12 says that we should not let sin rule in our bodies. Rom 6:13 says that we are not to present our bodies as instruments of unrighteousness to sin. Make no mistake about it - Christians DO NOT live in sin. Do Christians still sin? Yes. We are constantly falling short of the glory of God. Yet our walk is NOT in sin but is in newness of life. Look at 1Co 6:9-11 : Or do you not know that unjust ones will not inherit [the] kingdom of God? Do not be led astray, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous ones, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers shall inherit [the] kingdom of God. And some [of you] were these things, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.

Here is a description of what these Christians WERE like before they were saved - notice 1Co 6:11, "some WERE these things" - but now they are NOT these things. We see in 1Co 6:10 that NONE of these kinds of people will inherit the kingdom of God. Some like to gloss over this by saying that Christians are STILL these things in their walk but are declared righteous, so they will inherit the kingdom of heaven. Some say, "we're all adulterers, but we're covered by the blood." But the context will not allow that interpretation. NO HOMOSEXUAL will inherit the kingdom of God. If a person DIES A HOMOSEXUAL, he will go to hell. So the objector who says that we believe that someone can be a homosexual and be saved does not know what we believe. If they

say, "But you just said that a person can't lose his salvation no matter what he does," I say, that's true. But a person who has been truly saved WILL NOT be a homosexual. Does this mean that one's remaining saved is conditioned on one's doing or abstaining? In no way. One's remaining saved is conditioned on the finished work of Christ alone. But one who IS saved WILL NOT walk in a certain way. They WILL NOT walk in these sins. Call me a legalist if you want to, but that's what the Bible says. And if you think that this is legalism, you don't have a clue as to what legalism is.

There is one other area in which we need to see that God's people are preserved. It is a VITAL AREA. God's people are preserved from believing, confessing, and following a false Christ and a false gospel. Let's turn to John 10:5 : But they will not follow a stranger, never! But [they] will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of the strangers. Does it say that we will SOMETIMES follow a stranger? Does it say that we will follow a stranger and follow the true Shepherd at the same time? No! It says that we will NEVER follow a stranger! Let's turn to Mat 24:23-24 :

Then if anyone says to you, Behold, here [is] the Christ! Or, Here! Do not believe. For false christs and false prophets will rise up. And [they] will give great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Christ Jesus is saying that those false teachers will come with their subtle deceits and certainly will lead many astray -- but it is IMPOSSIBLE to lead the elect astray! God preserves His people from being led astray by the false gospels of these false prophets!

Let's turn to 2Th 2:3-17 : Do not let anyone deceive you in any way, because [that Day will not come] unless first comes the falling away, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, the [one] opposing and exalting himself over everything being called God, or object of worship, so as for him "to sit in the temple of God" as God, setting forth himself, that he is God. Do you not remember that I told you these things, I yet being with you? And now you know the thing holding back, for him to be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness already is working, only he [is] holding back now, until it comes out of the midst. And then "the Lawless One" will be revealed, "whom" "the Lord" "will consume" "by the spirit of His mouth," and will bring to nought by the brightness of His presence. [His] coming is according to the working of Satan in all power and [miraculous] signs and lying wonders, and in all deceit of unrighteousness in those being lost, because they did not receive the love of the truth in order for them to be saved. And because of this, God will send to them a working of error, for them to believe the lie, that all may be judged, those not believing the truth, but who have delighted in unrighteousness. But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of [the] Spirit and belief of [the] truth, to which He called you through our gospel, to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, then, brothers, stand firm and strongly hold the teachings you were taught, whether by word or by our letter. But may our Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, and our God and Father, the [One] having loved us and having given everlasting comfort and good hope by grace, encourage your hearts, and may He establish you in every good word and work.

After warning the Thessalonians about the falling away, the man of sin, the son of perdition, and God's sending "a working of error, for them to believe the lie, that all may be judged, those not believing the truth, but who have delighted in unrighteousness" (2Th 2:11), Paul then states, "BUT

we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of [the] spirit and belief of [the] truth, to which He called you through our gospel, to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Th 2:13-14). Notice the contrast! He talks of those who are deceived into believing the lie and delighting in unrighteousness, and he contrasts this with those who have been sanctified by the spirit and have believed the truth of the gospel. Paul is saying to the Thessalonian believers, and to all of us who are regenerate, that it is IMPOSSIBLE for us to believe the lie and delight in unrighteousness! God preserves us from these things!

Now let's turn to a passage that we read when we went over total depravity. It's Mat 7:18 : A good tree cannot produce evil fruits, nor a corrupt tree produce good fruits.

Now I want you to get the impact of this. Just as much as it is IMPOSSIBLE for a totally depraved sinner to bring forth good fruit - it is JUST AS IMPOSSIBLE for a regenerated sinner to bring forth evil fruit. Are you getting the full impact of this? When we talk about the TOTAL INABILITY of an unregenerate person to bring forth good fruit, we mean TOTAL and ABSOLUTE INABILITY. And you know what, a believer is TOTALLY, ABSOLUTELY UNABLE to bring forth evil fruit! But wait a minute. Don't we still sin? Yes, we CONSTANTLY fall short of the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, and we CONSTANTLY cry "O wretched man that I am!" How can it be said, then that believers CANNOT bring forth evil fruit? Luk 6:45 gives us the answer: The good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart. And the evil man brings forth evil out of the evil treasure of his heart, for his mouth speaks out of the abundance of his heart. This is not talking about all the thoughts, words, and deeds of either the regenerate or unregenerate man; it is talking specifically about what GOSPEL the men believe and confess. It is IMPOSSIBLE for a regenerate man to believe and confess a false gospel!! Those who are in the flesh bear fruit unto death, and those who are in the Spirit bear fruit unto God (Rom 7:4-5), and it is JUST AS IMPOSSIBLE for one who is in the Spirit to bear fruit unto death as it is for one who is in the flesh to bear fruit unto God. When we see descriptions in the Bible of sins that are necessarily indicative of lostness, we know that a believer is PRESERVED from doing such things. For example, God says that saying in one's heart, "There is no God" is indicative of lostness (Psa 14:1); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to say in his heart, "There is no God." God says that praying to a god who cannot save is indicative of lostness (Isa 45:20); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to pray to a god who cannot save. God says that being ignorant of the righteousness of God, seeking to establish one's own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God are indicative of lostness (Rom 10:3); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to be ignorant of God's righteousness, to seek to establish his own righteousness, or to not be submitted to God's righteousness. God says that preaching a false gospel is indicative of lostness (Gal 1:8-9); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to preach a false gospel. God says that saying we have no sin and saying we have not sinned are indicative of lostness (1Jn 1:8; 1Jn 1:10); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to say he has no sin or say he has not sinned. God says that denying that Jesus is the Christ is indicative of lostness (1Jn 2:22); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to deny that Jesus is the Christ. God says that not abiding in the doctrine of Christ is indicative of lostness (2Jn 1:9); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to not abide in the doctrine of Christ. God says that speaking peace to one who brings a false gospel is indicative of lostness (2Jn 1:11); thus, it is impossible for a regenerate person to speak peace to

one who brings a false gospel. Now if one says that a regenerate person CAN do these things, then that person DOES NOT KNOW the God who promises to preserve His people. But WE who DO KNOW the God of all grace, KNOW and REJOICE in God's preserving grace. It is so precious to us. Let's turn to Jude 1:24-25 to close:

Now to Him being able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you before His glory without blemish, with unspeakable joy; to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty and might and authority, even now and forever.

Amen.

S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (5)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (5) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 10/15/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Thus far in our series on Essential Gospel Doctrine, we have seen that God keeps his promises and that He promises to save. There's been a lot of essential gospel doctrine in these areas, and NONE of them can be missing, or else there's no gospel. Let's remember again what the gospel is. It is God's promise to save ... who? The gospel is God's promise to save HIS PEOPLE based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. This morning, the Lord willing, we'll be looking at those whom God promises to save.

Let's turn to Mat 1:21, which is a passage we read a couple sermons ago: And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

We see here that the angel of God promises that Jesus will save a group of people called "His people." "His" obviously refers to Jesus Christ -- so who are Christ's people? In John 10:1-42, Jesus Christ puts himself forward as the Good Shepherd. Now see how he talks about the sheep. As I read through John 10:1-30, notice how possessive Jesus is:

Truly, truly, I say to you, The [one] not entering through the door into the sheepfold, but going up by another way, that one is a thief and a plunderer. But the [one] entering through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The doorkeeper opens to him, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls [his] own sheep by name, and leads them out. And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes in front of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will not follow a stranger, never! But [they] will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of the strangers. Jesus spoke this allegory to them, but they did not know what it was which He spoke to them. Then Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you that I am the door of the sheep. All who came before Me are thieves and plunderers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in, and will go out, and will find pasture. The thief does not come except that he may steal, and kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life and may have [it] abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd! The Good Shepherd lays down His life on behalf of the sheep. But the hireling, not even being a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and forsakes the sheep and flees. And the wolf seizes them, and scatters the sheep. But the hireling flees because he is a hireling, and there is not a care to him concerning the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and I know those that [are] Mine, and I am known by the [ones that are] Mine. Even as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep which are not of this fold. I must also lead those, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock, one Shepherd. For this reason My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down from Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. I received this commandment from My Father. Then a division occurred again among the Jews, because of these words. And many of them said, He has a demon and is insane. Why do you hear Him? Others

said, These are not words of one having been possessed by a demon. A demon is not able to open [the] eyes of blind ones. And [the Feast] of Dedication took place in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's Porch. Then the Jews encircled Him, and said to Him, Until when do You lift up our soul? If You are the Christ, tell us publicly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you did not believe. The works which I do in the name of My Father, these bear witness about Me. But you do not believe for you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give eternal life to them, and they shall not perish to the age, never! And not anyone shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father who has given [them] to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are One!

Jesus says here that these sheep are HIS sheep, that He calls His own sheep by name, that He lays down His life for the sheep, He knows them that are His, He gives eternal life to His sheep, His father has given the sheep to Him, and His sheep shall never perish. So is Jesus saying that everyone without exception are His sheep? Well, if that were the case, then everyone without exception will be given eternal life and will never perish. We know that's not the case. But just to make it as plain and as clear as your own hand right in front of you, Jesus says something in Mat 10:26 that most of religion that comes in the name of Christianity absolutely HATES. Let's start with Mat 10:24

Then the Jews encircled Him, and said to Him, Until when do You lift up our soul? If You are the Christ, tell us publicly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you did not believe. The works which I do in the name of My Father, these bear witness about Me. But you do not believe for you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

Jesus first tells the Jews that He already told them He was the Christ, and they didn't believe. But JESUS DID NOT STOP THERE. Think about it. He told them WHY they did not believe! He said that THE REASON they did not believe was because they were NOT OF HIS SHEEP. It can't get any plainer than this. He didn't say, "You are not of My sheep because you don't believe." He said, "You don't believe because you are not of My sheep." Look at John 10:15 again in light of what we just read:

Even as the Father knows Me, I also know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

Jesus said that He lays down His life for the SHEEP. Okay - clear enough? Now in John 10:26, Jesus said that these Jews were NOT of His sheep. Got that? So - did Jesus lay down His life for these Jews? Can there be any doubt in the mind of ANYONE who really believes in the Jesus of the Bible? There can't be. Jesus did NOT lay down His life for these Jews. So, even if there were NO OTHER PLACE in Scripture that talked about this, we would have to conclude that there were at least a FEW for whom Christ did not die.

Before we get away from John 10:1-42, I'd like to point out John 10:30. After Jesus goes through the whole discourse of who His sheep are and what He does for His sheep, He says that He is God. He connects His deity to His saving work on behalf of His sheep. Here is another essential gospel doctrine: Jesus is God. I won't go into detail on this or go over all the Scripture references regarding this; that's the topic for another sermon. But we need to realize that this is vitally important. Those who deny that Jesus is God are lost. And on the other side, those who deny that

Jesus is man are lost. In order for Jesus to fulfill His mediatorial work, He must be BOTH God AND man.

Okay, let's get back to the topic of Christ's people. Let's look at Eph 5:25 :

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly and gave Himself up on its behalf, For whom did Christ give Himself up? For the CHURCH.

Turn to Acts 20:28 :

Then take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit placed you [as] overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God which He purchased through [His] own blood. Whom did Christ purchase with His own blood? Again, it is the CHURCH. So Christ's people are the ones for whom Christ died. And we have already seen in past messages that Christ's work DEMANDS and ENSURES the salvation of ALL whom Christ represented, because it fully satisfied the demands of God's law and justice on their behalf. Those who believe in universal atonement DO NOT believe that Christ's work demands and ensures the salvation of all whom Christ represented. They DO NOT believe that it is Christ's work alone that makes the difference between heaven and hell. Instead, they believe that it is the work of the SINNER that makes the difference between heaven and hell. This is damnable heresy.

Remember back in John 10:1-42 where Jesus said that His Father gave the Sheep to Him? When did that GIVING take place? Well, if you remember, a few sermons ago, I talked about PREDESTINATION. I showed that God determined ALL THINGS before He created the world. If He determines ANYTHING in REACTION to what His creation does, then His promises would not be sure and certain, because they could be changed by the will of man. This is most strongly shown in God's PREDESTINATING a certain number of people to be given to Christ and saved based on Christ's work alone. This kind of PREDESTINATING is sometimes called ELECTION. And the people whom God ELECTED are sometimes called the ELECT.

Let's first turn to Eph 1:1-23. Let's read Eph 1:3-14

Blessed [is] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies with Christ, even as He elected us in Him before [the] foundation of [the] world, for us to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, predestinating us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to [the] praise of [the] glory of His grace in which He favored us in the [One] having been loved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of deviations, according to the riches of His grace which He caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, for the administration of the fullness of the times to head up all things in Christ, both the things in the heavens, and the things on earth, in Him, in whom we also have been chosen to an inheritance, being predestinated according to [the] purpose of the [One] working all things according to the counsel of His [own] will, for us to be to [the] praise of His glory, the ones who had previously trusted in Christ; in whom also you, hearing the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also believing you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is an earnest of our inheritance, to [the] redemption of the purchased possession, to [the] praise of His glory.

We see that God chose His people before the foundation of the world. But we also see that bare election is not enough. God chose His people before the foundation of the world TO BE REDEEMED AND ADOPTED IN CHRIST! God chose His people before the foundation of the world TO MAKE US UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL AND TO BE TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY! God chose His people before the foundation of the world TO BE SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT that is the earnest of our inheritance! God did not just choose to save a people without His law and justice being satisfied! There have been debates down through the centuries as to whether God could have chosen to save His people without sending Christ to die for them. Well, I can tell you this: those who were of the view that God could have chosen His people without Christ did not know God. God CANNOT save apart from His law and justice being satisfied. So the true doctrine of election MUST take all this into consideration.

Now let's turn to 1Pe 2:1-25. Let's read 1Pe 2:1-10 :

Then laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil words, as newborn babes desire the pure soul-nourishing milk, that you may grow by it; if indeed you "tasted" "that the Lord is good;" to whom having drawn near, a living Stone, indeed having been rejected by men, but chosen by God, precious; you also as living stones are being built a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because of this, it is also contained in the Scripture: "Behold," I lay in Zion" an elect, "precious Stone," "a Corner-foundation;" "and the [one] believing in Him shall not be ashamed, never!" Then to you who believe [belongs] the preciousness. But to disobeying ones, [He is the] "Stone which those building rejected; this One became [the] Head of the Corner," and a Stone-of-stumbling, and a Rock-of-offense" to the [ones] stumbling, being disobedient to the Word, to which they were also appointed. But you [are] "an elect race," "a royal priesthood," "a holy nation," "a people for possession," so that "you may openly speak of the virtues" of the [One] who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; [you] who then were "not a people, but now [are] the people" of God; "the one not pitied [then] but now pitied."

We see in 1Pe 2:4 that Jesus Christ was chosen by God. We see in 1Pe 2:5 that Jesus Christ is called "an elect, precious Stone." And we see in 1Pe 2:9 that God's people are called "an elect race." Notice two other things in 1Pe 2:9. First, God's people are also called "a people for possession." This has to do with what I mentioned a little while ago, which is that Jesus Christ is POSSESSIVE of His people. He calls them "MY sheep" and says that they are "MINE." These are people who are Christ's own possession. Second, notice that at the end of this verse, it talks about the CALLING out of darkness into light. As we saw in a previous sermon, this darkness is the darkness of IGNORANCE, and this light is the light of the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God does not ELECT someone and then SAVE that person and leave that person IGNORANT of the person and work of Christ. Now look at 1Pe 2:8. Those whom God did NOT choose to salvation were APPOINTED to disobey and stumble at the word. This is no mere "passing by." This was an APPOINTMENT. Compare this with Acts 13:48 : And hearing, the nations rejoiced and glorified the Word of the Lord. And as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

These people believed because they were APPOINTED to believe, just as the reprobate do not believe because they were APPOINTED not to believe. Notice that the Bible does not say, "as

many as believed were appointed to eternal life." It says, "as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." Remember what Jesus said about those Jews in John 10:1-42 They did not believe BECAUSE they were not of Christ's sheep. Again, notice that election and belief are connected. What is this BELIEF to which the elect are predestinated? Belief of the TRUTH. What is this UNBELIEF to which the reprobate are predestinated? Unbelief of the TRUTH. And the truth is the gospel.

Now let's turn to Rom 9:1-33. Let's start with Rom 9:9-24 : For the Word of promise [is] this, "According to this time I will come, and a son will be to Sarah." And not only so, but also Rebekah conceiving of one, our father Isaac, for [the children] not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of the [One] calling, it was said to her, "The greater shall serve the lesser;" even as it has been written, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." What then shall we say? [Is there] not unrighteousness with God? Let it not be! For He said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will pity whomever I will pity." So, then, [it is] not of the [one] willing, nor of the [one] running, but of the [One] showing mercy, of God. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very thing I raised you up, so that I might display My power in you, and so that My name might be publicized in all the earth." So, then, to whom He desires, He shows mercy. And to whom He desires, He hardens. You will then say to me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? Yes, rather, O man, who are you answering against God? Shall the thing formed say to the [One] forming [it], Why did You make me like this? Or does not the potter have authority over the clay, out of the one lump to make one vessel to honor, and one to dishonor? But if God, desiring to demonstrate His wrath, and to make His power known, endured in much long-suffering vessels of wrath having been fitted out for destruction, and that He make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy which He before prepared for glory, whom He also called, not only us, of Jews, but also out of nations.

Here is a great example of unconditional election. God chooses to have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He chose the objects of mercy before they were even born, even before they had done anything good or bad. Rom 9:23 says that God PREPARED the vessels of mercy beforehand. Notice also in Rom 9:11, it says, "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works." The Holy Spirit through Paul presents two opposing views. The doctrine of election is totally contrary to salvation by works. If one does not believe in the biblical doctrine of unconditional election, he automatically believes in salvation conditioned on the sinner. If one believes in salvation conditioned on the sinner, he automatically opposes unconditional election.

Turn back a page to Rom 9:29-30 : because whom He foreknew, He also predestinated [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be [the] First-born among many brothers. But whom He predestinated, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. In Rom 9:29, when it says, "foreknew," it means "loved beforehand." God loved His people before the foundation of the world, and He predestinated out of love. Notice that he again does not talk about bare election but says that God predestinated His people to be conformed to the image of Christ. And as we see the chain of grace in this passage, we see that there are no broken links. ALL whom God foreknew, He predestined. ALL whom God predestined, He called. ALL whom God called, He justified. ALL whom God justified, He glorified. It goes all the way from eternity past to eternity future. It's all sure and certain. ALL whom God

predestined will be called, justified, and glorified. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Let's look at 2Th 2:13-14 : But we ought to thank God always concerning you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of [the] Spirit and belief of [the] truth, to which He called you through our gospel, to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God chose His people from the beginning, and not only that, He chose them to SALVATION in sanctification of the spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. There are some so-called "High Calvinists" who would say that they believe in absolute predestination but who also claim that not all who are saved believe the truth of the gospel. Let me tell you, these people know NOTHING of true, Biblical predestination and election. God predestinates His people to be called by the gospel, to be saved based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, and to KNOW that they have been saved based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Without this, predestination and election are empty doctrines of self-righteous religionists.

Lastly, let's turn to 2Ti 1:8-11 :

Then do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor [of] me, His prisoner. But suffer hardship with the gospel, according to [the] power of God, the [One] having saved us and having called [us] with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to [His] own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times, but now revealed through the appearance of our Savior, Jesus Christ, indeed making death of no effect, bringing life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed a herald and apostle and a teacher of nations.

Again, we see that God's people were chosen in eternity past. And again, we see that this choosing is in direct opposition to salvation by works. And we see that this choosing was to salvation by means of the calling of the gospel, which brings life and incorruptibility to light. As we meditate and rejoice in the precious truths of election and Christ's possession of His people, let us also rejoice that God predestines us and Christ possesses us unto knowledge and belief of the truth, so that we might glorify Him as the One who came to establish a righteousness that demands and ensures our entire salvation. Amen.

S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (6)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (6) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 10/22/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Last week, in our continuing series on Essential Gospel Doctrine, we saw who God's people are. They are the ones whom God had chosen before the foundation of the world and for whom Christ died. They, and they ALONE, are the ones to whom the gospel promise is made. God does NOT promise EVERY sinner or ANY sinner that He will save them. God promises HIS PEOPLE that He will save them. And EVERY ONE whom God chose and for whom Christ died SHALL BE SAVED, NO EXCEPTIONS.

We also touched on the WAY in which God's people are saved. God chose His people to be saved in a SPECIFIC way. It's a way that manifests all of God's attributes and gives God all the glory. This way is through the work of Christ alone. And God does not keep His people ignorant of that work when He saves them. The Bible shows in many passages that ALL whom God saves are given a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, which is revealed in the gospel.

Today, we're going to get into more detail about this work of Christ. God saves His people in a way that is consistent with His character. God does not go against one attribute in order to manifest another. Thus, His plan of salvation is a PERFECT plan. It could be NO OTHER WAY. The only way that God can be just to justify the ungodly is through the work of Christ alone.

Let's again remind ourselves of the definition of the gospel that is the basis of these studies of essential gospel doctrine. The gospel is God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. In past sermons, we have gone over "God's promise to save His people." Now we will focus on the last part of the definition: "conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone."

I first want to define what "conditioned" means. We say that God saves His people CONDITIONED on the work of Christ alone. What does it mean to CONDITION something on something else? "Condition" as a noun means "an essential requirement of." So if A is CONDITIONED on B, then A cannot happen until the requirement of B is met. In the gospel, SALVATION cannot happen unless the requirement of Christ's obedience and death is met. When we talk of those who believe in salvation CONDITIONED on the sinner, we are saying that these people believe that SALVATION cannot happen unless the requirement of the WORK OF THE SINNER is met. Are we clear on what CONDITIONED means? Okay. So the last part of the definition of the gospel goes into WHAT is the requirement for the salvation of God's people. We've already seen that God is so holy that He will not enter into communion with anyone who is not as righteous as He is. And He is so holy that He must punish everyone who does not meet up to this standard. And He is so holy that He must punish in proportion to how much offense He takes at the sin. And because of His infinite righteousness, all sin is an infinite offense to God, so all who are void of a righteousness that answers the demands of God's law and justice MUST be punished with eternal torment in hell.

We've also seen that God's people before salvation are sinners. They deserve eternal punishment. They are void of a righteousness that answers God's demand of perfect holiness. They are dead in their sins, slaves to sin, bringing forth fruit unto death, at enmity with God, unable to please God, and under God's curse. How is it, then, that God, who is absolutely holy, can bring these vile sinners into communion with Him? Some would say, "He can do it because He can do whatever He wants." But does God ever WANT to bring sinners into communion with Him at the expense of His law and justice? The answer is "NO". There are certain things that God CANNOT do. God CANNOT deny Himself. God CANNOT lie. God CANNOT do ANYTHING that is contrary to His perfect holiness and justice. How, then, does God remain perfectly holy and perfectly just when He brings sinners into communion with Him? This is where the great gospel of grace is manifested. This is where the heart of the gospel is revealed. God remains perfectly holy and perfectly just when He brings sinners into communion with him because the salvation of these sinners is conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. There is no other way. All other ways are false ways, and they only lead to death. The way of life is through Jesus Christ.

If you've heard me even for a short period of time, you know that I say "the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ" a lot. The reason I say this so much is that it is the very heart of the gospel. I'd like to separate out the two aspects of Christ's work and go over each of them separately.

First, let's go over the ATONING BLOOD of Christ. But before we go into what Christ's blood accomplished, we must first go over the concept of IMPUTATION. To IMPUTE means to LEGALLY CHARGE TO THE ACCOUNT OF. Another word for impute is COUNT. The sins of all God's people were IMPUTED or COUNTED to Jesus Christ. This was typified in the Old Testament in the sacrifice of atonement. Let's turn to Lev 16:1-34. Let's read Lev 16:2-22. Pay attention to how imputation and atonement are connected: And Jehovah said to Moses, Speak to your brother Aaron, and he shall not come in at all times to the sanctuary within the veil, to the front of the mercy-seat. With this Aaron shall come into the sanctuary: with a bull, a son of the herd, for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall put on a holy linen coat, and linen underpants shall be on his flesh, and he shall gird himself with a linen girdle, and he shall wrap himself in a linen miter; they [are] holy garments. And he shall bathe his flesh with water and shall put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. And Aaron shall bring near the bull of the sin offering which [is] his own, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his house. And he shall take the two he-goats and shall cause them to stand before Jehovah, [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall give lots over the two he-goats, one lot for Jehovah, and one lot for a complete removal. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the lot of Jehovah fell and shall make it a sin offering. And the goat on which the lot fell for a complete removal shall be made to stand living before Jehovah to atone by it, to send it away for a complete removal into the wilderness. And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering which [is] his own, and shall atone for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bull of the sin offering which [is] his own. And he shall take a censer full of coals of the fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of fragrant perfumes beaten small, and bring [it] within the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before Jehovah, and the cloud of the incense shall cover the mercy-seat on the

testimony; and he shall not die. And he shall take [some] of the blood of the bull, and shall sprinkle with his finger on the front of the mercy-seat eastward. And he shall sprinkle at the front of the mercy-seat seven times from the blood with his finger. And he shall kill the goat of the sin offering which [is] the people's, and shall bring in its blood to the inside of the veil, and shall do with its blood as he has done with the blood of the bull, and shall sprinkle it on the mercy-seat, and at the front of the mercy-seat. And he shall atone for the sanctuary because of the pollutions of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions for all their sins. And so he shall do for the tabernacle of the congregation dwelling in the midst of their pollutions. And not any man shall be in the tabernacle of the congregation as he goes in to atone in the sanctuary, until he comes out. And he shall atone for himself, and for his house, and for all the congregation of Israel. And he shall go out to the altar before Jehovah, and shall atone for it. And he shall take [some] of the blood of the bull, and [some] of the blood of the goat, and shall put [it] on the horns of the altar all around. And he shall sprinkle on it from the blood with his finger seven times, and shall cleanse it, and shall purify it from the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel. And when he has finished atoning [for] the sanctuary, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, and has brought near the living goat; then Aaron shall lay his two hands on the head of the living goat, and shall confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions, and all their sins, and shall put them on the head of the goat, and shall send [it] by the hand of a chosen man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear on him all their iniquities to a land cut off. And he shall send the goat away into the wilderness.

Now this is a rich passage of Scripture, and I can't go into it all right now. I'd love to preach on this chapter some time. But for now, let's look at one aspect of this passage. We see that there were two goats. In Lev 16:15-16, one of the goats is killed as a sin offering for the people of Israel. You see - it is FOR the people of Israel. The goat was killed FOR the sins of Israel. This is a picture of IMPUTATION. And it is even clearer when it talks about the second goat in Lev 16:21-22 Aaron put his hands on the head of the goat and confessed the sins of Israel. This confession of sins with the laying on of hands typifies the sins of God's people being charged to the account of Jesus Christ. Let's read Lev 16:22 again: And the goat shall bear on him all their iniquities to a land cut off. And he shall send the goat away into the wilderness. The goat BEARS all the sins of Israel. This is imputation. We even see in the Old Testament how this is a direct picture of Christ BEARING the sins of His people. Let's turn to Isa 53:1-12 and read Isa 53:4-5 and Isa 53:10-12 :

Surely He has borne our sicknesses, and He carried our pain; yet we esteemed Him plagued, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; [He was] bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His wounds we ourselves are healed. ... But Jehovah pleased to crush Him, to make Him sick, [so that] If He should put His soul as a guilt offering, He shall see [His] seed; He shall prolong [His] days; and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. He shall see [the fruit] of the travail of His soul; He shall be fully satisfied. By His knowledge the righteous One, My Servant, shall justify for many, and He shall bear their iniquities. Because of this I will divide to Him with the great, and with the strong He shall divide the spoil; because He poured out His soul to death; and [He] was counted with those transgressing; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for those transgressing.

Jesus Christ BORE the transgression of His people. The sins of His people were IMPUTED to Him. Jesus Christ actually became GUILTY by imputation. He remained perfect in His character

and conduct, but He was counted guilty because sin was imputed to Him. 2Co 5:21 says that Jesus Christ was actually MADE SIN for us.

Now let's get into the atonement. You can already see by the passages in Leviticus and Isaiah how imputation and atonement are connected. If Christ atoned without imputation, then he must have either atoned for no one or atoned for Himself. We know that both of these are impossible. In order to make atonement, Christ must be the SUBSTITUTE and REPRESENTATIVE of a certain number of people.

What is ATONEMENT? It is reconciliation. What does it mean to RECONCILE? To RECONCILE means "to restore to friendship or harmony." Jesus Christ, when He suffered, bled, and died, restored friendship between God and those for whom Christ died. How was this friendship restored? Jesus suffered the just punishment for the sins of all His people; God's wrath was poured out on Jesus; and God's wrath was appeased. Let's turn to Rom 5:10-11 : For if [while] being enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life; and not only [so], but also glorying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now received the reconciliation. This reconciliation is atonement. Let's now turn to 2Co 5:18-19 : And all things [are] from God, the [One] having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and having given to us the ministry of reconciliation, as, that God was in Christ reconciling [the] world to Himself, not charging their deviations to them, and having put the Word of reconciliation in us.

God restored friendship between His people and Himself through Jesus Christ, not charging their trespasses to His people, but instead charging their trespasses to Christ, who suffered the just punishment that their sins deserved. Let's turn to Eph 2:14-16 : For He is our peace, He making us both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, in His flesh causing to cease the enmity, the Law of the commandments in decrees, that He might in Himself create the two into one new man, making peace, and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, slaying the enmity in Himself.

Jesus Christ stopped the enmity and made peace between us and God. He killed the enmity between us and God through Himself, who took all the wrath that we deserved and suffered the torment that we deserved in order to reconcile us to God. The Bible uses other words to describe what Christ accomplished on the cross. In the first sermon in this series on the gospel, I went over PROPITIATION, REDEMPTION, and JUSTIFICATION. All are tied into atonement. One can't be present without the other.

Let's consider the BLOOD for a little while. It is the atoning BLOOD of Christ. We hear about the BLOOD from every religionist who comes in the name of Christianity. But why is BLOOD a necessary part of the gospel?

Let's first turn to Lev 17:11 : For the life of the flesh [is] in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar, to atone for your souls; for it [is] the blood which makes atonement for the soul. The LIFE is in the blood, and it is the BLOOD that makes atonement. Let's now turn to Heb 9:22 : And almost all things are purified by blood according to the Law; and apart from shedding of blood no remission occurs. This is a powerful statement. There is NO REMISSION without the shedding of blood. REMISSION means "a releasing of the guilt or penalty of." Notice here that it does not just

say "blood"; it says "SHEDDING of blood." This blood actually has to be SHED for remission. Why? Well, first, let's think about what Lev 17:11 said. The LIFE is in the blood. Thus, the SHEDDING of blood is the pouring out of one's life. We know that if someone loses too much blood, he will die. Christ's shed blood means that Christ died. But is that all it means? Well, we know that people die of things other than shedding too much blood. So why did Christ have to die a bloody death? Why did blood have to come out of His body? Let's look up Heb 9:12-21 : nor through the blood of goats and of calves, but through [His] own blood, [He] entered once for all into the [Holy of] Holies, having procured everlasting redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and ashes of a heifer sprinkling those having been defiled, sanctifies to the purity of the flesh, by how much more the blood of Christ (who through [the] eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God), will purify your conscience from dead works, to serve [the] living God! And because of this He is Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having occurred for redemption of transgressions under the first covenant, those being called might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance. For where a covenant [is], the death of him having covenanted must be offered. For a covenant [is] affirmed over [those] dead, since it never has force when he who has covenanted [is] living. From which neither the first [covenant] was dedicated without blood. For [when] every command had been spoken according to Law by Moses to all the people, having taken the blood of the calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and he sprinkled both the scroll and all the people, saying, "This [is] the blood of the covenant which God enjoined to you." And he likewise sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the service vessels with the blood.

First, what was done in the Old Testament with the blood of the sacrifice? It was sprinkled and poured -- mostly sprinkled. So Christ's shed blood is one of the evidences that He was sacrificed. But there's more. What did this sprinkling signify? Heb 9:19-20 refer to Exo 24:8. Let's turn there. Let's go through Exo 24:6-8 : And Moses took half of the blood, and he put it in basins. And he sprinkled half of the blood on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the ears of the people. And they said, We will do all that Jehovah has spoken, and we will hear. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which Jehovah has cut with you concerning these words. This blood was sprinkled as an outward, visible seal to the people. It was an outward, visible seal of God's promise. The shed blood of Christ is an outward, visible seal of God's promise to save His people. Heb 13:20 says that Christ's blood is the "blood of the everlasting covenant." And 1Co 11:25 says that the cup in the Lord's Supper is the New Covenant in Christ's blood.

Another reason that the blood of Christ must be shed is because it is a GIVING from one to another. Christ GAVE His blood, which was His life, TO His people. Blood that stays inside a human cannot be GIVEN to another. It cannot be SPRINKLED onto another. Christ did not keep His blood to Himself. He SPRINKLED our hearts from an evil conscience, as Heb 10:22 says. He WASHED our sins by His blood, as Rev 1:5 says. His blood cleanses us from all sin, as 1Jn 1:7 says. This SPRINKLING is a PURGING; it is a CLEANSING. Christ gave up His own blood - His own life - so that we might be cleansed by that blood. Praise God!

We saw in the Old Testament how the blood and reconciliation (or atonement) were tied together. Let's look at some verses in the New Testament that tie these together.

Eph 2:13 : But now, in Christ Jesus you who then were afar off, came to be near by the BLOOD of Christ.

Earlier on in this sermon, I read verses 14 through 16, which talk about making peace and causing to cease the enmity. And verse 13 says that Christ's blood made us COME TO BE NEAR because of that reconciliation.

Col 1:20 : and through Him making peace by the BLOOD of His cross, to reconcile all things to Himself; through Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens.

Again, we see that Christ's blood makes PEACE and RECONCILES. The Bible also talks about REDEMPTION through Christ's blood. To redeem means to pay the price for a possession so as to rescue or deliver that possession.

Acts 20:28 :

Then take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit placed you [as] overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God which He purchased through [His] own BLOOD.

Eph 1:7 : in whom we have redemption through His BLOOD, the remission of deviations, according to the riches of His grace

Col 1:14 : in whom we have redemption through His BLOOD, the remission of sins;

1Pe 1:18-19 : knowing that not with corruptible things, silver or gold, were you redeemed from your worthless way of life handed down from [your] fathers, but with precious BLOOD of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot,

Rev 5:9 : And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy are You to receive the scroll, and to open its seals, because You were slain, and by Your blood purchased us to God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, The Bible also speaks of JUSTIFICATION by Christ's blood in Rom 5:9 and of SANCTIFICATION by His blood in Heb 13:12. So the BLOOD of Christ that MAKES ATONEMENT between God and His people. It is a seal of the everlasting covenant of grace. None of these verses we read say that the blood of Christ makes salvation possible for everyone. In fact, these verses clearly show that the blood of Christ ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED reconciliation, redemption, justification, and sanctification. And remember - atonement means nothing without the doctrine of IMPUTATION. Christ, as a representative and substitute, bore our sins and was made sin for us. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Praise the Lamb of God who was sacrificed, who poured out His precious blood, so that we might live. Amen.

S. Essential Gospel Doctrine (7)

ESSENTIAL GOSPEL DOCTRINE (7) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 10/29/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Turn in your Bibles to Psa 32:1-11. Let's read the whole Psalm:

Blessed [is] he whose transgression is lifted, whose sin [is] covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom Jehovah does not charge iniquity, and in whose spirit there [is] no guile. When I kept silence, then my bones became old, through my howling all day. For by day and by night Your hand [was] heavy on me; my sap was turned into the drougths of summer. Selah. I confessed my sin to You, and I have not hidden my iniquity; I said, I will confess over my transgression to Jehovah; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah. On account of this let every godly one pray to You, at a time of finding; surely, when great floods come they will not reach him. You [are] my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround [me] with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you, My eye [shall be] on you. Be not like the horse, like the mule, with no understanding; with bit and bridle his gear to be held in, [that] they do not come near you. Many sorrows [are] to the wicked; but he who trusts in Jehovah, mercy embraces him. Be glad in Jehovah and rejoice, you righteous [ones]; and all the upright in heart, shout for joy.

Today I hope to conclude our point-by-point study of the definition of the gospel. The gospel is God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. We have five words left - "imputed righteousness of Christ alone." There's a lot packed into these words, and many sermons could be preached from these words, but I'd like to preach one that touches on each of the main points of these words.

We just read Psa 32:1-11. Psa 32:11 says, "Be glad in Jehovah and rejoice, you righteous ones; and all the upright in heart, shout for joy." Now what are David and all the people of God rejoicing in? They are rejoicing that God imputes righteousness apart from works. Now someone might say, "Wait a minute. You're reading too much into this Psalm. David isn't even talking about imputed righteousness here. He's talking about his sins being covered and his NOT being charged with iniquity. How can you get imputed righteousness out of this?" Well, let's turn to Rom 4:4-8 :

Now [to one] working, the reward is not counted according to grace, but according to debt. But to the [one] not working, but believing on Him justifying the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as also David says of the blessedness of the man to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "Blessed [are] those whose lawlessnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed [the] man to whom [the] Lord will in no way charge sin."

See what it says? It says that David was talking about imputed righteousness! The word "counts" in Rom 4:6 is the same as "imputes." The King James Version translates it "imputeth." David was talking about imputed righteousness.

I've talked about imputation many times. Imputation is legally charging to one's account. Last week, I talked about the sins of Christ's people being IMPUTED to Christ, and Christ suffering the

just penalty that these sins deserved. Now I'm talking about an imputation that is in the opposite direction - something is imputed FROM Christ TO His people. Again, if imputation is to occur, there must be REPRESENTATION. Jesus Christ must be a REPRESENTATIVE of a people.

What is imputed FROM Christ TO His people? We see from Rom 4:1-25 that it is RIGHTEOUSNESS that it is imputed. What is RIGHTEOUSNESS? It is perfect obedience, or you could say, the MERIT of perfect obedience. Why is perfect obedience necessary? Why can't God accept just the best someone has to offer? It is because God is HOLY. And if you understand God's HOLINESS, you will understand that God CANNOT fellowship with ANYONE who is not as righteous as He is. So in order for any human being to fellowship with God, that human being must either be perfectly righteous in His OWN character and conduct, or he must be CHARGED with the perfect righteousness of ANOTHER human being who is perfectly righteous in His character and conduct. In either case, there has to be at least one perfect human being! Well, we can eliminate anyone who's ever sinned. That leaves only one person - a sinless human being. We know that this is Jesus Christ.

Let's go into some Scripture verses that show that Jesus Christ was sinless:

1Jn 3:5 : And you know that that [One] was revealed that He might take away our sins, and sin is not in Him.

2Co 5:21 : For He made the [One] who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become [the] righteousness of God in Him.

Heb 4:15 : For we do not have a high priest not being able to sympathize with our weaknesses but [One] having been tried in all respects according to [our] likeness, apart from sin.

Heb 7:26-28 : For such a High Priest was fitting for us: holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, and having become higher than the heavens; who has no need, as do the high priests, to offer sacrifices day by day, first for His own sins, then for those of the people. For He did this once for all, offering up Himself. For the Law makes men high priests who have infirmity, but the word of the oath-taking after the Law [appoints the] Son to the age, having been perfected.

Remember last week when we read from Lev 16:1-34? What did Aaron the high priest have to do before he offered sacrifices for the people? He had to make atonement for himself and his household. But Jesus Christ, the GREAT high priest, did not need to offer a sacrifice for himself, because he was already sinless!

There are other verses that talk of Christ's sinlessness in that He was a perfect sacrifice. We see all throughout the Old Testament that the one who brought a sacrifice should bring the best of the flock, one without spot or blemish. This is a type of Christ, who was untainted by sin. Let's turn to Heb 9:13-14 : For if the blood of bulls and goats, and ashes of a heifer sprinkling those having been defiled, sanctifies to the purity of the flesh, by how much more the blood of Christ (who through [the] eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God), will purify your conscience from dead works, to serve [the] living God!

Now let's turn to First Peter. Let's first look at 1Pe 1:18-19 : knowing that not with corruptible things, silver or gold, were you redeemed from your worthless way of life handed down from [your] fathers, but with precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot, Now let's

look at 1Pe 2:21-24 : For you were called to this, for even Christ suffered on our behalf, leaving behind an example for us, that you should follow His steps; "who did not sin, nor was guile found in His mouth;" who, having been reviled, did not revile in return; suffering, He did not threaten, but gave [Himself] up to Him who [was] judging righteously; who "Himself carried up in His body our sins" onto the tree; that dying to sins, we might live to righteousness, of whom "BY His wound you were healed." So Jesus was totally sinless. And not only was He totally sinless; He was a totally sinless MAN. Jesus Christ was fully human. Mat 1:25, Luk 2:7, and Gal 4:4 clearly show that he was born of a woman. Matthew and Luke say that he was a child and grew up, just like any of us. Jesus got hungry and thirsty and tired and sleepy, just like any of us. In fact, 1Jn 4:3 says that anyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. Jesus came in the flesh, a flesh just like ours, and had all the same bodily needs that we do. Yet, UNLIKE any of us, He did all this without sin. And it HAD to be this way, or else there would be no imputed righteousness. The merit of Christ's perfect obedience to God's Law is charged to His people, and His people are counted perfectly righteous. Christ also had to be a human because a HUMAN must be punished for the sins of HUMANS. Just as Christ was our representative and substitute in His life, He was our representative and substitute in His death. And since sin demands death, and God cannot die, Jesus Christ HAD to be a human who could and did die. He HAD to be a human who could and did pour out His blood. He HAD to be a human who could and did rise again from the dead, giving resurrection life to us. The humanity of Christ is an essential gospel doctrine. But not only was Jesus Christ human, He was also God. And He HAD to be God. He HAD to be God because only GOD can forgive sin. Only GOD can deliver us from the power of sin and death. Only GOD is without sin. Only GOD can satisfy His own justice. And only GOD can sanctify the offering. We see in Mat 1:18-20 and Luk 1:35 that Jesus Christ was conceived by God the Holy Spirit. We see in Isa 7:14 and Luk 1:34 that Jesus Christ's mother had not had sexual relations with any man before Christ was born. Isa 9:6 says that Jesus Christ is THE MIGHTY GOD. John 1:1; John 1:14 says that the Word was God and became flesh and dwelled among us. Tit 2:13 says that Jesus Christ is our great God and Savior. Jesus said in John 10:30 that He and God the Father are ONE. John 1:14; John 1:18, John 3:16; John 3:18, Heb 1:5; Heb 5:5; Heb 11:17, and 1Jn 4:9 say that Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of God. And 1Jn 4:15 says that whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God is regenerate. The deity of Christ is an essential gospel doctrine.

Jesus Christ HAD to be a GOD-MAN. He HAD to be one person with two distinct natures: a divine nature and a human nature. He HAD to be both of these AT ONCE because He HAD to be the MEDIATOR between God and men - the only One who could go between God and man. Let's turn to 1Ti 2:5-6 : For God [is] one, also [there is] one Mediator of God and of men, [the] Man Christ Jesus, the [One] having given Himself a ransom on behalf of all, the testimony [to be given] in its own time, Who can make peace between Holy God and sinful man? Only a GOD-MAN MEDIATOR. So we see in the gospel how God is just to justify the ungodly. The key is in the God-Man Mediator. The sins of His people were imputed to Him, and He suffered the just penalty of those sins. His righteousness is imputed to His people, and His people are counted righteous. God then remains just, remains holy, remains undefiled, because He is communing and fellowshiping with those whose sins have already been punished and those who are righteous by imputation. So we've gone into imputed righteousness, and we've gone into the person of Christ. And last week, we went into the atoning blood. But let's not forget the last word of the definition of

the gospel. The last word of the definition is a very important word. That word is "ALONE". God saves His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. There are so many false gospels out there that say "the work of Christ - PLUS" or "the blood of Christ - PLUS." Well, my friends, if a "PLUS" is added to the equation, then it is no longer the true gospel of grace. The atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ MUST demand the salvation of ALL whom He represented WITHOUT ANY CONTRIBUTION FROM THE SINNER. Look again at Rom 4:4, which we read right at the beginning:

Now [to one] working, the reward is not counted according to grace, but according to debt.

If salvation is conditioned in ANY WAY to ANY DEGREE on the works of the sinner, then God is NOT showing grace; instead, the sinner has obligated God to save him. God would owe a debt to that sinner. And that god is an idol. Look at Rom 11:6 : But if by grace, no longer [is it] of works; else grace no longer becomes grace. But if of works, it is no longer grace; else work is no longer work.

Grace is NOT REALLY grace if the works of the sinner are introduced as forming ANY part of the ground of his salvation. And we have seen in this series that salvation does not only include initial regeneration and conversion; it includes being preserved throughout one's lifetime and being brought to final glory. If someone conditions ANY PART of salvation, from regeneration to final glory, on ANYTHING that proceeds from the sinner, then what they call "grace" is actually no grace at all. It's a system of works, and it's an abomination to God. In Gal 5:2, Paul says that if one is circumcised thinking that this forms at least some part of the ground of his salvation or acceptance before God, Christ will profit him nothing. It is Christ's work ALONE that is the ground of all salvation and all blessing. Why is it that God's people cannot lose their salvation? Because no one can undo what Christ has done. If one believes that he can lose his salvation, he does not believe in the finished work of Christ. If one believes that he cannot lose his salvation, BUT ALSO believes that his everlasting habitations are based on his present stewardship, he does not believe in the finished work of Christ. Our works form NO PART of our initial salvation, our being kept saved, our being blessed, our being recommended unto God, or our right to inherit the kingdom.

Let's turn to John 19:28-30 :

After this, knowing that all things have now been finished that the Scripture be completed, Jesus said, I thirst. Then a vessel full of vinegar was set, and having filled a sponge [with] vinegar, and putting hyssop around, they brought [it] to His mouth. Then when Jesus took the vinegar, He said, It has been finished. And bowing [His] head, [He] delivered up the spirit.

It is finished! There is no work for the sinner to do for salvation! To say that there IS still work for the sinner to do for salvation would be to say, "It is NOT finished" and to call the blessed Lord Jesus a liar. But we who are Christ's people, Christ's sheep, Christ's church - those who have been given by God the Father to God the Son, for whom Jesus led a perfect life and died on the cross - WE know that it is finished. We have a Sabbath rest, as Hebrews 4 says, because God has caused us to rest from our works and to trust in Jesus Christ ALONE for ALL of our salvation. The gospel is GOOD NEWS. It is a PROMISE. It is an UNCONDITIONAL PROMISE. It is a PROMISE from GOD, who KEEPS His promises, who is a JUST God and a SAVIOR. It is a PROMISE from GOD to SAVE, to rescue, to deliver, to preserve. It is a PROMISE from GOD to SAVE HIS

PEOPLE, those who have been chosen from before the foundation of the world, those for whom Christ died. It is a PROMISE from GOD to SAVE HIS PEOPLE CONDITIONED ON THE ATONING BLOOD AND IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST ALONE, with no contribution from the sinner in any way to any degree. This atoning blood and imputed righteousness DEMANDS the justification, sanctification, and glorification of ALL whom Christ represented, ALL for whom He lived and died, NO EXCEPTIONS. Jesus Christ finished the work. Let's turn to Heb 10:11-14 to close: And indeed every priest stands day by day ministering, and often offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But He, offering but one sacrifice for sins, "sat down" in perpetuity "[at the] right [hand]" of God, from then on expecting "until His enemies are placed [as] a footstool" of His feet. For by one offering He has perfected in perpetuity the ones being sanctified.

Amen.

S. God Hates Certain People

GOD HATES CERTAIN PEOPLE (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 2/18/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to Psa 5:1-12. I'll be reading Psa 5:4-6 : For You [are] not a God enjoying wickedness; nor shall evil live with You. The boasters shall not set themselves before Your eyes. You hate all workers of iniquity. You shall destroy those speaking lies; Jehovah will despise the man of blood and deceit. This is the second sermon in a series entitled "What God Hates." This is the first sermon that specifically goes into what the Bible says God hates. Today, the Lord willing, we'll be going over the awesome and sobering truth that God hates certain people. This is a subject that is sure to rouse anger among most professing Christians. They would consider it blasphemy to say that the God of love hates some people. But as we saw last week, God hates because God is love. God loves Himself, and all who are wicked God hates. As we see in Psa 5:5, God hates all workers of iniquity. The word translated "iniquity" means evil, wickedness, nothingness, or vanity. So God hates the workers of wickedness. Now some false religionists say, "God loves the sinner, but He hates the sin." But look at what the second part of Psa 5:5 says. Does it say, "You hate all iniquity?" No, it doesn't say that, although that is true. It says, "You hate all WORKERS of iniquity." Who or what are WORKERS? Are they plants? Are they emotions? Are they rocks? Are they concepts? No - these WORKERS are PEOPLE. They are HUMAN BEINGS. God hates HUMAN BEINGS who work iniquity. So we need to see right from the outset that God is a HATER of WICKED PEOPLE. He doesn't just hate the wickedness and love the people; He hates the people. In Psa 5:5-6, God gives us a description of the people He hates and what some particular acts of iniquity are. In the first part of Psa 5:5, God talks about BOASTERS as those who are wicked. Again, we see that God doesn't just say that He hates boasting and loves the person boasting. God hates boastERS. So what is a boaster? The Hebrew word comes from "ha-LAL", which means "to shine" or "to glory." A boaster is a "shiner," or "one who makes a show." He is a "glorier," or one who glories in himself. He is one who boasts in his own strength. He boasts of his own righteousness as forming some or all of the ground of his salvation. He boasts of his reforming and abstaining and obeying as that which recommends him to God. He glories in his own works as that which make the difference between him and the unsaved. Do you want to know how to find out what a person glories in? You just have to find out what he thinks makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell. Now if you go up to a religionist who calls himself a Christian and ask him what makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell, what's he going to say? Of course, he's going to say, "Jesus Christ." But this is just a deceptive cloak. What you really need to ask him is if Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception. If he says "yes," then you KNOW wherein he glories. He believes that Jesus Christ died for those in heaven and those in hell. Thus, he believes that it is NOT the work of Jesus Christ ALONE that makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell; instead, he believes that it is the work of the SINNER that makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell. Thus, he boasts in, he glories in, the work of the SINNER. And since he thinks he's saved, he is glorying in HIS OWN WORKS as what makes him to differ between himself and other sinners. He believes that it is his FAITH or his REPENTANCE or his PERSEVERANCE or his GOOD DEEDS that

make the difference. He is a boaster, and God hates him. Let me make it very clear: GOD HATES all who believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception. In contrast to those who boast in or glory in themselves, true Christians are ones who boast in or glory in the cross of Christ. Let's turn to Gal 6:14 : But may it never be for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. The CROSS OF CHRIST is the only thing we glory in! We glory in the cross because we KNOW that it is what makes the ONLY difference between heaven and hell! We KNOW that the cross of Christ demands and ensures the salvation of EVERY SINGLE PERSON WITHOUT EXCEPTION for whom Christ died! We know that ALL those for whom Christ died on the cross WILL BE SAVED. We know that the cross of Christ is the ONLY ground of our salvation! Thus, we glory in the cross.

Now let's look back at Psa 5:6 :

You shall destroy those speaking lies; Jehovah will despise the man of blood and deceit.

How else are wicked people described in the first part of the verse? They are described as "those speaking lies." This is easy to understand. God hates liars. A liar is one whose life is characterized by lying. Now lying comes in many forms. Lying includes saying that something is true that one knows is not true, such as parents telling children that Santa Claus comes to bring them presents. And parents who tell their children such things are liars. God hates those parents. But the ultimate lie is about the gospel. Anyone who proclaims a false gospel is a liar. He is lying about the most important thing in the world - the ground of salvation. God hates all such liars.

Now look at the second part of the verse. We see that God speaks of "the man of blood and deceit." The reason blood and deceit are mentioned together here is that they form one concept. A wicked man deceives so as to kill. To deceive is to speak a lie or to do something deceptive in order for the victim to be put in a vulnerable position where it is easy to kill that person. God hates those who do such things. He hates all murderers. Yet there is a gospel significance to this as well. Think of the preachers who preach false gospels. They deceive the people by speaking the false gospel to them and by speaking peace to them. And by doing this, they are murdering the souls of men. This includes the Arminians who preach that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, and it includes the Calvinists who preach that Arminians should be accepted as brothers. God hates such soul-murderers.

Let's turn to Psa 11:5 :

Jehovah tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one loving violence.

Again, we see that God hates the wicked, not just the wickedness. And he describes a kind of wicked person, which is the lover of violence. This, too, can have a spiritual significance like the one I just stated, but we also should not forget the physical significance. God hates those who love violence. This includes those who ARE violent and those who ENJOY violence who are not necessarily physically violent. What is violence? The Hebrew word is kah-MAHS, which means cruelty, maltreatment, damage, violation, or oppression. One who loves to hurt others is violent. One who enjoys watching someone hurt others is violent. Let me bring it right home: those who love watching violent movies or television shows are violent. If you enjoy watching a murder or a beating, whether it is real or acted, you love violence. We Christians must abhor such things. You might say that you don't love the violence in the show, but you watch the show anyway. Although

this is not necessarily love of violence, Christians should not be filling their minds with such things.

Let's go over to Proverbs to see what more God says about this. Let's first turn to Pro 3:32 : For the perverse one [is] hateful to Jehovah, but His intimacy [is] with the righteous.

Now let's read Pro 11:20 :

Hateful to Jehovah [are] the perverse hearted, but His delight [is] the upright in way. The word "hateful" is translated "an abomination" in the King James Version. The Hebrew word for "perverse" comes from LOOZ, which means "to turn aside." Those who are perverse do not walk in the straight paths of righteousness. They go their own way, which is not the prescribed way. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." The perverse are ones who try to come to the Father by another way. They try to come by their own righteousness. God hates them. Notice that God does not here say that God hates perversion, which He does; God says that God hates the ONE - the PERSON - who is perverse.

Let's turn to Pro 16:5 :

Everyone proud in heart [is] disgusting to Jehovah; [though] hand [join] in hand he shall not be innocent.

One who is proud in heart is one who is a boaster or a gloryer in himself, which we went over. Now over to Pro 12:22 :

Lying lips [are] hateful to Jehovah, but those who deal faithfulness [are] His delight.

Lying lips come from a liar, which we also went over. Now let's turn to Pro 17:15 :

He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, even both of them [are] disgusting to Jehovah.

Here God shows that two kinds of people are hateful or an abomination to Him: those who say that the wicked are not guilty, and those who say the just are guilty. Now why would people who do these things be an abomination to God? Well, think about the sermon I preached last week. God is holy. God is totally righteous and just. The reason he hates those who would let the wicked go unpunished is that God NEVER lets the guilty go unpunished. According to God's holy justice, the guilty MUST BE punished, no exceptions. God says in Exo 34:7 that he will by no means clear the guilty. Anyone who says that a guilty person is innocent and lets the guilty go unpunished is an abomination to God. The same goes for one who says that an innocent person is guilty and punishes the innocent person. God's holy justice demands that the innocent not be punished. Now some of you are probably thinking about the same thing I'm about to say. What about God not punishing some who sin, and what about God punishing Jesus Christ, who was without sin? How can it be said that these things are NOT an abomination to Him? The answer lies in IMPUTATION. God does not punish those who have Christ's righteousness imputed to them. In fact, because Christ's perfect righteousness is legally charged to the account of His people, God would be unjust to punish them! He would be condemning the just, which He cannot do. On the other side, the sins of all of the elect were legally charged to Jesus Christ on the cross, so God was just to punish Christ. In fact, God would have been unjust to NOT punish Him.

Now let's turn to Rom 9:1-33. I'll read Rom 9:6-13 :

Not, however, that God's Word has failed. For not all those of Israel [are] Israel, nor because they are Abraham's seed are all children, but "In Isaac a Seed shall be called to you." That is: Not the children of flesh [are] children of God, but the children of the promise [are] counted for a seed. For the Word of promise [is] this, "According to this time I will come, and a son will be to Sarah." And not only so, but also Rebekah conceiving of one, our father Isaac, for [the children] not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of the [One] calling, it was said to her, "The greater shall serve the lesser;" even as it has been written, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau."

Rom 9:13 comes from Mal 1:2-3. Here, God NAMES the person He hated. He hated Esau. Now I want you to think about this: WHY did God hate Esau? FOR WHAT REASON did God hate Esau? Well, the first answer someone might think of is that Esau was a sinner. And it's true that Esau was a sinner. But God gives the ultimate reason in Rom 9:11 : for [the children] not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of the [One] calling,

God hated Esau before Esau had done anything bad! God had DECREED, had CHOSEN to hate Esau before the foundation of the world! This is called reprobation. Not only did God choose to have a people for Himself, He also chose to damn everyone else. God is not a reactionary God. He does not love or hate in reaction to the actions of His creatures. This would make him a changeable god. God's love and hate have been PLANNED from BEFORE He created the world. The verse we just read says that He hated Esau "that the purpose of God according to election might stand"! It had to do with His election of Jacob and His reprobation of Esau. This is quite a truth, isn't it? And God's people will bow to this truth.

Finally, we need to understand that WE, the people of God, are to hate what God hates. We have seen that God hates certain people. And WE are to hate certain people. We are to hate the wicked, the boasters, the liars, those of deceit and blood, those who love violence, those who are perverse, those who justify the guilty and condemn the just. Turn over to Psa 139:19-22. Remember that these words are expressing perfect concepts, because David was writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

Surely You will slay the wicked, O God; and men of blood will turn away from me. Who will maliciously speak against You? Your enemies are lifted up with vanity. O Jehovah, do not I hate those hating You? And am I [not] detesting those rising against You? I hate them [with] a perfect hatred; they have become my enemies.

David here speaks of the wicked, the bloody men, those who speak maliciously against God, those who are lifted up with vanity, those who hate God, those who are God's enemies, and those who are David's enemies, meaning those who are enemies against the people of God. And David, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks for all of God's people when He says, "I hate them with a perfect hatred." But some of you might be already thinking, "What about where Jesus says to LOVE your enemies? Isn't that a command to NOT HATE your enemies?" Let's turn over to Mat 5:43-44 :

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor" and hate your enemy; but I say to you, Love your enemies; bless those cursing you, do well to those hating you; and pray for those abusing and persecuting you,

Now how do Psa 139:1-24 and Mat 5:1-48 jibe? Didn't Jesus say that YOU HAVE HEARD to hate your enemies, BUT I SAY to love your enemies? Let's think about this. Where had the crowd heard to hate their enemies? Look over at Mat 5:27 :

You have heard that it was said to the ancients: "Do not commit adultery." Where had the crowd heard to not commit adultery? From the Bible! Jesus said, YOU HAVE HEARD to not commit adultery, BUT I SAY. Was Jesus contradicting the law not to commit adultery? Was He saying that it was no longer a law that was to be kept? No. He was saying that they had misinterpreted and misused this law. The same goes for hating one's enemy. They had misused it. They had used it to justify doing harm or not doing good to their enemies. But Jesus said that they are to LOVE their enemies. Let's go back to Psa 139:22 :

I hate them [with] a perfect hatred; they have become my enemies.

What does it mean to hate in the first part of this verse? God gives us the answer in the second part of the verse. It means to count someone as an enemy. Are Christians to count the God-haters as their enemies? Of course they are. Now back to Mat 5:44 : but I say to you, Love your enemies;

Jesus says "enemies," doesn't he? So he is confirming that we are to count them as our enemies, which is the same as hating them in Psa 139:1-24. And how are we to behave towards our enemies, towards those we hate? We are to love them. And, as we have seen before in love toward the unregenerate, this means that we are to have their well-being in mind and to act accordingly. We are not to harm them or wish to harm them; we are not to seek revenge. We are to bless them, and do well to them, and to pray for them. They are still our enemies, and we are to hate them as such. But our hatred of them does NOT mean that we are to seek to harm them. We are to love them by doing good to them and praying for them. And one of the ways in which we do good to them is to tell them that they are lost and their deeds are evil. We do not tell them this out of malice, but out of love, because we seek the best for them. I hope that helps. In the rest of this series, the Lord willing, we will be going into specific sins that God says He hates. But let us always keep in mind that God hates the PEOPLE who do such things. And let us always keep in mind that we are to hate what God hates, as we seek to become conformed to the perfect standard of Christ's righteousness in our character and conduct, NOT to attain or maintain salvation, but out of love to God, realizing that we are ALREADY righteous in our persons because of the imputed righteousness of Christ. Amen.

S. God Hates False Religion

What God Hates (IV) GOD HATES FALSE RELIGION (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 3/18/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to Deu 12:1-32. I'll be reading the entire chapter:

These [are] the statutes and the ordinances which you shall take heed to do in the land which Jehovah the God of your fathers has given to you, to possess it, all the days that you live on the earth: Destroying you shall destroy all the places where the nations which you are dispossessing served their gods, on the high mountains, and on the hills, and under every leafy tree. And you shall break down their altars, and shatter their standing pillars. And you shall burn their Asherahs with fire. And you shall cut down the carved images of their gods, and shall destroy their names out of that place. You shall not do so to Jehovah your God. But you shall seek to the place which Jehovah your God shall choose out of all your tribes; for you shall seek His dwelling, to put His name there. And you shall go there. And you shall bring your burnt offerings there, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offering, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock. And you shall eat there before Jehovah your God, and shall rejoice in all that you put your hand to, you and your households, with which Jehovah your God has blessed you. You shall not do according to all that we [are] doing here today, each [doing] all that [is] right in his own eyes. For you have not come to the rest and to the inheritance which Jehovah your God [is] giving to you. And you shall cross over the Jordan, and shall live in the land which Jehovah your God is causing you to inherit. And He shall give you rest from all your enemies all around; and you shall live securely. And it shall be the place which Jehovah your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, there you shall bring all that I [am] commanding you, your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice freewill offerings which you vow to Jehovah. And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons, and your daughters, and your male slaves, and your female slaves, and the Levite within your gates because he has no portion or inheritance with you. Take heed to yourself that you not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which Jehovah shall choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command. Only with all the desire of your soul you shall sacrifice and shall eat flesh within all your gates according to the blessing of Jehovah your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean one may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the hart. Only, you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it as water on the earth. You are not able to eat the tithe of your grain within your gates, and of your new wine, and your oil, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock, and any of your vows which you vow, and your freewill offering, and the heave offering of your hand. But you shall eat it before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God shall choose, you and your son, and your daughter, and your male slave, and your female slave, and the Levite who [is] within your gates. And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all that you put your hand [to]. Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live on the land. Then Jehovah your God shall enlarge your border, as He has

promised you, and you shall say, I will eat flesh, because your soul desires to eat flesh, you may eat flesh according to all the desire of your soul. If the place which Jehovah your God shall choose to put His name there is too far from you, then you shall kill of your herd and of your flock which Jehovah has given you, as I have commanded you; and you shall eat within your gates according to all the desire of your soul. Only, as the gazelle and the hart are eaten, so you shall eat of it; the unclean and the clean may eat of it alike. Only, be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood [is] the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh; You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth as water. You shall not eat it in order that it may be well with you and with your sons after you, when you do that which [is] right in the eyes of Jehovah. Only, your holy things which you have, and your vows, you shall take up and shall go to the place which Jehovah shall choose. And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, on the altar of Jehovah your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out by the altar of Jehovah your God; and you shall eat the flesh. Take heed to listen to all these Words which I am commanding you, in order that it may be well with you and with your sons after you forever, when you do that which [is] good and right in the eyes of Jehovah your God. When Jehovah your God shall cut off the nations from before you, where you are going in to possess them, and you shall possess them, and shall live in their land, take heed to yourself that you not be snared to follow them after they have been destroyed before you; and that you not inquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? And I shall do so, even I. You shall not do so to Jehovah your God; for everything hateful to Jehovah, which He detests, they have done to their gods. For they have even burned their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods. All the things that I command you, take heed to do them and you shall not add to it, nor take away from it.

Today, if the Lord wills it, we'll be going over something that God says He hates that is mentioned more times in Scripture than anything else He says He hates. The title of this sermon is, "GOD HATES FALSE RELIGION." God HATES false religion. If you look through the Scriptures to find passages about what God hates and what is an abomination to Him, you will not find anything that is mentioned more often than religion. As we have seen before, God is a JEALOUS God and demands glory. When someone believes in and worships a god that is not how the TRUE God describes Himself, or when someone worships in a way in which the TRUE God does not prescribe, or when someone tolerates or joins in with those who do not worship the true God, then it is an ABOMINATION to Him.

We see in Deu 12:1-32 that God prescribed the way in which the Old Testament church was to deal with false religion and the way in which they were to worship. Of course, the Pentateuch is full of prescriptions for worship; Deu 12:1-32 is one example. Now note Deu 12:30-31 : take heed to yourself that you not be snared to follow them after they have been destroyed before you; and that you not inquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? And I shall do so, even I. You shall not do so to Jehovah your God; for everything hateful to Jehovah, which He detests, they have done to their gods. For they have even burned their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

God says that they are not to worship the gods of the nations that they will conquer, because these nations were doing what is HATEFUL to God. They did not worship the true and living God. They worshiped idols. They did what God DETESTS. And if the Jews went in and did what the heathens did, then the JEWS would be doing what God detests. In Deu 7:2-5, God says this: and

when Jehovah your God shall give them up before you, and you strike them, [then] you shall utterly destroy them; you shall not cut a covenant with them, nor show mercy to them; nor shall you intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughter to his son, nor shall you take his daughter to your son. For he will turn your son away from following Me, that they may serve other gods; and the anger of Jehovah will glow against you, and He will destroy you quickly. But you shall deal with them in this way: you shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces the cult-stones; and you shall cut down their Asherahs; and you will burn their carved images with fire. The people of God were not to intermarry with them, and they were to cut down, break down, dash in pieces, and burn their religious items. Does that sound like they were to meet them half-way or to tolerate their religion or to let their children go to their schools or to let their children at least date the children of the inhabitants of the land? No. They were to have nothing to do with the false religion of the heathen. God detests the false religion of the heathen, and he detests anyone who would welcome it or tolerate it. In fact, to MARRY someone who believes in a false religion is to SPEAK PEACE to one who believes in a false religion. And since the true people of God, the spiritual Israel, never speaks peace to those who bring a false gospel, what does this say about who a regenerate person would marry? If marrying is speaking peace, would a regenerate person ever marry someone who brings a false gospel? Think about it.

Let's read Deu 7:25-26 :

You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; and you shall not lust after the silver and gold on them, nor shall you take [it] to yourself, that you not be snared by it; for it [is] an abomination to Jehovah.

What does God think of images of deity? Is he just a little bit tolerant of them? How about just as a decoration? Was it okay for the Israelites to appreciate the culture of the inhabitants by decorating their houses with heathen images? No - they were to be utterly destroyed, because God says He hates them. He calls an idol an abomination. He talks about bringing an ABOMINATION into the house. Interesting wording, isn't it? When you bring an idol into the house, you bring an ABOMINATION into the house. And what does it say about those who DO bring an abomination into the house? They, too become an ABOMINATION! Psa 115:8 says that the ones who trust in idols are like the idols themselves. The end of Deu 7:26 says what I've been saying throughout this series - we are to hate what God hates. If God detests it, then WE detest it. If God hates it, then WE hate it. If God considers it a cursed thing, then WE consider it a cursed thing. God pronounces a CURSE in Isa 5:20 on those who call evil good and good evil. To call an abomination to God good is to be an abomination yourself.

Let's turn over to Deu 18:9-12 : When you come to the land which Jehovah your God is giving to you, you shall not learn to do according to the hateful acts of those nations. There shall not be found in you one who passes his son or his daughter through the fire, one that uses divination, an observer of clouds, or one divining, or a whisperer of spells, or a magic charmer, or one consulting mediums, or a spirit-knower, or one inquiring of the dead. For all doing these things [are] an abomination to Jehovah. And because of these filthy acts Jehovah your God is dispossessing these nations before you.

Again, we see what is an abomination to God. The people of God were NOT TO LEARN from the heathen. They were NOT TO LEARN how to worship by imitating the heathen. They were NOT TO

LEARN the abominable child-sacrifice practices of the heathen, which we've seen before. But look what else they were not to incorporate into their lives - magicians, psychics, fortune tellers, wizards, witches, or anything of the sort. Anything magic or occultic was to be avoided as a filthy act. Parents, do you keep yourself and your children away from magic, from wizards, witches, trolls, and other such occultic creatures? Do you consider them to be filthy? Do your children know that you consider them to be filthy? Magic and the occult abound in children's movies, toys, and books. We are to consider these things to be filthy and abominable, just as God considers them.

Turn to Amo 5:21-23 :

I hate, I despise your feast days; and I will not delight in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not be pleased; nor will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; and I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments. Do you see here what God hates? God hates their feast days. But wait a minute. Didn't God command feast days? He sure did. What else does God hate? God hates their solemn assemblies. Didn't God command solemn assemblies? He sure did. What else? God hates the burnt offerings and the grain offerings and the songs and the stringed instruments. Didn't God command all these? He sure did. And He said that those who did not follow these commands were in disobedience. So why did God say he hated their religious activities? Well, look at Amo 5:24-26 : But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Have you brought near sacrifices and food offerings to Me forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? Yea, you have lifted up the booth of your king, and Kiyyun, your images, the star of your gods which you made for yourselves!

We see here that they were not only offering God burnt offerings and sacrifices, but they also had what you might call a "side religion." They worshiped Kiyyun, which is the Arabic and Persian name for Saturn. An idol of Saturn had a star on top of it, and the astrologers called Saturn "the star of Israel." It is possible that the idolatrous Israelites used the idols of Saturn DURING their so-called "worship of God." But God is jealous for His name, His glory. He will not be one of many gods; He demands to be worshiped as the one and only true and living God.

Look at Deu 16:21-22 :

You shall not set up for yourself pillars of any trees, which you make for yourself near the altar of Jehovah your God. And you shall not raise up for yourself any standing image, which Jehovah your God detests. This is an interesting passage. The people are commanded not to set up pillars of trees beside the altar. These bunches of trees are commonly called groves. Now what's so bad about putting up some trees next to the altar? The trees aren't carved images, are they? They're just trees! Well, here's why. Many of the heathen religions of that time set up groves of trees in which they would worship their false gods. Their worship sometimes included committing all kinds of fornication and mutilation, but EVEN IF IT DID NOT include this, it was a place that was set up for false worship, and it symbolized false worship. Setting up a grove next to the altar would be mixing paganism with Judaism, false with true. You've heard of the "eclectic approach" to religion: taking a little bit from here and a little bit from there, until you come up with your own personalized spirituality. Those who set up the groves near the altar would just be a little eclectic, bringing the best of both religions. Or, as A.A. Hodge said, "Here, as everywhere else, there is essential truth on both sides of every controversy, and the real truth is the whole truth, its entire catholic body.

Arminianism in the abstract as an historical scheme is a heresy, holding half the truth. Calvinism is an historical scheme which in its best representatives comprehends the whole truth with considerable completeness. But the case is essentially different when we come to consider the great co-existing bodies of Christian people calling themselves respectively Calvinists and Arminians. Each of these parties holds all essential truth, and therefore they hold actually very much the same truth. The Arminians think and speak very much like Calvinists when they come to talk with God in either the confession of sin or the supplication for grace. They both alike in that attitude recognize the sovereignty of God and the guilt and helplessness of men. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? What room is there for anything other than essential Calvinism on one's knees? On the other hand, the Calvinist thinks and speaks like the better class of Arminians when he addresses the consciences of men, and pleads with them, as free, responsible agents, to repent and believe in Christ. The difference between the best of either class is one of emphasis rather than of essential principle. Each is the complement of the other. Each is necessary to restrain, correct, and supply the one-sided strain of the other. They together give origin to the blended strain from which issues the perfect music which utters the perfect truth." A.A. Hodge was setting up the groves of the pagans next to the altar of God. And what he comes away with isn't 80% of the truth or 50% of the truth or 30% of the truth - it is a COMPLETE LIE. A.A. Hodge brought an abomination into his house, and he showed himself to be an abomination to God.

Now what if a priest wanted to make the true religion more palatable to the pagans? What if he put the groves up, not for any significance to himself, but to make it easier for the pagans to be comfortable with the true religion so that they perhaps would hear and witness the truth and be saved? Would it be wrong for a priest to do that? It most certainly would be. In fact, he would be doing what is an abomination to God. This makes us think of the Roman Catholics and their holidays, doesn't it? Plus all those who call themselves Protestants or evangelicals or whatever who have gone along with Romanism. They find out when the pagans celebrate the birth of their god, then incorporate their version of Christianity into that by making it into a holiday to celebrate the birth of Jesus, mixing in the paganism enough to make everybody comfortable. Christmas comes from Christ-mass, which is the idolatrous Roman Catholic mass that celebrates the birth of Christ on the day that the Saxon pagans celebrated the birth of Mithra, the Sun-god. Since it was also in the middle of the winter equinox festival of Saturnalia, the feast of Saturn, they incorporated evergreen trees and exchanges of gifts, and what else? What did we see about the worship of Saturn back in Amo 5:1-27? The worship of Saturn included a STAR at the top of the idol. Does that bring anything to mind? And while papists were at it, they incorporated the occultic practices of the Nordic and Druid pagans that included yule, ivy, mistletoe, and elves. In the Spring time, the Saxon pagans celebrated the resurrection of Mithra. According to their religion, a god named Eostre opened the gates of the dead to let Mithra out. So what did the Roman Catholics do? You already know, don't you. Eostre became "Easter," to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. And they kept the pagan fertility symbols of Easter eggs and Easter bunnies in their celebration. And it goes on and on. They celebrate a day for one of their "saints" - Saint Valentine - on the day that the pagans celebrated the goddess of love, thus all the love and sex themes on Valentine's Day. It's all an abomination to God.

Okay. Thus far, we've seen that God hates the religion of the heathen and religion that mixes elements of heathenism with pseudo-Christianity. Let's now turn to another false religion God

hates. It's not heathenism or paganism. It's not unconcern and irreligion. It's not the wacko cults. Let's turn to Isa 1:10-14 :

Hear the Word of Jehovah, rulers of Sodom. Listen to the Law of our God, people of Gomorrah. What [good] to Me [are] your many sacrifices, says Jehovah? I am sated with burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fattened cattle, and the blood of bulls; nor do I delight in [the blood of] lambs and he goats. When you come to see My face, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts? Do not add to bringing vain sacrifice; [its] incense is an abomination to Me. I cannot endure the new moon and sabbath, the going to meeting, and the evil assembly. My soul hates your new moons and your appointed feasts. They are a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing [them].

God hates - he can't stand - their sacrifices, their incense, their new moon and sabbath keeping, their assemblies, and their feasts. These are ALL things that God commanded. Why did He hate the Israelites doing these things? Let's look at Isa 1:15-24 : And when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you. Yea, when you multiply prayer, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, purify yourselves. Put away the evil of your doings from My sight; stop doing evil. Learn to do good, seek justice, straighten the oppressor, judge the orphan, strive for the widow. Come now and let us reason together, says Jehovah: Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as the crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and hear, you shall eat the good of the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured [with] the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken. Oh how the faithful city has become a harlot! [She was] full of justice; righteousness lodged in it. But now, murderers! Your silver has become dross; your wine is diluted with water. Your princes [are] rebellious and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe, and is pursuing rewards. They do not judge the orphan, nor does the cause of the widow come to them, and says the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Alas! I will be eased of My foes, and avenge Myself of My enemies. The people were doing all the outward religious things, but their hearts were wicked. They were still dead in their sins. They showed this by doing evil, including not seeking justice, not reproving the oppressor, not vindicating the cause of the orphan, not pleading for the widow. They had become a whore by tolerating wicked people. These were all symptoms of hearts that did not believe in the true and living God, the one who turns scarlet, crimson sins into white-as-snow righteousness through the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Rom 9:31-33 says that Israel FOLLOWED AFTER a law of righteousness - meaning they outwardly obeyed God's commands - but they DID NOT ARRIVE at a law of righteousness, which means they were still void of a righteousness that answered the demands of God's law and justice. It says that the reason they did not arrive at a law of righteousness is because they did not have faith in Christ, meaning that they did not believe that it was the work of Christ ALONE that makes one righteous. They stumbled at the stumbling stone. Were these Israelites insincere? Was that their problem? Well, Rom 10:3 said that they were a zealous people. The Isaiah passage we're in says that they engaged in the religious practices that God commanded. Yet God still hated their zealous attempts to obey. Turn over to Pro 21:27 : The sacrifice of the wicked [is] hateful, how much more [when] he brings it with an evil intent!

Now this says the same thing about the sacrifices of the wicked as Pro 15:8, does, but it also says MORE. Look at it closely. Look at the phrase "how much more." The last part of the verse says

that bringing a sacrifice with evil intent is MORE HATEFUL than something else that is still hateful to God. What is it that is still hateful, still an abomination, to God? The sacrifice of the wicked one who is sincere!! It's the sacrifice of someone who does not believe the gospel but who has no underhanded motive for his worship! He's sincerely and zealously worshipping God the best way he knows how! Yet since it is WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE, as Rom 10:2-3 says, it is an abomination to God. And that knowledge is the knowledge that EVERY Christian receives upon regeneration and conversion. Heb 11:6 says that "without faith, it is impossible to please God." Thus, until one is given FAITH, NONE of his religious deeds are pleasing to God. Israel pursued a law of righteousness, but they did it without FAITH. And what does it mean to be without faith? Rom 10:3 states it clearly - it means to be ignorant of the righteousness of God, and thus going about to establish one's own righteousness. So we see that God hates paganism and God hates any mix of paganism and so-called worship of God, but we also see that God hates all worship that comes in the name of the true and living God that is performed by those who do not have FAITH. And those who do not have FAITH are those who are ignorant of and thus not submitted to the righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel. This includes every single person who believes that Jesus died for all without exception. They do not believe that it is the work of Christ alone that makes the difference between heaven and hell. They stumble at the stumbling stone. All of their religious worship today - all their praying, all their singing, all their Bible reading, all their preaching - no matter how sincere -- ALL OF IT is an abomination to God. God hates it.

If you're listening to this and are into some kind of pagan religion, including the Eastern religions and New Age and all that, you must know that God hates your religion. If you're a person who hates all paganism and claims to believe in the one true Christ of the Bible, and you try your best to obey God's commands in worship and daily life, yet you believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, then you must know that God hates your religion, too. If you're someone who believes that you worship the same god as those who believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, then you must know that God hates your religion, too. God commands all of you - from the pagans to the sincere evangelicals - to repent of your dead works and idolatry, and to believe in the true and living God, who gave His only begotten Son to establish a righteousness that demands the salvation of everyone whom He represented. The only TRUE faith is faith in Christ ALONE, meaning believing that God saves His people based SOLELY on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. The work of Christ is the only thing that makes the difference between heaven and hell. It's my only hope. Is it yours? Amen.

S. God Is Love

GOD IS LOVE (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 2/11/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to 1Jn 4:7-8 :

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been generated from God, and knows God. The [one] who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

Today, I'm going to be starting a series of sermons under the heading, "What God Hates." The Lord willing, in this series, we will see from the Scriptures what God says He hates. To start the series, I'm entitling today's sermon "God is Love." Now some of you listening to this might be surprised that I'm going to be preaching a sermon on the love of God in a series on the hatred of God. But the only way to truly understand God's hatred is to understand His love. The passage we just read stated that God IS love. It doesn't state that God DOES love, although that's true. And it doesn't state that God is LOVING, which is also true. It states that God IS love. It is making a specific point. It is saying that God is DEFINED BY love. Love is God's ESSENCE. Now with the way this phrase is constructed in the original, it CANNOT be said that LOVE is GOD. This needs to be made clear, because some might use this verse to make love a god. But love IS NOT God - GOD is LOVE. God is ESSENTIALLY love, and God is the SOURCE of all love.

Remember when I went over the different Greek words translated "love"? Well, the "love" in this phrase is a-GAH-pay, which has a MORAL sense to it. It's that so-called "head love" that the scholars like to put down in favor of their romantic notions of "heart love." This love is what has the best interests in mind of the object of that love.

Now how can it be that God, who IS love, HATES? Some would say that it's an impossibility, since a being whose essence is love cannot produce hatred. Thus, when they come to the passages that say that God hates, they say that it must mean that God "loves less." But then they get themselves into a mess. For if God's love is a PERFECT love, how can there be degrees of perfection? If God loves one person perfectly and loves another one less, does he love the object of His lesser love PERFECTLY? You can see where that leads.

Those who say that God, whose essence is love, cannot produce hatred, do not know the NATURE of the LOVE that God has. And they do not know the LOVE that is the NATURE of God.

What is this love? I found a definition of it that I couldn't improve on. Here it is: "Love is that spiritual bond of perfect fellowship that subsists between ethically perfect, personal beings, who, because of their ethical perfection have their delight in, seek, and find one another." So what is this saying about the love of God? WHAT or WHO is the FIRST and FOREMOST object of God's love? HIMSELF! GOD LOVES HIMSELF. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have PERFECT LOVE for EACH OTHER. The Godhead is the essence, the epitome, the supreme example, of love. Before we talk about love in any other way, we need to see that God loves Himself. And we not only need to see the FACT that God loves Himself - we need to see the

REASON that God loves Himself. As with every other attribute of God, God's love comes from His HOLINESS. WHY does God love Himself? It's because He is HOLY. God loves and communes with Himself in His Holiness.

What is God's Holiness? It's His ethical perfection. It's His purity, His righteousness. God loves His purity. He loves His righteousness. And His purity and righteousness are so perfect that He CANNOT love or commune with or fellowship with ANYTHING or ANYONE that is not as pure and righteous as He is. In fact, because He is perfectly Holy, anything that is in the least bit contrary to His Holiness is an ABOMINATION to God. And here is where we get into God's hatred. See how it's connected with God's love? God HATES wickedness because He LOVES His Holy Self. He CANNOT but HATE that which is not holy. So keep this in mind as we go through what the Bible says about what God hates. God hates because He is love. If God did not hate, then He would not be love. He would not be holy. A non-hating god is no God. A god who loves everyone without exception is no God. A god who lets some sin go unpunished is no God. A god who fellowships with those who are not as righteous as He is is no God. So what are we to conclude? Does God hate everyone? After all, the Bible says that no one is righteous and that all have sinned. And God only loves those who are righteous, which means perfectly sinless. Are you perfectly sinless? Am I perfectly sinless? In our own character and conduct, we are wretched sinners, even at our best. And anyone trying to fellowship with God by his own efforts, even his very best efforts, is hated by God, because He hates all who do not have a righteousness that equals His. Is there then no hope?

Well, praise God, there IS hope for those whom God has chosen to be His from the foundation of the world. And that hope DOES not and CANNOT reside in the character and conduct of the PEOPLE whom God chose, because these people are SINNERS, just like the rest. So if they were to come to God based on their own works, God would HATE them, just like the rest. But God does NOT hate His people. He LOVES His people. But how can God LOVE sinful humans and yet remain true to His Holiness, which includes ABSOLUTE HATRED of wickedness? As I've said many times before, and as I hope to say many times more, the answer lies in the person and work of Jesus Christ. God did not just let our sin go. God did not just forget about it. God is HOLY. God loves HIMSELF and HATES EVERYTHING contrary to His perfect holiness. And let me tell you how much He hates everything contrary to His perfect holiness. He hated it SO MUCH that He Poured OUT His hatred on the second person of the Holy Trinity - the sinless, undefiled Son of God, the Christ - when the sins of His people were imputed to Christ. Think about it! God the Son, the one in perfect communion and love with the Godhead, was not spared the hatred of God when sins were imputed to Him. Now does that show us the MAGNITUDE and the ABSOLUTENESS of God's hatred? When the sins of His people were imputed to Christ, did God make the excuse that he wasn't going to hate this time because it was His only Son, the perfect God-man? Did he make an exception here? Some say that God is too loving to show hate, and that he would never pour out his wrath on anyone. Yet God did not even make an exception WITH HIS OWN SON - A MEMBER OF THE TRINITY! If God were to make any exceptions, if He were to be lenient, this would have been the time to do so. But His hatred is pure. It is holy. It makes no exceptions, even when it comes to His only begotten Son.

Jesus Christ bore the full force of God's hatred as a SUBSTITUTE for His people. He bore God's hatred IN PLACE OF His people. And when God's hatred had been fully poured out for everyone

Christ represented, SATISFACTION had been made. And this GUARANTEES that God's hatred will NOT be poured out on His people. NONE of them will suffer under the hatred of God in hell. This is love. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 1Jn 4:9-10 says, "By this the love of God was revealed in us, because His Son, the Only begotten, God has sent into the world that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son [to be] a propitiation relating to our sins." God's love is manifested by Christ's death for His people. In pouring out His hatred on His Son, God was showing love for those whose sins were imputed to His Son.

Just a little while ago, I was talking about the perfect love that God has for Himself. There is perfect love between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are in perfect everlasting communion. Now here is an amazing thing. Because we are IN Christ, because we are ONE with Christ, WE are in that circle of fellowship and communion with the Godhead! What an awesome thing to meditate upon! Think about this: God is love, meaning first and foremost that God loves Himself. And it follows that since God loves Himself, He loves Jesus Christ. And it follows that since God loves Jesus Christ, He loves all who are IN Jesus Christ. God's love for HIMSELF is the primary reason that God loves US! And God loves US as much as He loves HIMSELF! Because of the imputed righteousness of Christ, we are as holy and as pure as Jesus Christ is! 1Jn 1:3 says, "And truly our fellowship [is] with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." The only way we can be in fellowship with God is if He loves us. And the only way we can be loved by God is if we are as holy, righteous, and pure as He is. And the only way this is accomplished is through the imputed righteousness of Christ. God does not hate us. By "us," I mean those of us who have a righteousness that answers the demands of God's law and justice. In fact, God CANNOT hate us, because He CANNOT do anything contrary to His nature. And hating those who have a perfect righteousness would be contrary to His nature. In the same way, God CANNOT love anyone who does not have a righteousness that answers the demands of His law and justice. Loving those who do not have a perfect righteousness would be contrary to His nature.

I'd like to briefly mention something else we should keep in mind as we go through this series on God's hatred. When we read a passage in which God expresses His hatred, there is sometimes a temptation to read it as if God raises His voice when He talks about what He hates or when He is cursing people or when He is angry at people. The truth is that we DON'T KNOW what God sounded like when He was expressing hatred, and we should not attempt to dramatize what God sounded like. We know that God's voice thundered and was loud enough for His hearers to hear what He was saying, but this was the case whether he was expressing love OR hatred, and we should not attempt to imitate God's thundering voice. Our reading voice has some natural inflections in it so as to give structure and flow to a sentence, and that's okay, but we shouldn't go out of our way to dramatize God's voice, just as we shouldn't dramatize anything else about God or Christ or the Holy Spirit. Dramatizing would get into people's minds that this is what God sounded like, and we do NOT want to get this into people's minds, just as we do not want to get into people's minds what God or Christ or the Holy Spirit looked like. Just something to keep in mind. As we who are Christians go through this series and see what God specifically says He hates, let us meditate on God's holiness. Let us thank God for pouring out His hatred on our

substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, out of love for God who first loved us, let us hate what He hates. I hope this series will be a blessing to you. Amen.

S. Gospel Repentance And Judgement

GOSPEL REPENTANCE AND JUDGMENT (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 11/5/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to Php 3:1-21. Let's read the entire chapter: For the rest, my brothers, rejoice in [the] Lord. To write the same things to you truly [is] not tiresome to me, but safe for you. Look out [for] the dogs, look out [for] the evil workers, look out [for] the concision [party]. For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, and who glory in Christ Jesus, and who do not trust in flesh. Even though I [might] have trust in flesh; if any other thinks to trust in flesh, I more; in circumcision, [the] eighth day, of [the] race of Israel, [the] tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to Law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the assembly; according to righteousness in Law, being blameless. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss because of Christ. But, no, rather I also count all things to be loss because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count [them to be] trash, that I might gain Christ and be found in Him; not having my own righteousness of Law, but through the faith of Christ, [having] the righteousness of God on faith, to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, having been conformed to His death, if somehow I may attain to a resurrection out of the dead. Not that I already received or already have been perfected, but I press on, if I also may lay hold, inasmuch as I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not count myself to have laid hold, but one [thing I do], forgetting the things behind, and stretching forward to those things before, I press on after a mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Then as many as [are] perfect, let us be of this mind; and if you think anything differently, God will also reveal this to you. Yet [as] to where we have arrived, walk by the same rule, [being] of the same mind. Be fellow-imitators of me, brothers, and consider those walking this way, even as you have us [for] a pattern. For many walk [as] hostile [to] the cross of Christ, of whom I often told you, and now even weeping I say it, whose end [is] destruction, whose god [is] the belly, and who glory in their shame, the [ones] thinking earthly things. For our citizenship is in Heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, [the] Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our body of humiliation, for it to be conformed to His body of glory, according to the working [of] Him to be able even to subject all things under Himself.

Over the past seven weeks, we've gone point-by-point through the definition of the gospel. Some of the things we saw were that God exists, that God is sovereign, that God predestinated everything before the foundation of the world, that God is all-powerful to keep His promises, that man by nature is dead in sins and at enmity with God and can do nothing to please God, that Adam's sin is imputed to all whom He represented, that sin deserves everlasting punishment in hell, that God's saving power is irresistible, that there is a change of state and a change of heart upon regeneration, that God preserves everyone He regenerates so that they will not perish and will not believe or confess a false gospel, that God chose to save a people before the foundation of the world, that Jesus Christ died for those people and those people alone, that all of the sins of His people were imputed to Christ, that Jesus Christ was punished by God and paid the penalty in full

for all of His people by shedding His precious blood, that Jesus Christ lived a perfectly sinless life, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His people, that God saves His people in a way that is consistent with His law and justice, that Jesus is fully God and fully man, that the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ demands and ensures all of salvation, from regeneration to final glory, for all whom He represented, and that salvation is by the work of Christ alone without any contribution from the sinner.

These are all precious truths. We who are believers confess that they are true. We hold to these truths and will never let them go. But there's a group of people out there who will say they agree with us on every one of the points I just mentioned, yet they are children of the devil. They will even say that the doctrines that oppose these truths are false doctrines, such as the doctrines that God did not predestinate everything before the foundation of the world, that God chose to save people based on what He knew they would do, that God's saving power is resistible, that fallen man can choose to be saved, that regenerate man can lose his salvation, and that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception. They will call these things false doctrines. They will say that these doctrines oppose the glory of God. Yet they are children of the devil.

How can this be? How can it be that these people who say they agree with us on so many things are still children of the devil? How can it be that these people, who say that they exalt the glory of God in salvation, are actually enemies of the God they claim to exalt? The answer is this: Even though they claim to believe this gospel, they do not VALUE it. They do not value it to the point of seeing that it is a life-and-death matter. They do not value it to the point that they consider everything opposed to it as dung. They do not value it to the point that they make judgments based on it. They say they love it, they say that it is precious to them, they say they hate what is opposed to it, yet they do not really VALUE it. At the beginning of this message, I read Php 3:1-21. Paul said that all of his religious deeds before he was saved were nothing but wickedness. In verse 6, he said that before he was saved, he was BLAMELESS according to righteousness in Law! Yet he counted himself LOST when he was in this religion. Why did he count himself lost? Because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. When God saved him, God gave him the KNOWLEDGE that his salvation was conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, his works totally excluded. And when God gave him that KNOWLEDGE, he counted his former religion as nothing but self-righteous dung, because he realized that in his former religion, he believed in salvation conditioned on the sinner. This is called REPENTANCE. This repentance is a change of heart, wherein one turns FROM believing in, worshiping, and serving a false god and a false christ TO believing in, worshiping, and serving the true God and the true Christ. The person turns FROM believing in the false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner TO believing in the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. And in order for the person to TRULY turn from one to the other, he must RECOGNIZE that the gospel he USED to believe was a FALSE GOSPEL, the god he used to worship was a FALSE GOD, and the christ he used to trust was a FALSE CHRIST. He must RECOGNIZE that these sins are indicative of LOSTNESS. He must RECOGNIZE that when he believed in a false gospel and a false god and a false christ, he was an open idolater, bringing forth dead works and fruit unto death. Without this RECOGNITION, there is no repentance. Paul RECOGNIZED that in his former religion, he was bringing forth fruit unto death. Let's turn to Rom 7:4-5 : So that, my brothers, you also were made dead to the Law through

the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, to [the One] raised from [the] dead, so that we may bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin were working in our members through the Law for the bearing of fruit unto death.

Paul RECOGNIZED that when he was lost, he was IN THE FLESH, and he was BRINGING FORTH FRUIT UNTO DEATH. Now was Paul talking about his old party days where he engaged in all kinds of immorality? NO! When he was lost, he was BLAMELESS according to righteousness in Law. Paul was talking about his life of RELIGION, DEDICATION, and MORALITY! He counted it as bringing forth fruit unto death. He RECOGNIZED it to be so.

Now I'd like to give you a scenario to illustrate this point.

Here's the scenario: A man claims to believe the doctrines of grace. He claims to agree with the definition of the gospel. He says that salvation is by the sovereign grace of God alone, based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, without any contribution from the sinner. He says that the work of Christ demands and ensures the salvation of all Christ represented, that Christ only died for His people, and that universal atonement is heretical. So far, so good. But then he says that when he was unregenerate, he was an irreligious drug dealer, until God saved him and changed his life. He says that when he first became a believer, he believed that Christ died for everyone without exception in the whole world, based on his misunderstanding of some Scripture passages that seemed to teach universal atonement. He says that it wasn't until a few years after his conversion that he encountered a Reformed book that explained particular redemption, and then he saw the precious truth of particular atonement and the heresy of universal atonement. He now considers his spiritual life to be much more enriched now that he has come to know the truth of particular atonement.

What is this man's current spiritual state? This man is still as lost as when he was an irreligious drug dealer. He was lost as an irreligious drug dealer, he was lost as a religionist who believed in universal atonement, and he continues to be lost as a religionist who has now "come into" the doctrines of grace. How do we know this? It has to do with his REPENTANCE

, which shows how much he VALUES the gospel. When this man saw the truth of particular redemption, what did he think of his former religion in which he believed universal atonement? Did he count it as dung? Did he say that he was in the flesh and bringing forth fruit unto death? Did he say that he was worshiping and serving a false god and a false christ? Did he say that he believed a false gospel? No. He believes that he was regenerate while he believed in universal atonement. And remember - universal atonement is equal to salvation conditioned on the sinner, because those who believe in universal atonement DO NOT believe that the work of Jesus Christ ALONE demands and ensures the salvation of all whom He represented. They DO NOT believe that the work of Jesus Christ ALONE is what makes the difference between heaven and hell. They believe that it is the work of the SINNER that ultimately makes the difference between heaven and hell. So, since this man believes that he was regenerate while he believed in universal atonement, it is clear that HE HAS NOT REPENTED. He does not consider belief in universal atonement to be belief in a false gospel. Instead, he believes that one can believe the gospel and believe universal atonement at the same time. So not only has he not repented, he does not really believe the gospel. Do we all understand this? Okay.

Now I'd like to show you how REPENTANCE is directly connected to how one judges the spiritual state of OTHERS. I'm not going to go into the fact that Christians are commanded to judge the spiritual state of others and the objections raised to this by false religionists. For this sermon, it's a given that Christians judge the spiritual state of others.

Think of the man in the scenario I just presented. This man believes that he was regenerate while he believed in universal atonement. Now what if another man comes along who professes to be a Christian and says that he believes in universal atonement? Is the first man going to judge him lost? Of course not. If he judged THIS MAN lost, he'd have to say that HE was lost when HE believed in universal atonement. In fact, this is what we hear a lot from those who speak peace to such people. They do not reason from the Bible; instead, they go back to their own so-called "salvation experience." They'll say, "All Arminians aren't lost, because I was an Arminian for a period of time after I was regenerated." Again, this peace-speaking is a sure sign that he does not VALUE the gospel to the point of JUDGING by it. They'll say that they agree with the gospel doctrine, but they will not consider it ESSENTIAL gospel doctrine. They will not consider it VITAL gospel doctrine. Instead, they will consider it to be merely a MORE CONSISTENT version of the gospel than the Arminian version. And they MUST say that the Arminian version of the gospel is STILL the gospel, even though it is less consistent. Thus, they believe that the Arminian gospel is the BEGINNING POINT of their own faith. They are just as lost as the Arminians.

Let's turn to a passage of Scripture that irrefutably shows that those who speak peace to those who confess a false gospel are just as lost as those who confess a false gospel. That passage is 2Jn 1:11. Let's start reading 2Jn 1:9-11 :

Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. The [one] abiding in the doctrine of Christ, this one has the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bear this doctrine, do not receive him into the house, and do not speak a greeting to him. For the [one] speaking a greeting shares in his evil works.

First, we see that everyone who does not remain in the doctrine of Christ is lost. What is the doctrine of Christ? It is the GOSPEL. It's what we've been going over in the past seven weeks. The GOSPEL includes all the doctrine that I've gone over. THIS is the doctrine of Christ. If anyone does not remain in this doctrine, he is lost. Mark 16:16 says that those who do not believe the gospel are lost. Rom 10:3 says that those who are ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel are lost.

Second, we see the command not to receive a person who brings a false gospel into your house. This is talking about having religious fellowship with him. The last part of 2Jn 1:10 says, "and do not speak a greeting to him." Does that mean that you are not to say "hello" to such a person? No -- this is a specific kind of greeting. The Greek word translated "greeting" is usually translated "rejoice." I'm going to give some examples of how the New Testament uses this Greek word:

John 4:36 : And the one reaping receives reward, and gathers fruit to everlasting life, so that both the [one] sowing and the [one] reaping may REJOICE together.

Rom 16:19 : For your obedience reached to all; therefore, I REJOICE over you. But I desire you to be truly wise [as] to good, but simple toward evil.

Php 2:17-18 : But if indeed I am poured out on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I REJOICE; yea, I REJOICE with you all. And you also REJOICE [in] the same and REJOICE with me.

Php 4:4 :

REJOICE in [the] Lord always. Again I say, REJOICE! Did you notice the intimate meaning of the word "rejoice" in these passages? It is obviously talking about speaking peace to a person -- calling that person a brother in Christ. So when 2Jn 1:10 says, "do not speak a greeting to him," it's saying, "do not speak peace to him"; "do not call him a brother in Christ."

Now in 2Jn 1:11, we see a VERY grave, weighty statement: For the [one] speaking a greeting shares in his evil works. The one who speaks peace to a person who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ actually SHARES in the evil works of that person. What does it mean to "to share in" these evil works? The Greek word used here is koinonei. I'm sure that many of you recognize the root; koinos (Koy-nos) means "common" or "communal," koinonia (Koy-no-nia) means "partnership" or "fellowship," and koinonos means "partner" or "sharer." Let's go into some verses that give some examples of how this word is used in the New Testament. Notice again the intimate nature of sharing:

1Co 1:9 :

God [is] faithful, through whom you were called into [the] FELLOWSHIP of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Heb 2:14 :

Since, then, the children have partaken of flesh and blood, in like manner He Himself also SHARED the same things, that through death He might cause to cease the [one] having the power of death, that is, the devil;

1Pe 4:13 : but according as you SHARE the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; so that you may rejoice exultingly at the revelation of His glory.

Tit 1:4 : to Titus, a true child according to [our] COMMON faith: Grace, mercy, peace from God [the] Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

1Co 10:16 : The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a PARTAKING of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a PARTAKING of the body of Christ?

Jude 1:3 :

Having made all haste to write to you about the COMMON salvation, beloved, I had need to write to you to exhort you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Php 1:5 : over your FELLOWSHIP in the gospel, from [the] first day until now,

Php 2:1 :

[So] then, if [there is] any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any FELLOWSHIP of [the] Spirit, if any tenderesses and compassions

Php 3:10 : to know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the FELLOWSHIP of His sufferings, having been conformed to His death,

1Jn 1:3 :

We announce to you what we have seen, and [what] we have heard, that you also may have FELLOWSHIP with us. And truly our FELLOWSHIP [is] with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Mat 23:30 : And you say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been PARTAKERS with them in the blood of the prophets

2Co 1:7 : and our hope for you [is] certain, knowing that even as you are SHARERS of the sufferings, so also of the comfort.

Heb 10:33 : indeed being exposed both to reproaches and to afflictions; and having become PARTNERS of those so living.

1Pe 5:1 :

I, a fellow elder, exhort the elders among you, I being also witness of the sufferings of Christ, and [being] SHARER of the glory about to be revealed:

2Pe 1:4 : by which means He has given to us the very great and precious promises, so that through these you might be PARTAKERS of [the] divine nature, escaping from the corruption in [the] world by lust. Do you see what sharing means? So 2Jn 1:11 is saying that the person who speaks peace to one who brings a false gospel is actually SHARING in the evil deeds of that person. What are the evil deeds of that person? It is the evil of not abiding in the gospel -- the evil of abiding in a false gospel. 2Jn 1:9 says that the one who performs these evil deeds (who does not abide in the gospel) "does not have God." One who "does not have God" is lost. So the one who speaks peace to that person is SHARING IN the false gospel of that person. And we can see how this happens. If Mr. Smith believes in universal atonement, and Mr. Jones claims to believe the true gospel of grace but calls Mr. Smith a brother, Mr. Jones SHARES IN the false gospel of Mr. Smith, because Mr. Jones believes that he SHARES the same gospel as Mr. Smith. And, in fact, Mr. Jones DOES share the same gospel as Mr. Smith. They both share the false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner. They are both bringing forth evil deeds and fruit unto death. My hearers - do you believe the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone? If you say you do, do you VALUE it to the point of considering all your former religion as dung? Do you VALUE it to the point of believing that you were lost when you were in such a religion? Do you VALUE it to the point of believing that ALL OTHERS who are in such a religion are lost? If you do not VALUE it so as to judge yourself and others by it, then you remain dead in your sins, no matter if you call yourself Reformed or a Calvinist or a believer in the doctrines of grace. God commands you today to repent - to TRULY repent - and to TRULY believe the gospel. Are you one who believes that Jesus Christ died for everyone in the world without exception? Then you don't believe the gospel. You don't believe that it is the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE that demands and ensures the salvation of ALL for whom He lived and died. You believe that it is the work of the SINNER that makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell. God commands you today to repent - to

consider all of your religion and all of your life as wickedness and idolatry, to turn from that wickedness, and to believe in the TRUE God who promises to save EVERY one of His people based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. And to those of you who believe the true gospel, have repented of dead works and former idolatry, and who judge based on the truth of the gospel: REJOICE in this precious gospel! WORSHIP King Jesus! LOVE your brothers in Christ! EVANGELIZE to the irreligious and unconcerned! EVANGELIZE to those in false religion! PRAY for the salvation of the lost! DO GOOD WORKS out of a love for the one who first loved us! MEDITATE on the truth!

We'll close with a truth that we should ALWAYS keep in our minds. It's in 2Co 5:14-21 : For the love of Christ constrains us, having judged this, that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that the living ones may live no more to themselves, but to the [One] having died for them and having been raised. So as we now know no one according to flesh, but even if we have known Christ according to flesh, yet now we no longer know [Him so]. So that if anyone [is] in Christ, [he] is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new! And all things [are] from God, the [One] having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and having given to us the ministry of reconciliation, as, that God was in Christ reconciling [the] world to Himself, not charging their deviations to them, and having put the Word of reconciliation in us. Then on behalf of Christ, we are ambassadors, as God [is] exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God. For He made the [One] who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become [the] righteousness of God in Him.

Amen.

S. More Things God Hates

MORE THINGS GOD HATES (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 3/25/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Today is the last sermon in the series on what God hates. We have seen that God hates certain people, God hates false religion, and God hates a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that plots evil plans, feet hurrying to run to mischief, a false witness who breathes lies, and he who causes strife among brothers. There are several more passages in God's Holy Word that show what God hates that I have not yet mentioned. I'd like to combine the rest of them in this one sermon as I wrap up this series. This sermon may seem a little disjointed, but I didn't want to leave out any passages where God says He hates something.

Before I start on today's topics, I'd like to go back and say something more about the "false witness who breathes lies" that is part of the list of the seven things God hates that we went over a few weeks ago. I wanted to make sure that you know that there is a gospel significance to this, not just someone who witnesses falsely about another person. Anyone who ascribes to God qualities of character that do not belong to him is a false witness who breathes lies. They testify falsely about God. We can think of all kinds of examples of this, but the example I use most frequently applies here as well. Those who preach and witness that Christ did all he could do on the cross for everyone without exception and hopes that everyone without exception comes to Him, and now it's up to the sinner to do his part, is a false witness about Christ. This preacher is breathing out lies. Someone who tells people that God loves everyone without exception and wants everyone without exception to be saved is a false witness who breathes lies. And God says he hates such a person.

Let's first turn to Deu 24:1-4 : When a man has taken a wife and married her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found a thing of uncleanness in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; and if she goes out from his house and goes and becomes another man's [wife], and the latter husband hates her, and writes her a bill of divorce, and puts [it] in her hand, and sends her out of his house or if the latter husband who took her to be his wife dies; her former husband who sent her away [is] not to take her again to be his wife, after she is defiled. For it [is] a hateful thing before Jehovah, and you shall not cause the land to sin which Jehovah your God is giving to you as an inheritance.

Now this "former" and "latter" might be a bit confusing, so let me explain what this passage is saying. Let's call the man Mr. Smith and his wife Mrs. Smith. Deu 24:1 says that Mr. Smith marries Mrs. Smith and then Mr. Smith divorces Mrs. Smith. Okay? Deu 24:2 says that if Mrs. Smith leaves Mr. Smith's house to become the wife of Mr. Jones, and Mr. Jones either divorces her or dies, then Mr. Smith is not to take Mrs. Smith back to be his wife, because Mrs. Smith is defiled. God hates this. Notice THE REASON why the husband is not to take his former wife back. I just mentioned it. Do you see it? It's because the woman is defiled. And why is she defiled? Because she remarried another man. This remarriage defiled her, and she remains defiled. Before I go any further, I want

to point out a very serious error in the King James Version's translation of this passage. In Deu 24:2, the King James says, "And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." This is the EXACT OPPOSITE of what God is saying here! This translation gives the divorced wife PERMISSION to marry another man! Yet in Deu 24:4, both the LITV and the KJV say that this woman is defiled because of her second marriage! The KJV makes no sense in the context of the passage, and it erroneously puts forth the view that God condones remarriage after divorce. The truth is that remarriage DEFILES a person. This is borne out in the New Testament. Turn over to Mat 5:31-32 :

It was also said, Whoever puts away his wife, "let him give her a bill of divorce." But I say to you, Whoever puts away his wife, apart from a matter of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry the one put away commits adultery. So here Mr. Smith puts away Mrs. Smith, not because of fornication. What does it say about anyone who marries Mrs. Smith? It says that anyone who marries her commits adultery. But isn't it the fault of the husband, who sinned by putting her away? He certainly is at fault, because he is the one CAUSING her to commit adultery. But even the woman who was put out, even one who was put out through no fault of her own, is not to marry again. Now let's turn over to Mat 19:9 : And I say to you, Whoever shall put away his wife, if not for fornication, and shall marry another, [that one] commits adultery. And the one who marries her who was put away commits adultery. Who are the ones committing adultery in this verse? Both the man AND the woman. If Mr. Smith puts away Mrs. Smith, not because of fornication, and Mr. Smith marries someone else, HE is committing adultery. And if Mrs. Smith remarries, SHE is committing adultery. Mark 10:11-12, and Luk 16:18 say the same thing, only the phrase "if not for fornication" is left out. God makes it very clear: remarriage after divorce results in adultery. And adultery defiles a person. And marrying a defiled person is something God hates. The reason God places so much emphasis on the marriage relationship in the Bible is because it is a picture of Christ and the church. I hope to do a series on this subject sometime, but for now, let me just say that since the relationship between Christ and His church is so precious, and Christ is jealous over His church, then anything that would defile the instituted picture of Christ and His church is calling Christ an adulterer and His church an adulteress. We can see why God hates this, can't we?

Let's now switch gears and go into something else God says He hates. In fact, God says He hates this four times in the Bible. Let's turn to Pro 20:10 : A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah, both [are] hateful to Jehovah.

Now what does that mean? Why does God hate a stone and a stone? Does that mean he hates all stones? Or that he hates two stones? Well, to understand what God is talking about, let's turn to Deu 25:13-16 :

You shall not have in your bag a stone and a stone [weight], a great and a small. You shall not have in your house an ephah and an ephah, a great and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight; you shall have a perfect and just ephah; so that they prolong your days in the land which Jehovah your God is giving to you. For anyone doing these things [is] hateful to Jehovah your God, everyone doing unrighteously.

Okay, now we're starting to get the meaning here. "A stone and a stone" means "a big stone and a small stone." "An ephah and an ephah" means "a big ephah and a small ephah." Now what's so

bad about having a big stone and a small stone, and a big ephah and a small ephah? Well, stones and ephahs were weights and measures. Let's take stones first. Stones were used as weights. Now have you ever seen a scale in which there is a weight or weights on one side, and something to be measured on the other? For example, let's take kilogram as a weight. A gram was defined as the mass of one cubic centimeter of water, and a kilogram is a thousand grams. The kilogram is now defined by a specific platinum-iridium cylinder in France. Have you ever seen a kilogram weight? Well, it's usually a cylinder made out of metal that weighs one kilogram. Now if a kilogram weight is on one side of the scale, and some rice was on the other side of the scale, and the scale balanced, that would mean that the rice weighed one kilogram. And if someone were selling rice for one dollar per kilogram, then he would charge one dollar to the person who wanted to buy this amount of rice. Got it so far? You'll see why this is so important soon. Now what if someone had a weight that was half as big as a kilogram weight, and he still called it a kilogram? What if he wrote "one kilogram" across the weight? Okay, now suppose someone comes into his store and wants to buy one kilogram of rice. Now what would happen if the one selling the rice used the false kilogram? Well, the rice on one side would balance with the half-kilogram on the other side, and the customer would think he's getting a full kilogram of rice. The customer would end up paying one dollar for only a half of a kilogram. The seller would be cheating the buyer; the seller would be LYING to the buyer. Now what if there were a country in which every store owner could choose what he called a kilogram? One store owner would have a big weight that he called a kilogram, and another store owner would have a small weight that he called a kilogram, and no one would really know how much they were getting! That's why it is important to have a STANDARD. A standard is something unchangeable by which everything is measured. There need to be standard measures of weight, standard measures of length, standard measures of volume, and so on. Everything that is measured needs to be measured according to a STANDARD. Suppose I had a one-meter ruler, and you had a one meter ruler, and they were different lengths? When I measure the height of the ceiling with my ruler, I come up with 10 meters, and when you measure the height of the ceiling with your ruler, you come up with 14 meters. Who is right? The only way to know is if we have a STANDARD measure of length that is a TRUE meter, so we can tell if either one of our rulers is correct, and so we can measure correctly. I don't know if you knew this or not, but there are exact standards of the different weights and measures that are under lock and key, such as the kilogram cylinder in France, so there can always be something by which everything else can be measured.

Now an ephah was a dry measure that was equal to a little more than a bushel. Again, if there were no standard ephah, or if a person had something he called an ephah that really wasn't an ephah, the customers would be cheated.

Let's look back at Deu 25:15 :

You shall have a perfect and just weight; you shall have a perfect and just ephah; so that they prolong your days in the land which Jehovah your God is giving to you.

God demands a perfect standard. Any ephah or weight that does not equal the perfect standard is an abomination to God. Let's look at Pro 11:1 :

False balances [are] hateful to Jehovah, but a perfect stone is His delight.

God contrasts false balances with a perfect stone. A false balance is one that uses weights that do not really equal what the seller says they equal. Remember the example of the seller who was passing off a half-kilogram as one kilogram. God says that He hates false balances. A perfect stone is one that conforms exactly to the standard. God loves a perfect stone. Now over to Pro 20:23 : A stone and a stone [are] hateful to Jehovah; and a false balance [is] not good. This is similar to Pro 20:10. We see that a stone and a stone is the same thing as a false balance. If there are two stones of different sizes with which someone weighs something, then we know that at least one of them is a false weight, and this is what God hates.

Now we've seen in previous messages that God hates liars. So he hates those who lie by using false weights and measures. But this whole issue of weights, measures, and standards is not just an issue unto itself. It points to an even more important spiritual issue. I hope you'll see why I took some time to really spell out what false weights and measures are and the need for a standard. Can you see the spiritual issue? It has to do with judging. The only way we can judge right from wrong, good from evil, saved from lost, is if we have a STANDARD. If there were no standard meter, then anyone could use any measure of length that seems right to him, and he could judge something to be one meter or two meters long, and no one could say that he's wrong. The only thing that another person could say is something like, "Well, in my opinion, it's not one meter long; it's fifteen meters long." And there would be nothing but chaos, because no one could judge a true meter from a false meter. The same things goes for judging spiritual things. If there were no standard, no one could say that something is right or wrong; no one could say something is good or evil; and no one could say that one person is saved and one person is lost. Everyone would be judging according to his own opinion and measuring others according to his arbitrary whim. This is what's happening today amongst both the irreligious and the religious, isn't it. They do not believe there is any standard, so they're making up their own. It has just come down to equally valid opinions. But when GOD says that He hates false weights and measures, He is saying that He hates ANY judgment that is not according to the one PERFECT standard of judgment. Where is that perfect standard of judgment to be found? In God's Word.

Let's turn to 2Co 6:14-15 : Do not be unequally yoked [with] unbelievers. For what partnership does righteousness [have] with lawlessness? And what fellowship does light [have] with darkness?

God tells us not to have spiritual partnership with unbelievers. Now what would this verse mean if there were not some STANDARD by which to judge, or to MEASURE, who is an unbeliever? It would be like saying, "Do not be unequally yoked with gindersikes." If we have no idea who or what gindersikes are, then how can we not be unequally yoked with them? When God tells us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, this means that we KNOW who the unbelievers are, does it not? And God tells us in His Word who the unbelievers are. He tells us what the standard of judgment is. Turn to Mark 16:15-16 : And He said to them, Going into all the world, preach the gospel to all the creation. The [one] believing and being baptized will be saved. And the [one] not believing will be condemned.

What is the standard of judgment here? What is the measure by which we are to measure whether or not someone is saved? THE GOSPEL. If someone does not believe THE GOSPEL, then he is lost. Rom 1:17 says that THE GOSPEL reveals the righteousness of God. Rom 3:26 says that God shows His righteousness in being just and justifier. And Rom 10:3 says this: For being

ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God.

God shows us the standard, doesn't he? Anyone who is ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is lost. And the way they show us that they are lost is by their confession. So then we can apply this standard to 2Co 6:1-18. God commands us that we are not to be unequally yoked with those who confess a false gospel. Now the TRUE gospel shows God to be just and justifier. And the only way God can be just and justifier is through imputation. God justly punished His perfect Son on the cross because the sins of His people were imputed to Christ. God justifies these people because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His people. The atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ MUST demand the salvation of all whom He represented, or else God is not just and justifier. All of salvation must be conditioned on the work of Christ alone, or else God is not just and justifier. The difference between salvation and damnation must be the work of Christ alone, or else God is not just and justifier. And any who are ignorant of this are automatically seeking to establish a righteousness of their own and are not submitted to the righteousness of God. When we use GOD'S STANDARD in our judgment, we see that all who believe that Christ died for everyone without exception are lost, because they believe that it is the work of the SINNER that makes the difference between salvation and damnation. And what of those who DO NOT use God's standard in their judgment? GOD HATES those who use false weights and measures.

One example of a false weight would be judging someone to be saved based on that person's morality. He's putting his own weight on one side of the scale, and he's CALLING IT a true weight, but it does not equal God's standard. So when he measures a person based on his own corrupt weight, the scale balances. So he speaks peace to that person, because he believes that person is saved based on his false scale. And we could think of many other examples, couldn't we? We think of someone who claims to believe the doctrines of grace, yet when he weighs the Arminian in his false scale, using a false weight that is not based on the standard of God's Word, that Arminian and his false weight balances. That false weight could be the fact that the Arminian sounds like a Calvinist when he prays. That false weight could be the fact that the Arminian is so zealous in reading his Bible. That false weight could be the fact that the Arminian seems so open to the truth. Each lost Calvinist has his own pet false weights. And each of these false weights is an ABOMINATION to God. God HATES these false weights, because they are not based on the true standard. And God HATES those who use these false weights to make their judgments. But we who are God's people use the perfect stone. This leads into one more thing that God says He hates. Let's turn to Rev 2:6 : But you have this, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

God says that He hates the works of the Nicolaitans. In Rev 2:15, God says that He hates the TEACHING - the DOCTRINE of the Nicolaitans. Hating their works comes from hating their doctrine, because those who hold to doctrine contrary to the doctrine of Christ can only bring forth wicked works. Notice how verse 6 is constructed. God says that the church at Ephesus hates the works of the Nicolaitans, and then He adds, "which I also hate." This is a perfect example of what I have been saying throughout this series - God's people are to hate what God hates. God hates the teaching of the Nicolaitans because it's a false gospel, and God's PEOPLE hate the teaching of the Nicolaitans because they judge the Nicolaitans by God's one true standard. From Rev 2:14-15,

we see that the Nicolaitans were ones whose doctrine was the same in essence as the doctrine of Balaam. What does it say that Balaam taught Balak? He taught Balak to teach Israel to eat idol sacrifices and to commit fornication. This has to do with false religion that we went over last week. The Nicolaitans were professing Christians who brought in false religion and its practices. And we saw last week that God hates false religion and any mixture of the true and the false. And if we judge by the right standard, we, too, will hate false religion and any mixture of the true and the false, and we, too, will judge those lost who engage in such things. So we come to the end of the series on what God hates. I'd like to end the series with one final verse. Let's turn to Luk 16:15 : And He said to them, You are those justifying yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for the thing highly prized among men is a hateful thing before God.

God hates the thing highly prized among men. What is the thing highly prized among men? The first part of the verse gives us a clue. The Pharisees were ones who justified themselves before men. Whatever the Pharisees used to justify themselves before men is the thing that men highly prize and is the thing that is an abomination to God. What did the lost Israelites admire in the Pharisees? What did the Pharisees do that made them think that they were the holiest men on earth? Their outward works of religion and morality. The lost Israelites considered the Pharisees to be the holiest of the holy because they were zealous in their religion and even went over and above the call of religious duty. And they were outwardly the most moral people around. They were highly esteemed. But Jesus Christ said that these things were hateful to God. Why? Well, Paul tells us in Philippians that he was a Pharisee - he was zealous in his religion, and he was blameless in his morals. Yet Paul counted it all but loss and trash. The reason he counted it as wicked was because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus - that he was found in Christ, not having his own righteousness of Law, but through the faith of Christ, having the righteousness of God on faith. Paul hated what God hates. God hated the Pharisees because they believed that they made themselves righteous through their Law-keeping. And the lost Israelites highly esteemed the Pharisees because they believed the same thing. But what is highly prized among men is an abomination to God. Any sincere, moral, religious, zealous person who believes that he is made righteous by his obedience is an abomination to God. Any sincere, moral, religious, zealous person who believes that his own works form any part of the ground of his acceptance before God is a hateful thing to God. But we who have been saved count all this as just religious trash. We have been given that excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus, which means that we believe that we are not made righteous by our Law-keeping but by the imputed righteousness of Christ. We believe that it is the work of Christ alone that demands and secures our salvation. God hates every false way, and God's people hate every false way. We are given the standard by which to distinguish the true way from all other false ways. The true way is the way of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Any way that conditions salvation on anything in the sinner is a false way. May we judge righteous judgment by the perfect standard. Amen.

S. Seven Things God Hates

SEVEN THINGS GOD HATES (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 3/11/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Today, in our continuing series on what God hates, we turn to a passage of Scripture that lists seven things that God hates. That passage is Pro 6:16-19. Let's turn over there:

These six [things] Jehovah hates; yea, seven [are] hateful to his soul; a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that plots evil plans, feet hurrying to run to mischief, a false witness who breathes lies, and he who causes strife among brothers.

Here, God gives us in one small passage, a list of things that God hates. The fact that God lists these things in one place is important. These things must be the epitome of what is hateful to God - a summary, if you will, of wickedness. It comes in the middle of the "my son" section of Proverbs, in which the essence of wisdom and obedience is put forth. Earlier in this section, in Pro 3:32-35, God says, "For the perverse one [is] hateful to Jehovah, but His intimacy is with the righteous. The curse of Jehovah [is] in the house of the wicked, but He blesses the abode of the righteous. Surely He scorns the scorers, but He gives grace to the lowly. The wise inherit honor, but the foolish exalt shame." Here is a contrast between the wicked and the righteous. And as we saw in the last message, including the passage I just read, God hates the wicked. So when we read this list of seven things that God hates, we need to keep in mind that God not only hates the sin, but he hates the SINNERS who do such things.

Let's go over each one of these seven things that God hates. The first one is "a proud look." What is "a proud look"? The Hebrew word for "look" is usually translated "eye" or "eyes." You LOOK through your EYES. Let's turn to Pro 21:4 :

High eyes, a proud heart, [and] the uncultivated mind of the wicked, [is] sin. The word for "eyes" here is the same word as "look" back in Pro 6:1-35. What kind of eyes are described in this verse? HIGH eyes. And you know what? The word for "high" is the same word that is translated "proud" back in Pro 6:1-35. So we have the same phrase translated two different ways, which shows you that the LITV still has its flaws. So these phrases could be translated "a proud look" or "proud eyes" or "high eyes" or "a high look" or "haughty eyes" or "a haughty look." It would be helpful to those of us who don't know Hebrew to have the same phrases translated the same way. Anyway, we're getting to the meaning. "High eyes" is probably the most literal translation. Let's see where else this phrase is used. Let's look at Psa 18:27 : for You will save an afflicted people; but You will bring down haughty eyes.

Now over to Psa 101:5 :

[Whoever] secretly slanders his neighbor, I will cut him off; I will not endure him who has high eyes and a proud heart.

Now over to Psa 131:1 :

O Jehovah, my heart is not proud, nor have my eyes been lofty; nor have I walked in great things, nor in things too wondrous for me. So we're getting the sense of eyes that are high. So what are high eyes? Well, have you ever heard the phrase, "he looked down on someone else"? This phrase is an outgrowth of the concept of "high eyes." When one's eyes are HIGH, they LOOK DOWN. It is a picture of a person with his neck stretched high and looking down with disdain or disgust on someone who is of lower status than he is. It is an outward symbol of PRIDE. A PROUD LOOK comes from a PROUD HEART. So we see that this is like the boasters and glories I mentioned last week. Those who have a PROUD HEART are ones who think that they are inherently better than others. It can take many forms. One that comes quickly to mind is someone who says he is PROUD of being white, thinking that he is better than those who are black. God hates this. What did a white person do to make himself be born white? Racism is something that is an abomination to God. There is also a spiritual, gospel application. Those who are of a PROUD HEART think that their own good deeds put them in good standing before God, and they look down upon those who they think are not as good as they are. An example of this is the Pharisee in Luke 18 who relied on himself, that he was righteous, and despised others. He believed that his own doing and abstaining recommended him to God. He was proud of his works. He looked down on others who were sinners in his eyes. Yet God showed that it was the Pharisee who was not justified, because he did not believe the gospel of salvation conditioned on the work of Christ alone, his works totally excluded.

Let's turn back to Pro 6:17. The next thing in the list is "a lying tongue." Again, we went over the fact that God hates liars last week. Lying is telling something that is not true. It is being deceptive. Lying comes in many forms, and its most heinous form comes in speaking a false gospel and speaking peace to those who believe a false gospel. While we're on the subject of lying, look down at the first part of Pro 6:19 : a false witness who breathes lies, and he who causes strife among brothers.

Let's go over this one now, because it is a form of lying. God says that He hates "a false witness who breathes lies." One kind of lying is bearing false witness. One of the Ten Commandments is "You shall not testify a witness of falsehood against your neighbor." Proverbs has a lot to say about false witnesses. We'll turn to a few. First, Pro 14:25 : A true witness delivers souls, but a deceitful witness speaks lies.

Now over to Pro 19:5 : A false witness shall not be acquitted; yea, a breather of lies shall not escape.

Now over to Pro 21:28 : A false witness shall perish, but the man who attends will speak forever.

What is a "witness"? It is a testifying about the deeds of someone else. So a "false witness" or a "witness of falsehood" is testifying falsely about the deeds of someone else. It is making a false accusation. For example, if Mr. Smith says that Mr. Jones committed adultery but has no proof, then Mr. Smith is guilty of bearing false witness against Mr. Jones. Now we have seen this many times when we've encountered lost religionists, haven't we? They will hurl out the accusations as fast as they can speak or type, as the case may be, but when they are asked for proof of these accusations, they suddenly go silent, or they'll say, "You know what I'm talking about" or speak in generalities. But an accusation, a witness, a testifying, of the deeds of others without proof is a false witness. And God says He hates a false witness who breathes lies. Let those of us who have

been the ones falsely accused take heart, for Jesus Christ was falsely accused as well. He was told by the religious people of His day that He was of the devil. Our enemies will not stop falsely accusing us, because we are witnesses of the truth of the gospel of Christ, and we will not speak peace when there is no peace.

Back to Pro 6:17. The next thing that God hates are hands that shed innocent blood. This, too, relates to what we heard last week. Remember when we went over the fact that God hates the man of blood and deceit? A man of blood is one who sheds innocent blood. He is a murderer. God says that all murderers are lost. But notice that it says INNOCENT blood. This has to do with condemning the just. It has to do with unjust killing. The Psalms mention this several times. Turn to Psa 10:8 :

He sits in the hiding places of the villages; in the secret places he murders the innocent; his eyes watch against the poor.

Now over to Psa 94:21-23 :

They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the blood of the innocent. But Jehovah is my tower of defense; and my God [is] the rock of my refuge. And He shall turn their own iniquity upon them; and He shall cut them off in their evil, Jehovah our God shall exterminate them!

Now to Psa 106:37-39 :

Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; and they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan. And the land was polluted with the blood. And they were unclean with their works, and went whoring in their acts.

Notice that shedding innocent blood included the abomination of child sacrifice. God hates the hands that shed innocent blood.

Next, in Pro 6:18, is "a heart that plots evil plans." Here, God is talking about evil premeditation. He is talking about one who schemes ahead of time to do evil and devises the means by which to do the evil and then carries out the evil. This also takes many forms. One who plans out a robbery or a murder or an assault certainly fits into this category. But there's also something you might not think about immediately when reading these words. What about when a false religionist makes plans to do or say a certain thing in order to bring the most people to the front of the aisle? What about the false religionists who plan so-called "revivals" all over this country? They are just as wicked and evil as the one who plans a rape. They are plotting evil plans, and God hates them. The next is "feet hurrying to run to mischief." This is in contrast with the deliberation of the heart that plots evil plans. This is talking about those who have no self-control, who are running to and fro to do one evil thing after another. As soon as they've done one evil thing, they are off doing another evil thing. It's interesting that God includes both the one who thinks a lot before doing evil deeds and the one who doesn't think a lot before doing evil deeds. He doesn't let the non-premeditator off the hook. One who murders out of spontaneous rage is just as guilty as one who plans a murder and meticulously carries it out. The "feet hurrying to run to mischief" also includes the thrill-seekers who just go out to destroy for the fun of it. We certainly live in a

generation where running around out of control and going from one mischievous act to another is valued by a large segment of society. God hates the feet hurrying to run to mischief.

We already went over the sixth thing that God hates, so let's go to the last thing that God says He hates in this passage. God hates the person who causes strife among brothers. The KJV translates the Hebrew word for "strife" as "discord." It means "contention" or "quarreling." Someone who likes to stir up contention among brothers is an abomination to God. Let's turn to some Scripture passages that talk about this. First, let's stay in Proverbs and go to Pro 17:1 :

Better [is] a dry piece of bread, and quietness with it, than a house full of sacrifices [with] fighting. The word "fighting" there is translated "strife" in the KJV. Here we see what the opposite of strife is. It is QUIETNESS. It is PEACEFULNESS. Strife is a lack of peacefulness. When people are arguing with each other, it is not peaceful. Now we'll see what causes strife. First, Pro 28:25 : The proud in soul stirs up strife, but he who is trusting on Jehovah shall be abundantly satisfied.

Next, Pro 29:22 : An angry man stirs up contention, and a furious one abounds in transgression. So we see from these two verses that the two things that cause strife or contention or discord or quarreling are PRIDE and ANGER. How do these things cause strife? Well, let's first think about PRIDE. Someone who thinks he's better than others will easily get into an argument to show his superiority or if his pride is at stake. Pro 13:10 says that contention comes by pride. And what about ANGER? Someone who is an angry person will easily get into contentions with others arising out of his anger at another person. Pro 10:12 says that hatred stirs up strife, and Pro 30:33 says that the squeezing of wrath brings out strife.

Let's turn to two passages in the New Testament that talk about those who cause divisions and strife. These will bring out the gospel significance of the Proverbs passage. First, let's turn to Rom 16:17 : And brothers I exhort you to watch those making divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and turn away from them.

God warns us about contentious people who cause discord. First of all, how do we know they are causing discord? They are making divisions contrary to ORTHODOXY - RIGHT DOCTRINE. Secondly, how are we to treat them? God says to turn away from them. Excommunicate them. Have nothing to do with them. They are those who cause strife, and God hates them. The second passage is 1Ti 6:3-5 :

If anyone teaches differently, and does not consent to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to godliness, he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but [is] sick concerning doubts and arguments, out of which comes envy, strife, evil-speakings, evil suspicions, meddling, of men whose mind has been corrupted and deprived of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness. Withdraw from such [persons].

Notice that these people are puffed up in pride, and this pride leads to doubts and arguments, and these doubts and arguments lead to envy and strife. Again, these men are causing doubts and arguments that are contrary to what? RIGHT DOCTRINE. And what does God say we should do with them? WITHDRAW from them. They are contentious people, and God hates them.

Now the false accusers will accuse US of causing strife and division and contention and discord and quarreling because we believe the gospel and thus judge people lost who believe the false

gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner. But we know that these are just false witnesses who breathe lies. If it were contentious to call the self-righteous religionists lost, then Jesus Christ was contentious when He told the Pharisees that their father was the devil. And Paul would have been contentious when he told people they were lost. We are not out to cause fights, and we do not love causing fights, but those who hate the gospel message will sometimes cause the fights. Jesus and Paul were beaten and killed because of their messages. Jesus even said that he did not come to bring peace into the world but to set people against each other, even family members. If a saved family member tells a lost family member that he is lost, and the lost family member gets angry and argumentative, is that saved family member the one causing strife? No. Strife and contention is caused when someone speaks contrary to the truth or gets angry when someone speaks the truth. In contrast to these seven things that God hates, let us be humble, truth-tellers, upright, and peaceful - not in order to gain or maintain our salvation or entitle ourselves to final glory, but out of love for God who sent His Son to establish a righteousness that demands the salvation of all whom He represented. And let US hate what GOD hates. Amen.

S. TRUE AND FALSE HOLY SPIRIT

TRUE AND FALSE HOLY SPIRIT (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 11/26/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to 1Co 2:1-16, and I'll be reading the entire chapter: And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with excellency of word or wisdom, declaring to you the Testimony of God. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him having been crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my word and my preaching [was] not in enticing words of human wisdom, but in proof of [the] Spirit and of power, that your faith might not be in [the] wisdom of men, but in [the] power of God. But we speak wisdom among the perfect, but not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, those being brought to nothing. But we speak [the] wisdom of God in a mystery, having been hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age has known. For if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; according as it has been written, "Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard," nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him. But God revealed [them] to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of a man within him? So also no one has known the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things we also speak, not in words taught in human wisdom, but in [Words] taught of the Holy Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual [things]. But a natural man does not receive the things of [the] Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know [them], because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual one discerns all things, but he is discerned by no one. For "who has known [the] mind of [the] Lord?" "Who will teach Him?" But we have [the] mind of Christ.

Over the past two weeks, I've talked about the first two persons of the Trinity: God the Father and God the Son. We saw how Satan counterfeits each one. There is only one true God, and there are many false gods. There is only one true Christ, and there are many false christs. Today, we turn to the third person of the Trinity, which is God the Holy Spirit. There is only one true Holy Spirit, and there are many false holy spirits. In fact, just like the false gods and false christs, what most people call the Holy Spirit today is a counterfeit. The Lord willing, we will see the true Holy Spirit of the Bible and distinguish Him from all counterfeits. The Bible clearly shows that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both God the Father and God the Son. He's called "the Spirit of God" in places such as 1Co 2:11, which we just read. And He's called "the spirit of Christ" in places such as 1Pe 1:11.

Today, the Lord willing, we're going to be looking at three main aspects of the Holy Spirit's work. They are: the giving of life, the giving of truth, and the giving of preservation. Of course, all of these works are interrelated, but they're separated out to give us a clear understanding of the overall work of the Holy Spirit.

Let's first look at the giving of life. The true Holy Spirit gives spiritual life to dead sinners. Let's turn to John 6:63. This is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking:

It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh does not profit, nothing! The Words which I speak to you are spirit and are life.

Jesus said that it is the Spirit, not the flesh, that gives life. Now what Scripture passage does that remind you of? John 3:1-36. Let's turn over there. When Jesus talked to Nicodemus, what did He say about the flesh and the Spirit? Let's look at John 3:5-8 :

Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, If one is not generated out of water and Spirit, he is not able to enter into the kingdom of God. That having been generated out of the flesh is flesh, and that having been generated out of the Spirit is spirit. Do not wonder because I said to you, You must be generated from above. The Spirit breathes where He desires, and you hear His voice; but you do not know from where He comes, and where He goes; so is everyone having been generated from the Spirit.

One is not able to enter the kingdom of God unless what happens? Unless the person is born of water and Spirit. The water and the Spirit go together. The Jews understood the water to be a purification, a sanctification, as we see throughout the Old Testament. This purification pointed to the cleansing work of the Spirit, as Eze 36:25-27. Let's turn there:

Then I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your defilement and from all your idols. And I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do [them].

Washing of the water of the Spirit is also mentioned in 1Co 6:11 : And some [of you] were these things, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.

Let's also read Tit 3:5 : not by works in righteousness which we had done, but according to His mercy, He saved us through [the] washing of regeneration and renewal of [the] Holy Spirit, So it is the Holy Spirit who gives life to a dead sinner. When the Holy Spirit works in a sinner, that sinner comes to life. That sinner is sanctified - purged, cleansed - from the defilement of sin. But is that sinner given life and cleansed, and then goes on his merry way just as before? Does he just continue believing the same thing he believed before? Does he just continue acting the same way he did before? This is where we get to the second main aspect of the Holy Spirit's work. The Holy Spirit gives TRUTH. And He gives TRUTH to the MIND of the one who has been regenerated.

Let's turn to John 14:16-17 : And I will petition the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may remain with you to the age, the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He abides with you and shall be in you.

Here, and in John 15:26, The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of TRUTH. And the world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth because it does not see Him or know Him. So what is this saying about the world of the ungodly? It DOES NOT HAVE the Spirit of Truth. An ungodly person DOES NOT

HAVE the Holy Spirit. What does a godly person have? The Spirit of Truth. So does a godly person have the truth? Yes. Keep this in mind as we go through other passages and as I talk about the false Holy Spirit later. Let's now turn to John 16:13 : But when that One comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all Truth, for He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will announce the coming things to you. For now, let's focus on the first part. What does the Holy Spirit do? He GUIDES HIS PEOPLE INTO ALL TRUTH. And 2Th 2:13 says that God chose us from the beginning to sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Now let's go back to 1Co 2:1-16, which is the passage that I read right at the beginning. This is a very important passage when it comes to the Holy Spirit's work and what it means to a believer. Let's first read 1Co 2:9 : according as it has been written, "Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard," nor has it risen up into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those that love Him.

Now if it just stopped there, someone could argue that we can't know the works of God. But look at 1Co 2:10 : But God revealed [them] to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. And then he goes on to explain how it is that those who have the Spirit KNOW the things of God. 1Co 2:11-12 : For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of a man within him? So also no one has known the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Do you see that? The Spirit of God KNOWS the things of God. So those who HAVE the Spirit of God KNOW the things that are freely given to us by God! Doesn't this just crush the argument of the God-hating Calvinists who say that a person can EXPERIENCE the grace of God without KNOWING the grace of God? They say that a person can EXPERIENCE salvation by grace alone but still BELIEVE in salvation conditioned on the sinner. This is hogwash. Those who have the SPIRIT of God KNOW the things that are freely given to us by God. They KNOW sovereign grace. They KNOW the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. Let's go on to 1Co 2:14 : But a natural man does not receive the things of [the] Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.

What does this say about those who do not have the Spirit of God? It says that the things of the Spirit - which are the doctrines of free, sovereign grace given to us by God - are FOOLISHNESS to him and he CANNOT know them, because only those who have the HOLY SPIRIT know them. So is the Holy Spirit working in those who are ignorant of the work of Christ that demands and ensures the salvation of all whom Christ represented? No. Let's go on to 1Co 2:15 : But the spiritual one discerns all things, but he is discerned by no one.

Those who have the Holy Spirit JUDGE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT. If one does NOT discern and judge between good and evil, saved and lost, then he DOES NOT have the Holy Spirit. Now 1Co 2:16 : For "who has known [the] mind of [the] Lord?" "Who will teach Him?" But we have [the] mind of Christ.

We actually have the mind of Christ! How can that be? Because the Holy Spirit knows the mind of Christ, and we have the Holy Spirit! Some people use the first part of this verse to try to prove that Christians cannot know God's mind. They also use Isa 55:8-9. Let's turn over to Isa 55:8-9 for a minute: For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, nor [are] your ways My ways, says Jehovah. For

[as] the heavens are high from the earth, so My ways are high from your ways, and My thoughts from your thoughts.

Now compare this with the Scripture we just read in 1Co 2:1-16. 1Co 2:1-16 says that through the Holy Spirit we KNOW the things of God and we HAVE the MIND OF CHRIST. So Isa 55:8-9 CANNOT be saying that those who have the Holy Spirit do not have the thoughts of God. And if we look at it in its context, we will see that God is talking to the WICKED in Isa 55:8-9. In Isa 55:7, God says, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the vain man his ..." What? His THOUGHTS! The wicked man is to forsake his THOUGHTS, because GOD'S thoughts are not the WICKED MAN'S thoughts. Once a man is indwelt with the Holy Spirit, he has within him a being that KNOWS the things of God and KNOWS the mind of Christ.

There are other passages in Scripture that show us exactly WHAT truth the Holy Spirit gives us. Let's go back to John 15:26 : And when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, that One will witness concerning Me. The Holy Spirit witnesses concerning Jesus Christ - who He is and what He did. So everyone who has the Spirit believes in the person and work of Jesus Christ - that He is the God-man mediator who came to establish a righteousness that ensures and demands the salvation of all whom He represented. Let's go down to John 16:1-33 and start with John 16:7-14 : But I tell you the truth, it is advantageous for you that I should go; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And having come, that One will convict the world concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment. Concerning sin, because they do not believe into Me; and concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father, and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have yet many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear now. But when that One comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all Truth, for He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will announce the coming things to you. That One will glorify Me, for He will receive from Mine and will announce to you.

Here is another very important passage about the Holy Spirit's work. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. This could be a whole sermon in and of itself, but briefly, this means that the Holy Spirit's work consists of convincing sinners that they by nature are void of a righteousness that answers the demands of God's law and justice and that sin deserves everlasting punishment in hell, that salvation is only through the work of Christ revealed in the gospel and that righteousness deserves everlasting life in heaven, and that Satan has been condemned at the cross and all who follow his lie of salvation conditioned on the sinner are lost and will be judged to hell with Satan at the final judgment. EVERY BELIEVER knows this, because it is the HOLY SPIRIT who convinces them of this. We also see in John 16:13-14 that the Holy Spirit does not speak from Himself; He only speaks what He hears, and what He hears is what glorifies Christ. He speaks of the glory of Jesus Christ that is revealed in the gospel - how God is just to justify the ungodly based solely on the work of Christ, the work of the sinner totally and absolutely excluded so there is no glory for any sinner but only for Christ. The Holy Spirit speaks this to every one of His people. The third main aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of God's people is His work of preservation. There are two aspects of preservation, which are objective and subjective. Objectively, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance. Let's read 2Co 1:22 : even He having sealed us, and having given the earnest of the Spirit in our

hearts.

Now over to Eph 1:13-14 : in whom also you, hearing the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also believing you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is an earnest of our inheritance, to [the] redemption of the purchased possession, to [the] praise of His glory.

What is an "earnest"? Well, let me give an illustration. Think of a person who wants to buy a car from another person. Okay? This person gives the seller his antique rug and says to the seller, "I am going to buy this car from you. If I don't you can keep the rug." That rug is an EARNEST. Of course, an earthly illustration falls way short of this earnest that the Bible talks about. We are given the Holy Spirit as a PLEDGE or a GUARANTEE that God will bring us to heaven. The Holy Spirit is a reminder of God's promise of final glory to us. Subjectively, the Holy Spirit keeps us from sinning any sin that is indicative of lostness. This includes the sin of confessing a false gospel. We went over this in the previous series, so I'll not go into all the verses. Let's just read a few.

Psa 121:1-8 :

I will lift up my eyes to the hills; from where shall my help come? My help [comes] from Jehovah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth. He will not give your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel will not slumber nor sleep. Jehovah [is] the One keeping you; Jehovah [is] your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night; Jehovah shall keep you from all evil; He shall keep your soul. Jehovah shall keep your going out, and your coming in, from now on and till forever.

John 10:4-5 : And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes in front of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will not follow a stranger, never! But [they] will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of the strangers.

Jude 1:24-25 :

Now to Him being able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you before His glory without blemish, with unspeakable joy; to the only wise God, our Savior, [be] glory and majesty and might and authority, even now and forever. Amen. The Holy Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance and keeps us from sinning damnable sins.

We've seen what the true Holy Spirit does. But the Bible says that there are false spirits. 1Ti 4:1 says that some cleave to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. And remember in last week's sermon, in 2Co 11:4, that Paul talked about another Jesus? Well, right after that, he talks about "another spirit."

How can we tell the true Holy Spirit from all false spirits? It is by DOCTRINE. The true Holy Spirit is the Spirit of TRUTH. All false spirits are spirits of LIES. So one thing we can say about false spirits is that they will give people belief in the false gods that I talked about two weeks ago and the false christs that I talked about last week. But there are other things that are particular to the Holy Spirit that I'd like to mention. I want to talk about some who say they believe in the Holy Spirit but attribute things to the Holy Spirit that are against His nature. And as I hope you remember, anyone who does this is an idolater.

Let's first talk about a phrase we hear a lot in so-called "sovereign grace" circles. That phrase is "Holy Spirit conviction." You see it with the puritans a lot. In most cases, this is what they mean by "Holy Spirit conviction." They mean that before someone finds rest in Christ alone (thus, before he believes the gospel), he has great struggles with sin and his own sinfulness and has great disturbances in his mind about what God requires and what his sin deserves. He does something like cry on his bed all night or go without food for days or cry out in despair, not knowing what to do. They call this "Holy Spirit conviction." They'll say, "He has such a sense of his own sin and depravity and misery. He must be under Holy Spirit conviction." Some will go so far as to say that this Holy Spirit conviction can ultimately be resisted and the person go back to living an unregenerate life. Well, I'm here to tell you today that this is the conviction of a FALSE Holy Spirit, NOT the true Holy Spirit. What have I just shown you about the true Holy Spirit? The Bible clearly shows that when the Holy Spirit works on a sinner, He gives that person a knowledge of the TRUTH of Jesus Christ's work as the only ground of salvation. Now if a person is weighed down under a deep sense of sin and doesn't know where to turn, is the Holy Spirit doing this work? May it never be! The Holy Spirit's work is an EFFECTUAL work that enables the sinner to believe the TRUTH. If a person does not know that the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone is the only answer, then he continues to believe a lie, and the Holy Spirit does not lead a person to a lie. The false religionists who hold to this kind of so-called "Holy Spirit conviction" turn to people like the Ethiopian eunuch and the Philippian jailer to try to prove their points. They say that while these men were searching for the truth, they were under "Holy Spirit conviction." Some of them will say that the Spirit had actually quickened them during this time, and that there was a period of time that elapsed between being given life by the Spirit and believing the truth. Well, Mark 16:16 and Rom 10:3 smash this lie to pieces. God says that those who do not believe the gospel are unregenerate and those who are ignorant of the righteousness of God are unregenerate. When the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip about Isa 53:1-12, and when the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas what he needed to do to be saved, they were ignorant of the righteousness of God. They were lost. There was no Holy Spirit work in them, only a false spirit. The TRUE SPIRIT convinces men of SIN, of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT. Would you say that a person who is in deep despair over his own sin and can't find a way out has been convinced of righteousness? Of course not. He is yet dead in his sins. And speaking this, the last thing I'd like to say about false spirits is that they do not convict of sin, righteousness, and judgment. A false spirit convicts a person that he has a free will to either choose or reject Christ. A false spirit says that some of what comes from the flesh is spirit. A false spirit convicts a person that sin does not demand everlasting punishment in hell. A false spirit convicts a person that there are not certain sins that are indicative of lostness. A false spirit convicts a person that a regenerate person can sin the sin of confessing a false gospel or can sin the sin of following a false christ. A false spirit convicts a person that everything that is repented of at conversion needs to be repented of again and again, including repenting of dead works and fruit unto death. A false spirit convicts a person that the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone is not enough to make the ultimate difference between heaven and hell. A false spirit convicts a person that the Holy Spirit does not guarantee final glory for all whom He indwells. A false spirit convicts a person that the work of Christ does not demand the salvation of all whom He represented. A false spirit convicts a person that not all who believe in universal atonement are lost. A false spirit convicts a person that a regenerate person can confess a false gospel, or, as one lost Calvinist said, "a

believer can speak as an unbeliever would speak." And I could go on. The distinction is clear. The true Holy Spirit is one who gives life, gives truth, and gives unconditional preservation. A false spirit is one who convicts without giving life, gives life without giving truth, and gives preservation conditioned on the sinner. Which spirit is inside you right now? You CAN know which it is. The Bible shows that you can know by what doctrine you believe. May you experience true Holy Spirit conviction. Amen.

S. The Gospel: What It Is

THE GOSPEL - WHAT IT IS (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 9/3/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Please turn to Rom 1:1-32 if you would. I'd like to start Rom 1:8-17 :

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how without ceasing I make mention of you always at my prayers, beseeching if by any means now at length I shall be blessed by the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, for the establishing of you; and this is to be comforted together among you, through the faith in one another, both yours and mine. But I do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers, that often I purposed to come to you, and was kept back until the present, that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the other nations. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to wise, and to foolish, so as far as [lies] in me, I am eager to preach the gospel to you in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is [the] power of God to salvation to everyone believing, both to Jew first, and to Greek; for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; even as it has been written, "But the just shall live by faith."

Today I'm going to be talking to you about the gospel. It's the most important subject in the whole world - the whole universe! This is the most important subject you will ever hear. I'll be showing you, the Lord willing, why it's so important. Everybody needs to pay very close attention to what I'm about to say. In fact, it's so important, that every sermon that's preached needs to talk about the gospel. Now each sermon doesn't need to have the gospel as its subject, but each and every sermon needs to define the gospel and to be preached in light of the gospel. Because if the gospel's not there, the preaching may mislead people. For example, if I preached on the way Christians should conduct themselves in this world, and I didn't preach it in light of the gospel, then it could be misinterpreted to mean that the works a Christian does somehow form at least some part of the ground of acceptance before God. So the gospel MUST be presented in every sermon.

Let's look at one Scripture passage that show how serious this issue is. Let's look at Mark 16:15-16 : And He said to them, Going into all the world, preach the gospel to all the creation. The [one] believing and being baptized will be saved. And the [one] not believing will be condemned.

I'm just going to focus on the negative part of that verse for now. "And the [one] not believing will be condemned," or as the King James puts it, "he that believeth not shall be damned." So what is it that those who will be damned don't believe? Mark 16:15 - the gospel. Now think about this. Those who do not believe the gospel will be damned in everlasting torment in hell. Now, from this passage, just how important is believing the gospel? It's a matter of eternal life or eternal death. That's how important it is. Now, if it's that important, we'd better know exactly what the gospel is, don't you think? Because if we don't know what it is, we can't believe it.

Okay, let's get into what exactly the gospel is. I read Rom 1:1-32 right at the beginning, and I'd like for us to read Rom 1:16-17 again: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is [the]

power of God to salvation to everyone believing, both to Jew first, and to Greek; for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; even as it has been written, "But the just shall live by faith." So let's look closely at what the Holy Spirit is saying here. What is the gospel?

Well, first we see the gospel's effects. It's the **POWER OF GOD TO SALVATION**. Now what does that mean - the power of God to salvation? Does it mean that the words of the gospel have some mystical power, so when anybody hears the words or chants the words or thinks of the words, they become saved? Of course not. We see many times in the Bible where the gospel was preached and some of those who heard it remained unsaved. In fact, look at verse 16 again: it is the power of God to salvation to whom? **EVERYONE BELIEVING**. That's important. It's not the power of God to salvation to everyone who hears the gospel. It's the power of God to everyone who hears it **AND BELIEVES IT**. Now, before we go on, I'd like to ask this: Can anyone believe what they've never heard? Can anyone believe what they don't know about? Can anyone believe what they don't understand? No. The gospel, in order to be believed, must be proclaimed and understood.

Okay, let's get back to the power of God to salvation. This means that God has chosen to display His power to save His people through His gospel. There is **NO SALVATION** apart from the gospel. Don't believe **ANYBODY** who tells you that they or others remained ignorant of the gospel after they were saved. This is a **DENIAL** of the gospel as the power of God to salvation. The Lord willing, I'll talk about what it means to be ignorant of the gospel in a little while. But here, the Bible plainly puts forth, that **SALVATION** and **THE GOSPEL** are **INSEPARABLY CONNECTED**. So what do we find in the gospel? Rom 1:17 gives us the answer: "for in it (**THE GOSPEL**) the righteousness of God is revealed." Now sometimes we tend to skip over the "for's." But the "for's" are very important in understanding the Bible. "FOR in it the righteousness of God is revealed." Whenever you see a "for" in this way, it is saying, "for this reason." And what is the "for" pointing to? Is it pointing to something that's about to be said or something that's already been said? Something that's already been said. So let's look back at Rom 1:16. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is [the] power of God to salvation to everyone believing, both to Jew first, and to Greek;" Now this verse also has two "For's" in it. "FOR I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Look back at Rom 1:15. Paul was eager to preach the gospel to those in Rome; he was not ashamed of the gospel. The second "for" is this: "FOR it is the power of God to salvation to everyone believing." Why is Paul not ashamed of the gospel? Because it is the power of God to salvation! Why should anyone be ashamed of the very thing God uses to save His people? Now let's look at the "for" in Rom 1:17. Why is the gospel the power of God to salvation? Because in the gospel the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD** is revealed!

Now, if the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, and those who do not believe the gospel are lost, then we'd better know what the righteousness of God is. Because if we don't know what the righteousness of God is, we don't know the gospel. Let's look at Rom 10:3 : For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. Do you see that? Those who are ignorant of the righteousness of God - that is, those who don't know what the righteousness of God is - are seeking to establish their own righteousness and do not submit to the righteousness of God! They're lost! So this **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD** is the key element of the gospel! If there's no knowledge of the righteousness of God, there's no belief of the gospel. If there's no belief of the gospel, there's no salvation. That's serious stuff here, isn't it? We'd better know what the

righteousness of God is, or else we're lost!

Thank God that He has not left us in the dark as to what the righteousness of God is. God clearly reveals it in His Word. Even as Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit introduces the gospel in Rom 1:1-32 as the revelation of the righteousness of God, he goes on to tell us what the righteousness of God is. Let's turn to Rom 3:1-31, and we'll start reading Rom 3:9-24 :

What then? Do we excel? Not at all! For we have charged both Jews and Greeks before, all [with] being under sin; according as it has been written, "[There is] not a righteous [one], not even one!" "[There is] not [one] understanding; [there is] not [one] seeking God." All turned away, [they] became worthless together, not [one is] doing goodness, not so much as one!" "Their throat [is] a tomb being opened;" "they used deceit with their tongues; [the] poison of asps [is] under their lips; whose mouth [is] full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet [are] swift to shed blood; ruin and misery [are] in their way; and they did not know a way of peace; there is no fear of God before their eyes." But we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those within the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God. Because by works of Law not one of all flesh will be justified before Him, for through Law [is] full knowledge of sin. But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ toward all and upon all those believing; for there is no difference, for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus,

First, we see that every human being is unrighteous by nature; there is no difference between the pagan, immoral Gentiles and the religious, moral Jews. He had pointed this out in the previous chapters. He shows in Rom 3:20 that righteousness does not even come from one's best efforts to keep the law. Then, in Rom 3:21-24, we see the righteousness of God revealed. In Rom 3:21, we see that the righteousness of God is revealed apart from the law. This means that the righteousness of God has NOTHING TO DO with our law-keeping. It has NOTHING TO DO with our attempts at obedience and service. So what does this righteousness have to do with? Well, let's read Rom 3:22-26 : even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ toward all and upon all those believing; for there is no difference, for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a propitiation through faith in His blood, as a demonstration of His righteousness through the passing over of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God, for a demonstration of His righteousness in the present time, for His being just and justifying the [one] that [is] of the faith of Jesus.

First, the righteousness of God is THROUGH the FAITH, or actually, the FAITHFULNESS, of Jesus Christ. The righteousness of God has to do with Christ's FAITHFULNESS. Faithfulness to do what? Rom 3:24-25 - "being JUSTIFIED freely by His grace through the REDEMPTION in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a PROPITIATION through faith in his blood." Jesus accomplished REDEMPTION, JUSTIFICATION, and PROPITIATION. And look at the next words in Rom 3:25 : "for a showing forth of His RIGHTEOUSNESS." We're on the right track here! Justification, Redemption, and Propitiation show forth the righteousness of God. I'd like to save JUSTIFICATION for last, because it is talked about further in Rom 3:26.

Let's first talk about PROPITIATION. To propitiate means to appease or to pacify. Christ appeased or pacified God's wrath when the sins of His people were imputed to Jesus Christ, when Jesus Christ became sin for His people, and He incurred the judgment for that sin. There is no fellowship with God when there is sin. Why is that? It is because God is RIGHTEOUS. RIGHTEOUSNESS is the opposite of SIN. So in order for God to fellowship with sinners, the sin of those sinners MUST BE PUNISHED in a substitute who is a man who is totally without sin. The only one who qualifies for that is Jesus Christ. Christ took on the sins of His people, and God punished Christ for those sins, and God was pacified. God was at peace, not at war. The next is REDEMPTION. To redeem means to pay the price for a possession so as to rescue or deliver that possession. Ransom is another word that is used. Christ's blood paid the price for His people's sins and bought them as his very own. What did His people do to make themselves into God's own possession? Absolutely nothing. It is CHRIST ALONE who paid the price. We had nothing to pay. Nothing that we ever did or were enabled to do would pay the price. It is only through the blood of Christ.

Now let's talk about JUSTIFICATION. Let's read Rom 3:26. "For the showing forth of His righteousness in the present time" - there's the mention of the righteousness of God again. How does God show forth His righteousness? Let's read on: "for His being just and justifying the one that is of the faith of Jesus." Here he talks about JUSTIFICATION. But if you notice, he doesn't just talk about justification of His people. He talks about His own JUSTICE. God is a JUST God. This means that He is faithful to BLESS those who are righteous and CURSE those who are wicked. His justice demands that all who are not righteous MUST be punished. Now to JUSTIFY someone means to declare that the person is RIGHTEOUS, NOT GUILTY. But we read further up in Rom 3:1-31 that there's NO ONE who is righteous! We read that no one will be justified by his best efforts to keep the law! So how can it be true that God declares some to be RIGHTEOUS who have no RIGHTEOUSNESS in themselves? It can only be through the perfect righteousness of a substitute! And that substitute is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life. He obeyed the law perfectly for his entire life. So how does God declare US to be righteous, when it is only Jesus Christ who lived a perfect life? The answer is in Rom 4:1-25. Paul first shows that Abraham could not have been justified by his works. He says that justification is not by works; instead, God JUSTIFIES the UNGODLY. And how does God justify the ungodly? The Holy Spirit through Paul goes to the Psalms for the answer. Look at Rom 4:6-8 :

Even as also David says of the blessedness of the man to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "Blessed [are those] whose lawlessnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed [the] man to whom [the] Lord will in no way charge sin."

What does it mean that God COUNTS righteousness apart from works? It means that God justifies the ungodly based on a righteousness that is COUNTED to him. Another word for this is IMPUTED. It means LEGALLY CHARGED TO THE ACCOUNT OF. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and was perfectly obedient, even unto death. This righteousness of Christ is IMPUTED to, or COUNTED to, or CHARGED to God's people. Even though God's people are not righteous in their own character and conduct, they are COUNTED righteous because the righteousness of Christ is IMPUTED to them.

Let's look at Rom 10:4 for a minute. Remember when we read Rom 10:3 to show that those who do not know about the righteousness of God are lost? The Holy Spirit then goes on to define what

the righteousness of God IS in this verse: For Christ [is] the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. This means that righteousness does not come through our law-keeping but through the righteousness of Christ!

We can see how God remains JUST to JUSTIFY those who are not righteous in and of themselves. Look at Isa 45:21 :

Declare and bring near; yea, let them consult together. Who has revealed this of old; [who] has told it from then? Is it not I, Jehovah? And there [is] no God other than Me; a just God and a Savior; [there is] none except Me.

How is God both a JUST God AND a Savior? Because the sins of God's people were imputed to Christ, and Christ bore the punishment that our sins deserved, and because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to God's people, and God declares His people righteous. Two imputations - sin imputed to Christ, and righteousness imputed to God's people. As Paul said way back in Rom 1:1-32, the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. The gospel means "good news." What is this good news that reveals the righteousness of God? It is the good news that God saves His people based on these two imputations! When the sins of God's people were imputed to Christ, Christ endured the wrath of God for those sins and paid the price in full. When the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His people, God declares His people not guilty. This is good news! This is the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel!

2Co 5:21 is a good summary of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. Let's read it to close: For He (that's God the Father) made Him who knew no sin (that's Jesus Christ the perfectly righteous one) to be sin for us (that's our sin imputed to Him), that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (that's Christ's righteousness imputed to us).

Praise God for this good news of the gospel, wherein His righteousness is revealed. It is the power of God to salvation to everyone believing. Amen.

S. The Gospel: What It's Not

THE GOSPEL - WHAT IT'S NOT (from a manuscript of a sermon preached 9/10/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Last week, I preached a message entitled, "The Gospel - What it Is." Today, I'm entitling the message, "The Gospel - What It's Not." The foundation was laid last week as we went over what the gospel is. I'd like to do a quick review of some of the key passages we went over.

First, let's look at Rom 1:16-17 : For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is [the] power of God to salvation to everyone believing, both to Jew first, and to Greek; for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; even as it has been written, "But the just shall live by faith." The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone believing, and the gospel is the revelation of the righteousness of God. What is the righteousness of God? Let's turn to Rom 3:21-26 : But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ toward all and upon all those believing; for there is no difference, for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a propitiation through faith in His blood, as a demonstration of His righteousness through the passing over of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God, for a demonstration of His righteousness in the present time, for His being just and justifying the [one] that [is] of the faith of Jesus.

Now let's read Rom 4:6-8 :

Even as also David says of the blessedness of the man to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: "Blessed [are those] whose lawlessnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed [the] man to whom [the] Lord will in no way charge sin." The righteousness of God shows forth that God is just to justify the ungodly based on two things: the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ after the sins of His people were imputed to him, and based on the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to His people. Rom 10:4 says that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. And the summary of the gospel is in 2Co 5:21 : For He (that's God the Father) made Him who knew no sin (that's Jesus Christ the perfectly righteous one) to be sin for us (that's our sin imputed to Him), that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (that's Christ's righteousness imputed to us). The gospel is a specific message. It is the specific message of salvation based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. It is a promise from God He will save His people based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Last week, we saw how important the gospel is. We saw that Mark 16:16 says that those who do not believe the gospel are lost, and we saw that Rom 10:3 says that those who don't know about the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel are lost.

Now it's time to talk about what the gospel is NOT. This, too, is a very important subject, as I hope you will see, because when we hear people give a wrong definition of what the gospel is, then this

tells us a lot as to how they make their judgments. Again, like I said last week, the gospel can be expressed in different ways, so I'm NOT saying that you need to use the exact same words as I do, but whatever words you use, it must include the message of salvation that is based on the work of Christ alone and leaves no doubt that this work of Christ ENSURES and DEMANDS the salvation of ALL whom Christ represented.

Let's first go over one of the more blatant heresies when it comes to defining the gospel. The false gospel known commonly as Arminianism is a gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner. Different Arminians will define it in different ways, but what they all have in common is that salvation, in some way, to some degree, is conditioned on the sinner. The Arminian gospel is the good news that God loves everyone and showed that love by sending Christ to die for everyone so as to make it possible for everyone to be saved. In their gospel, what is the ultimate ground of salvation? Well, if Christ died for everyone, and not everyone goes to heaven, then does Christ's work make the ultimate difference between heaven and hell? Of course not. It is the work of the SINNER that makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell. This is not only NOT the gospel, but it is the very ANTITHESIS of the gospel. Arminianism has this in common with all false religions, from Hinduism to Buddhism to Islam to all the false gospels that come under the name of Christianity: salvation conditioned on the sinner.

What I'd like to focus on are the wrong definitions of the gospel that are given by those who claim to believe the doctrines of grace. And I hope you will see that wrong definitions of the gospel give rise to many wicked things.

First, the gospel is NOT the entire Word of God. It's a very popular notion among those who profess to believe the doctrines of grace to define the gospel as everything that is contained in the Bible. Now what difference does this definition make? Isn't it true that the entire Bible records the very words of God? Yes. Isn't it true that God's Word must be believed? Yes. Isn't it true that the gospel is contained in God's Word? Yes. Isn't it true that the gospel is throughout God's Word? Yes. So why is defining the gospel as the entire Word of God such a horrible error? Well, let's think about it for a little while. If the gospel is the entire Word of God, then how is the gospel preached? Does the preacher have to read or preach the entire Bible in order to preach the gospel? Well, the advocates of this definition have a little out that they will always mention eventually. They will say, "No! A preacher doesn't need to read or preach the entire Bible; instead, a preacher can read or preach ANYTHING in the Bible and still preach the gospel." So they believe that the power of God unto salvation is ANYTHING in the Bible. Now notice what this means about BELIEVING the gospel. Mark 16:16 says that those who do not believe the gospel will be damned. If they were consistent, they would have to say that those who do not believe EVEN ONE PART of the Bible are lost. And, as I mentioned in last week's sermon, you can't believe what you don't know. So, if they were consistent, they would have to say that someone who doesn't know that Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah," which is from Num 26:33, they are lost. But no - they do not say that someone who doesn't know about a particular truth in the Bible is lost. Instead, they say that WHEN THIS MESSAGE IS PREACHED, they will believe it. And UNTIL IT IS PREACHED, a believer can be ignorant of it. Now this is all well and good, when it comes to the daughters of Zelophehad. But what about when it comes to the work of Christ that demands and ensures the salvation of all whom He represented? Here we get to the bottom of it all, and the real

reason why some would want to define the gospel in this way. They use the SAME REASONING for the daughters of Zelophehad as for the atoning work of Christ. After all, since it's ALL the gospel, one passage of Scripture is no different than any other passage of Scripture when it comes to salvation. So here's what they say: They say that a regenerate person can be ignorant of what Christ's work accomplished, but when they are confronted with what Christ's work accomplished, they will believe it. This is their way of speaking peace to those who are ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel, including speaking peace to Arminians. They will say that a regenerate person may believe for a period of time that Christ died for everyone, but when they are shown their error from the Bible, they will repent of their error and believe the truth of the Bible. But what they are really doing is speaking peace to those who believe that Christ died for everyone. They do not judge as lost those who are ignorant of what the atonement accomplished. In speaking peace to them, they are participants in their evil deeds.

Second, the gospel is not a well-meant offer of salvation to all who hear it. We're not using the word "offer" in the old sense of the word, which meant "to bear," "to bring," or "to present." We're using the word "offer" in the sense in which most religionists use it, including those who claim to believe the doctrines of grace. The word "offer" now implies that the offerer desires that the offeree accept the offer. For example, if Mr. Smith offers Mr. Jones an apple, it is because Mr. Smith desires that Mr. Jones accept the offer of the apple. In the same way, if God offers salvation through Christ to all without exception, it is because God desires the salvation of everyone to whom He offers it. Now if God desires the salvation of everyone who hears the gospel and yet not everyone is saved who hears the gospel, upon whom is this salvation conditioned? You only need to hear the appeals of the well-meant offer advocates to see their conditionalism. They preach that Christ is ready and waiting and willing to save every lost person within the sound of the preaching. So if Christ is READY and WILLING to save them, what is He WAITING for? Of course, it is for the sinner to do his part. They will even go so far as to say that God ENABLES the elect to fulfill the condition. Yet it is still salvation conditioned on the sinner, and it is damnable. In light of the well-meant offer, I would also like to mention some terminology in preaching that comes very close to, if not crosses the line into, well-meant offer preaching. Suppose a preacher says to lost sinners, "the gospel is God's promise to save you based on the righteousness of Christ alone." What does that "you" imply? It implies that God promises to save every person in the audience based on the righteousness of Christ alone. Some preachers will just come out and say, "God will save every one of you based on the righteousness of Christ alone." Now if this is a promise from God, then God WILL save every one of them. But this is NOT a promise from God. God NEVER promised this. And to say so is to say that God's promise is a conditional promise - that God will save every one of you, IF you do your part.

There's another way that the gospel is stated that could be misunderstood (or understood, as the case may be) as teaching conditional salvation. Some preachers say that the gospel is God's promise to save sinners based on the righteousness of Christ alone. You might be wondering, "what's wrong with that?" Certainly, God saves sinners based on the righteousness of Christ alone. I have no dispute there. But how could this be interpreted when preached to an audience that includes unbelievers? When one uses the word "sinners" in this general sense, then it could easily be interpreted to mean "every sinner." And some who use this general word DO mean it as that. In fact, the well-meant offer preachers LIKE to use these general terms, so they can straddle

the fence between universal and particular redemption. What could the unregenerate people in the crowd think when the gospel is presented in such a way? They could think, "God promises to save sinners, and I'm a sinner, so God promises to save me." It's like the old Arminian Roman Road. You first admit you're a sinner, then you admit that Christ died for sinners, and then, based on these two facts, you come to the conclusion that Christ died for you. So be wary of such things. The gospel IS a promise. But it is a promise from God to save HIS PEOPLE. It is a particular promise. It is NOT a universal promise. If it were a universal promise, then it would be the will of the sinner that thwarts God from fulfilling his promise.

Third, the gospel is not a COMMAND. Some who say they are against the well-meant offer say things like, "The gospel is not an offer; it's a command." They will say, "the gospel is the command to repent and believe." Or "the gospel is repent or perish." Or "the gospel is repentance for the forgiveness of sins." But do you notice - in each one of these definitions, the emphasis is on the work of the sinner! The gospel is about Christ's accomplished work. It has nothing to do with our work. Some go to Acts 16:31 to try to prove their definition of the gospel. Let's read Acts 16:30-31 : And leading them outside, he said, Sirs, what must I do that I may be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

What they fail to read is Acts 16:32 : "And they spoke the WORD OF THE LORD to him, and to all those in his house." Paul and Silas did not just say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved"; they preached WHO this Jesus Christ is and WHAT he accomplished! I have one more comment on those who say that the gospel is the command to repent and believe. Look at Mark 1:14-15 : And after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God draws near. Repent and believe in the gospel.

If you replace "gospel" in this verse with their definition, you will come up with this: "Repent and believe the command to repent and believe." It makes no sense.

Fourth, the gospel is not the death, burial and resurrection of Christ considered apart from that the death, burial, and resurrection actually ACCOMPLISHED. People go to 1Co 15:1-58 to try to prove this definition. Let's read 1Co 15:1-5 :

But, brothers, I reveal to you the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, by which you also are being kept safe, if you hold fast the Word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you in the first place what I also received, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised the third day, according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

What do we see in 1Co 15:3? Does it just say "Christ died?" No! It says, "Christ died FOR OUR SINS!" Christ's death actually accomplished something! And he doesn't stop there. He says, "Christ died for our sins ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES"! So in order to know what Christ accomplished on the cross, we go the Scriptures. In this passage, the Scriptures to which he was referring were the Old Testament Scriptures. Now what do the Old Testament Scriptures say about what Christ accomplished on the cross? Let's look at one familiar passage, Isa 53:1-12. Let's read Isa 53:4-6 :

Surely He has borne our sicknesses, and He carried our pain; yet we esteemed Him plagued, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; [He was] bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His wounds we ourselves are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have each one turned to his own way; and Jehovah made meet in Him the iniquity of all of us.

What was Jesus wounded for? OUR TRANSGRESSIONS. He bore our sicknesses and He carried our pain. AND his wounds heal us. And look at Isa 53:10-11 : But Jehovah pleased to crush Him, to make Him sick, [so that] If He should put His soul as a guilt offering, He shall see [His] seed; He shall prolong [His] days; and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. He shall see [the fruit] of the travail of His soul; He shall be fully satisfied. By His knowledge the righteous One, My Servant, shall justify for many, and He shall bear their iniquities.

Jesus Christ was made a guilt offering for us. He bore our iniquities. He was punished in our stead. And God was satisfied with the offering and shall justify many based on Christ's obedience unto death. Rom 4:25 says that Jesus Christ was delivered because of our offenses and raised because of our justification. So the gospel DOES include the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But it doesn't stop there. It also includes the ACCOMPLISHMENT of that death, burial, and resurrection. The work of Christ ENSURES and DEMANDS the salvation of ALL whom Christ represented. And those who do not believe THIS, do not believe in the accomplishment of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The gospel is not just the person of Christ or just the work of Christ. The gospel is not just "Jesus is God." The gospel is not just "salvation." It is SALVATION BASED SOLELY ON THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST, THE GOD-MAN MEDIATOR.

I could go on forever about what the gospel is not. But I hope I touched on some of the important ones that we have and will come across as we talk with other professing Christians. I hope this will help equip the saints in their daily warfare, and if anyone listening to this has not believed in God's definition of the gospel, I hope the TRUE gospel will be used by God to bring you to life. Amen.

S. True And False Church

TRUE AND FALSE CHURCH (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 1/7/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly .)

Thus far in our series on the true and the false, we've gone over the true God versus false gods, the true Christ versus false christ, the true Holy Spirit versus false holy spirits, the true gospel versus false gospels, and true teachers versus false teachers. Today, the Lord willing, we will go over something that has elements from all of the previous things we've gone over. It's the true church versus the false church. The true church is made up of those who believe in and worship the true God, the true Christ, the true Holy Spirit, who believe the true gospel, and who have true teachers. The false church is made up of those who believe in and worship false gods, false christ, and false spirits, who believe a false gospel, and who have false teachers. This is really a good, concise summary of the difference between the two. If you've heard all the previous messages, I could just stop right there. But I WOULD like to go into some detail from God's Word about the true church and the false church. God gives us clear descriptions of each, and I think it would be beneficial for us to search the Scriptures to see what God says.

Before I do that, I want to talk about what a "church" is. What does "church" mean? The Greek word for "church" is ek-klay-SEE-ah, which comes from the Greek words EK and kal-EH-oh. EK means "from" or "out," and kal-EH-oh means "to call." So ek-klay-SEE-ah literally means "a calling out." Before we go too far in reading too much into this word, it is used for any public assembly that is called. The people are called out of their daily routine and gather together. It's not always used in a religious sense. For example, let's go over to Acts 19:32; Acts 19:39 :

Then others indeed cried out a different thing, for the assembly was confused, and the majority did not know on what account they came together. But if you seek concerning other things, it will be settled in a lawful assembly. The word translated "assembly" is ek-klay-SEE-ah. But in most of the New Testament, ek-klay-SEE-ah is either talking about an assembly that is gathered together for the common purpose of public worship or a gathering of believers that is not a PHYSICAL gathering but a SPIRITUAL gathering of all believers everywhere. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew words that are commonly used are ka-HALL and ay-DAH, which mean assembly, congregation, or gathering. When I talk about the true church this morning, I'm talking about the church in the religious sense of the word. A TRUE church is an assembly of TRUE believers, while a false church is an assembly of FALSE believers. Okay?

Sometimes a distinction is made between the VISIBLE church and the INVISIBLE church. This can be a helpful distinction at times, but it has also led to error. The VISIBLE church is a gathering of people who come together in the name of Christ, some of whom are saved and some of whom may be lost. The INVISIBLE church is made up of all believers that have ever lived. But many of the tolerant Calvinists like to use this and other distinctions to say that Arminian churches are part of the true VISIBLE church, because they are made up of people who gather in the name of Christ. What they don't realize is that they are gathered in the name of a FALSE Christ, and thus they

cannot be said to be a true visible church.

Okay, let's get into some verses that speak of the true church, and we will contrast it with the false church. Let's first turn to Psa 89:7 :

God is greatly to be feared in the congregation of the saints, and to be adored by all around Him.

Now over to Psa 149:1 :

Praise Jehovah! Sing to Jehovah a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints. A true church is an assembly of SAINTS. What are SAINTS? They are ones who have been SANCTIFIED. Let's turn over to Eph 5:25-27 :

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly and gave Himself up on its behalf, that He might sanctify it, cleansing [it] by the washing of the water in [the] Word, that He might present it to Himself [as] the glorious assembly, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such things, but that it be holy and without blemish. The church is made up of those whom Christ loves and for whom Christ gave Himself up. And the church is a sanctified, cleansed, washed, holy, unblemished body. Does that mean that members of the true church never sin? No - it means that all members of the true church are clean by virtue of the merits of the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. This is the same thing as saying that they are SAINTS. The Roman Catholics would want us to believe that SAINTS are people who were a lot better and did more wonderful things than an average Christian. The truth is that EVERY Christian is a saint. (Of course, none of the Roman Catholics who call themselves Christians are true Christians.) We who are true Christians have ALL been sanctified by the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. Every Christian, whether they have been saved for two hours or 60 years, is fully sanctified and fully entitled to all of God's blessings, including final glory.

Now we contrast this to the false church. The false church is made up of people who have not been sanctified. They are not saints. They do not believe the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone.

Now because the true church is made up of people who believe the true gospel, we see something else about the true church in 1Ti 3:15. Let's turn over there: But if I delay, that you may know how to behave in the house of God, which is [the] assembly of the living God, [the] pillar and foundation of the truth. The true church is the pillar and foundation of the TRUTH. You can be sure that where the true church is, you can find the TRUTH. In fact, the way to find a local assembly that is part of the true church is to see if this assembly believes and proclaims the TRUTH. The false church believes and proclaims the LIE. When you are searching for a true assembly, you should find out whether or not this assembly believes and proclaims the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. The series of sermons I preached on the gospel would be a good litmus test. Do they VALUE this gospel to the point of judging by it? Do they believe that universal atonement is a false gospel and that all who believe universal atonement or any other false gospel are lost? If they don't, then they are not a true assembly of Christ; instead, they are what God calls a "synagogue of Satan" in Rev 2:9. They are a synagogue of lies, and you are to avoid such an assembly. Turn over to 2Co 6:14-18 : Do not be unequally yoked [with] unbelievers. For what partnership does righteousness [have] with lawlessness? And what fellowship does light [have] with darkness? And what agreement does Christ [have] with

Belial? Or what part does a believer [have] with an unbeliever? And what agreement does a temple of God [have] with idols? For you are a temple of [the] living God, even as God said, "I will dwell in them and "walk among them, [and] I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Because of this, "come out from among them" "and be separated," says [the] Lord, "and do not touch [the] unclean thing," and I will receive you. "And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons" and daughters to Me, says [the] Lord Almighty.

God makes it crystal clear: God's people are not to have religious fellowship with unbelievers, lawlessness, darkness, Belial, or idols. We are to be separate from them. If someone who is listening to this tape has recently become a Christian and has been a part of a false church, the first thing you need to do is GET OUT of that false church. Run as fast as you can. It is a place of unbelievers, lawlessness, darkness, and idols. It is Satanic. And how can we tell believers from unbelievers, righteousness from lawlessness, light from darkness, the true Christ from Satan, and the temple of God from idols? I've said it enough now that you should already know what I'm about to say. It starts with a "D". It is DOCTRINE. That's how we distinguish the true from the false. What DOCTRINE does this assembly believe and teach? The TRUE church is the pillar and foundation of TRUTH. And the FALSE church is based on the lies of the Devil.

Turn to Rev 17:1-18. I'll be reading Rev 17:1-6, and then I'll read Rev 18:1-5 : And one of the seven angels having the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying to me, Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot sitting on the many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the ones inhabiting the earth became drunk from the wine of her fornication. And he carried me away into a desert, by [the] Spirit. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, filled with names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and being gilded with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominations and unclean things of her fornication. And on her forehead was a name having been written: Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the woman being drunk from the blood of the saints, and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. ... And after these things I saw another angel coming down out of Heaven having great authority, and the earth was lighted up from his glory. And he cried in a strong, great voice, saying, Babylon the great has fallen! It has fallen, and it has become a dwelling-place of demons, and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean bird, even having been hated, because of the wine of the anger of her fornication which all the nations have drunk, even the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; and the merchants of the earth became rich from the power of her luxury. And I heard another voice out of Heaven saying, My people, come out of her, that you may not share in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues; because her sins joined together, even up to Heaven, and God remembered her unjust deeds. This is quite a description of the false church. The false church is called a great harlot and the mother of harlots. A harlot is the same thing as a whore. She is one who fornicates with many men. The false church is one who fornicates with the wicked. And what is the main evidence of this fornication? It is saying "peace, peace" when there is no peace, like we saw of the false teachers two weeks ago. These religious fornicators will be intimate with and get into bed with those who believe in salvation conditioned on the sinner. A prime example of this, like I've said before, is the "Calvinist" or "Reformed" or "Sovereign Grace" church that speaks peace to those who believe in universal atonement. This church might strongly

preach against physical adultery and whoredom, yet they are committing adultery and whoredom themselves, and what they are doing is just as wicked and abominable as the woman who has slept with a thousand men. And in Rev 18:1-24, we see God's command to His people, just like His command in 2Co 6:1-18 : COME OUT. And those who DO NOT come out of the whore are sharing in her sins, just like in 2Jn 1:11, and show that they are not truly God's people. In contrast with the great whore, the true church is the virgin bride of Christ. The true church does not go after other gods or after others who believe in other gods. The true church is a faithful, chaste virgin. Let's turn to Rev 21:9 : And one of the seven angels came to me, he having the seven bowls being filled with the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

God then goes on to give a picture of the wife of Christ, and He says in Rev 21:27 : And all profaning may not at all enter into it, or any making an abomination or a lie; but only the ones having been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb.

Turn over to 2Co 11:2 : For I am jealous [over] you with a jealousy of God. For I have promised you to one Man, to present [you] a pure virgin to Christ. And then back to Rev 14:1-5 : And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion! And with Him were a hundred [and] forty four thousands, with the name of His Father having been written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound out of Heaven, as a sound of many waters, and as a sound of great thunder. Also I heard a sound of harpers harping on their harps. And they sing as a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one was able to learn the song except the hundred [and] forty four thousands, those having been redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones following the Lamb wherever He may go. These were redeemed from among men as [a] firstfruit to God and to the Lamb.

Let's go over a few more characteristics of the true church. Since the church is the pillar and ground of truth and is made up of believers, then when a person shows himself to be an unbeliever, he is to be excommunicated from the assembly of believers. Let's turn to some examples of this:

1Co 5:7-13 :

Then purge out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For also Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. So let us keep [the] feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and of evil, but with unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in the letter not to associate with fornicators; and not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or with plunderers, or with idolaters, since then you must go out of the world. But now I wrote to you not to associate intimately; if anyone is called a brother [and is] either a fornicator, or a covetous one, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a plunderer, with such a one not to eat. For what [is it] to me also to judge the ones outside? Do you not judge those inside? But God will judge the ones outside. "And you shall put out from yourselves the evil one."

Mat 18:15-20 : But if your brother may sin against you, go and reprove him between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not hear, take one or two more with you, "so that on the mouth of two" or "three witnesses every word may stand". But if he

fails to hear them, tell [it] to the assembly. And if he also fails to hear the assembly, let him be to you as the nations and the tax collector. Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth will be, having been bound in Heaven. And whatever you loose on the earth will be, having been loosed in Heaven. Again I say to you, If two of you agree on earth as to anything, whatever they shall ask, it shall be to them from My Father in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.

Rom 16:17 : And brothers I exhort you to watch those making divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and turn away from them.

Tit 1:10-11 : For there are indeed many insubordinate men, empty talkers and mind-deluders, especially those of [the] circumcision, whose mouth [you] must stop, who overturn whole houses, teaching things which [they] ought not for the sake of ill gain.

Tit 3:10-11 :

After the first and second warning, avoid a man of heresy, knowing that such a one has been perverted and sins, being self-condemned.

Gal 1:8-9 : But even if we, or an angel out of Heaven, should preach a gospel to you beside the gospel we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, and now I say again, If anyone preaches a gospel beside what you received, let him be accursed.

1Ti 6:3-5.

If anyone teaches differently, and does not consent to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to godliness, he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but [is] sick concerning doubts and arguments, out of which comes envy, strife, evil-speakings, evil suspicions, meddling, of men whose mind has been corrupted and deprived of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness. Withdraw from such [persons].

Notice that excommunication is to be made in cases of behavior AND in cases of doctrine. Some so-called churches will only excommunicate those who are immoral and continue to speak peace to those who bring false doctrine, while other so-called churches will only excommunicate those who bring false doctrine but continue to speak peace to those who are immoral. The true church is to excommunicate both. Now excommunication is part of a process of church discipline that I won't go into today, but I will say that in some circumstances, a professing believer is to be rebuked and called to repentance, and if there's repentance, this person is not excommunicated.

Here is another characteristic of the true church. Turn back to Psa 149:1 :

Praise Jehovah! Sing to Jehovah a new song, His praise in the assembly of the saints.

Now turn to Psa 111:1 :

Praise Jehovah! I will thank Jehovah with all [my] heart; in the council of the upright, and of the assembly. A true church is one in which there is thanksgiving and praise to the true God. The thanksgiving and praise comes from a heart that believes that God's grace, manifested in the work of Christ, makes the only difference between heaven and hell. Those who are members of the council of the upright know that the work of Christ demands and ensures their salvation, and they

praise God together for His amazing grace. The false church gives thanks to their god and their christ, but they give thanks for making it possible for them to come to Christ of their own free will. Many of the modern churches are rocking with so-called praise, and they sing and shout and clap their hands and dance to their god, but it is a false god. And just from the name "church" or "assembly" or "congregation," we see that the church is a gathering together. We also see this in the passages on worship. Believers within an area ASSEMBLE to worship God. Turn to Heb 10:24-25 : And let us consider one another, to incitement of love and of good works, not forsaking the assembling together of ourselves, as [is the] custom of some, but exhorting, and by so much more as you see the Day drawing near.

Believers are to ASSEMBLE together to incite and exhort. And we just saw in the passages in Psalms that believers are to assemble together to corporately worship the true and living God. God does not say that we are just to privately worship. He places a strong emphasis on COMING TOGETHER to worship. God has made the assembly of saints a means of grace to His people, so that they will grow in grace and knowledge. We see an example in Acts 20:7 where the disciples gathered together on the first day of the week, and in Acts 2:42, believers continued in the doctrine of the apostles, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Eph 5:19 says, "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and praising in your heart to the Lord." The Greek words for psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are the same Greek words that are found in the Greek version of the Old Testament in the Book of Praises, otherwise known as the Book of Psalms. These psalms and hymns and spiritual songs are actually titles of specific Psalms in the Book of Praises. Thus, we see that in our assembly, we are to sing from the Book of Praises. God does not command us to sing from any other book, and in worship, we are only to do what God has prescribed in His Word.

Another important thing to know about a local assembly is that it is ORGANIZED and ORDERLY. God gives His prescription as to the order of the church. The assembly doesn't just wing it. Look back at 1Ti 3:14-15 :

I write these things to you, hoping to come to you shortly. But if I delay, that you may know how to behave in the house of God, which is [the] assembly of the living God, [the] pillar and foundation of the truth.

Note that the Holy Spirit through Paul told the people how to BEHAVE in the house of God. And we see starting in 1Pe 2:1-15 that the Holy Spirit clearly shows how the assembly is to be run. Petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings are to be made by men on behalf of all kinds of men. Women are to adorn themselves in proper clothing, with modesty and sensibleness. Women are not to teach but to learn in silence. The assemblies are to have overseers and deacons who are of good behavior and good reputation. And there are other passages that give prescriptions for the order of the assembly.

I could go into so many more things concerning the church, but I hope this brief overview will be of help to you. Let's turn to Col 1:21-29 to close: And you then being alienated and hostile in [your] mind by evil works, but now He reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death, to present you holy and without blemish and irreproachable before Him, if indeed you continue in the faith grounded and settled and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard proclaimed in all the creation under Heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister, who now rejoice

in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up in my flesh the things lacking of the afflictions of Christ on behalf of His body, which [is] the assembly, of which I became a minister, according to the administration of God given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God, the mystery having been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now was revealed to His saints; to whom God willed to make known what [are] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, who is Christ in you, the hope of glory; whom we announce, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man full-grown in Christ Jesus, for which also I labor, struggling according to the working of Him who works in me in power.

Amen.

S. True And False Faith And Hope

TRUE AND FALSE FAITH AND HOPE (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 2/4/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Today is the last sermon in this series on the true versus the false. There's so much more that can be said regarding what the Bible says is true and what the Bible says is false, but I've been thinking about this whole concept of true and false and how many more sermons could be preached on it, and I came to an obvious conclusion: just about every sermon I preach, no matter what subject, is talking about what is true versus what is false. It's a basic part of instruction. So even though we're officially ending the series today, you won't be getting away from sermons on what is true versus what is false. The preacher is supposed to tell forth the truth that is in God's Word, especially the truth of the gospel, and he is supposed to expose the false that is contrary to God's Word, especially the lie of the false gospel. The Bible ITSELF does this. It doesn't just focus on the positive, and it doesn't just focus on the negative. It promotes the truth and exposes the lie. It is what's called a POLEMICAL book. A POLEMIC is something that upholds one thing and condemns what is opposed to it. A good example of a POLEMIC is 1 John, where the apostle over and over says things like 1Jn 2:23 :

Everyone denying the Son does not have the Father. The [one] confessing the Son also has the Father.

He CONTRASTS the wicked with the righteous. He CONTRASTS the true gospel with the false gospel. When you think of "polemic," think of "pole." Poles are opposites. On a U-shaped magnet, there is a negative pole and a positive pole. When someone says that two people or opinions are "poles apart," he means that they are as diametrically opposed as possible. When someone or something is said to be "polarizing," it means that it is DIVISIVE. It makes people OPPOSE each other. Every true preacher of God should be a POLEMICIST. He should clearly set forth what divides the true from the false. Jesus was a POLEMICIST. He said in Mat 10:34-36 : Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. I came to dis sever a man from his father, and a daughter from her mother, and a bride from her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies [shall be] those of his [own] house.

These words are quite DIVISIVE, aren't they? Jesus didn't come to bring everybody together. He came to divide. And all who would follow after Jesus are fellow-dividers. So let's go into true faith and hope versus false faith and hope. Faith and hope are inextricably connected to each other. Let's read Heb 11:1 :

Now faith is [the] essence of things being hoped, the evidence of things not having been seen.

We see here the connection between faith and hope. But what does it mean that faith is the SUBSTANTIATION of things having been hoped? Well, we need to see the other places in the Bible where the Greek word is used. The Greek word is hu-POS-ta-sis. The word comes from hu-PO, which means "under," and HIST-ay-mee, which means "to stand." So hu-POS-ta-sis

literally means, "a standing under," or "a support." Let's read some passages that include this word.

2Co 9:4 : lest if Macedonians come with me and find you not ready, that we (we do not say you) should be ashamed in this assurance of boasting. The word there is "assurance."

2Co 11:17 :

What I speak, I speak not according to [the] Lord, but as in foolishness, in this boldness of boasting. The word there is "boldness."

Heb 3:14 : For we have become partakers of Christ, if truly we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to [the] end; The word there is "assurance." Now we're getting the meaning, aren't we? The first part of Heb 11:1 would be much better translated like this: "Now faith is the ASSURANCE of things having been hoped." That makes it much clearer, doesn't it? Faith is the ASSURANCE of what God's people hoped for. The question arises in theological circles from time to time, "Is assurance of the essence of faith?" Heb 11:1 answers that question with a resounding "YES." No assurance, no faith. No faith, no assurance.

Now before we get back to faith, now is a good time to talk about hope. If faith is the ASSURANCE of things HOPED for, then what is HOPE, and what IS it that is HOPED for? The two Greek words translated "hope" in the New Testament are the noun el-PEECE and the verb el-PID-zo. The noun means "expectation," and the verb means "to expect." And what is it that is expected? Let's turn to some passages that use the noun.

Acts 24:15 : having hope toward God, which these themselves also admit, [of] a resurrection being about to be of [the] dead, both of just and unjust ones. This is a hope of the resurrection.

Acts 26:6 : And now for [the] hope of the promise having been made by God to the fathers, I stand being judged; This is a hope of God's promise.

Rom 5:1-2 :

Then being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have had access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we glory on the hope of the glory of God.

Here we see faith, hope, and peace. The hope is of the glory of God.

Gal 5:5 : For we through [the] Spirit eagerly wait for [the] hope of righteousness out of faith. This is a hope of righteousness in glory.

Col 1:5 : because of the hope being laid up for you in Heaven, which you heard before in the Word of the truth of the gospel, This is a hope of Heaven.

Col 1:18-23 : And He is the Head of the body, the assembly, who is [the] Beginning, [the] First-born out of [the] dead, that He be preeminent in all things; because all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him, and through Him making peace by the blood of His cross, to reconcile all things to Himself; through Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in the heavens. And you then being alienated and hostile in [your] mind by evil works, but now He reconciled in the

body of His flesh, through death, to present you holy and without blemish and irreproachable before Him, if indeed you continue in the faith grounded and settled and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard proclaimed in all the creation under Heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister, This is a hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who reconciled us to Himself through His death.

1Th 1:2-4 :

We give thanks to God always concerning you all, making mention of you on our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love, and the patience of hope of our Lord Jesus Christ before our God and Father, knowing, brothers, having been loved, your election by God. This is a hope of final glory because of Jesus Christ in light of election.

1Th 2:19 : For what [is] our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? [Are] not even you, before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? This is a hope of glorying in Christ at His coming.

1Ti 1:1 :

Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ according to a command of God our Savior, even [the] Lord Jesus Christ, [our] Hope, Here Christ is called our Hope.

Tit 1:1-2 :

Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to [the] faith of [the] elect of God and full knowledge of [the] truth according to godliness, on hope of eternal life which the God who does not lie promised before [the] eternal times, This is a hope of eternal life based on God's promise.

Tit 2:13-14 : looking for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself on our behalf, "that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify a special people for Himself," zealous of good works. This is a hope of the second coming of Christ who gave Himself up for us and redeemed us.

Tit 3:7 : that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life.

Again, this is the hope of everlasting life in Heaven.

Heb 6:17-20 : In which way, desiring to more fully declare to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His counsel, God interposed by an oath, that through two unchangeable things, in which [it was] not possible [for] God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, those having fled to lay hold on the hope set before [us], which we have as an anchor of the soul, both certain and sure, and entering into the inner [side] of the veil, where Jesus entered as forerunner for us, having become a High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. This again is a hope based on God's promise through Jesus Christ.

1Pe 1:3-9 :

Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He according to His great mercy having regenerated us to a living hope through [the] resurrection of Jesus Christ from [the] dead, to an

inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in Heaven for you [the ones] in [the] power of God being guarded through faith to a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time; in which you exult; yet a little [while], if need be, grieving in manifold trials, so that the proving of your faith, much more precious than perishing gold, but having been proved through fire, may be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, you love; in whom not yet seeing, but believing, you exult with joy unspeakable and being glorified, obtaining the end of your faith, the salvation of [your] souls. This is a hope of our inheritance in heaven that is kept and guarded in Heaven for us, our final salvation.

These passages make it very clear what hope is and what is hoped FOR and what is hoped IN. Our hope is in the promise of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ! Remember when I talked about God as a promise-keeper? One of the things God promises is to bring every single one of His people to heaven. He promises that He will lose none, and that NONE will pluck them out of His hand. So true hope is the expectation of final glory based on the work of Christ alone. Now let's go back to Heb 11:1 :

Now faith is [the] essence of things being hoped, the evidence of things not having been seen. From what we have seen thus far, we can now plainly state what the first half of this verse means: FAITH is the FULL ASSURANCE that what is EXPECTED based on God's PROMISE will HAPPEN! In the second half of the verse, the Greek word for "evidence" is really "conviction." So the second half goes right along with the first. FAITH is the CONVICTION of things not seen. We who are alive and who know Christ have not ever seen God or Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. We have never seen final glory. Yet we are FULLY ASSURED and are CONVICTED that we will be in final glory, because we KNOW whom we have BELIEVED, and we KNOW that God's promise of salvation, from regeneration to final glory, conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, is SURE AND CERTAIN. This is our HOPE! Praise God!

Now let us see what false faith and hope are. Let's first turn to the parable of the sower and the seed in Mat 13:1-58. Let's go immediately to Christ's explanation of it in Mat 13:18-23 :

Then hear the parable of the sower: Everyone hearing the Word of the kingdom, and not understanding, [then] the evil one comes and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is that sown by the roadside. And that sown on the stony places is this: the [one] hearing the Word, and immediately receiving it with joy, but has no root in himself, but is temporary, and tribulation, or persecution occurring because of the Word, he is at once offended. And that sown into the thorn bushes is this: the [one] hearing the Word, and the anxiety of this age, and the deceit of riches, choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. But that sown on the good ground is this: the [one] hearing the Word, and understanding it, who indeed bears and yields fruit, one truly a hundredfold, and one sixty, and one thirty. The roadside hearer heard the gospel but didn't understand it. The thorny ground hearer was too consumed with the cares of the world. But take a look at the stony ground hearer in Mat 13:20-21. He receives the gospel with JOY when he first hears it! Now during the time he was joyful about the gospel, would this man tell you that he has faith in Jesus? Of course he would. And it even looks for a time like he DOES have faith in Jesus. But what happens to him? His so-called "faith" withers when persecution comes because of the gospel. Here is an example of FALSE FAITH. It believes things about the gospel, but it doesn't believe EVERYTHING about the gospel. It doesn't VALUE the gospel to the point of JUDGING by it. Once

the persecution comes, the house shows that it was not built on the rock of Christ but on the sand of self-righteousness. The world comes in and says that his gospel is too harsh and judgmental, and he ends up caving in and agreeing with them. He doesn't want to stir things up. He wants to stay in the same church he's always been in. Turn over to John 12:42-43 :

Still, however, even out of the rulers, many did believe into Him. But because of the Pharisees, they were not confessing, so that they not be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

Here is another example of false faith. They believed, but they did not tell the Pharisees that they were lost and their deeds are evil, because they didn't want to get thrown out of church. And why did they do this? Because they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God. This belief turned out to be a false belief.

False faith is also seen in Jas 2:1-26. Let's turn over there. Let's read Jas 2:14-26 : My brothers, what [is] the gain if anyone says he has faith, but he does not have works? Is the faith able to save him? But if a brother or a sister is naked and may be lacking in daily food, and any one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but does not give them the things the body needs, what gain [is it]? So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself. But someone will say, You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith out of my works. You believe that God is One. You do well; even the demons believe and shudder. But are you willing to know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is dead? Was not our father Abraham justified by works offering up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith worked with his works; and out of the works the faith was made perfected. And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, "And Abraham believed God, and it was counted for righteousness to him;" and he was called, Friend of God. You see, then, that a man is justified out of works, and not out of faith only. But in the same way Rahab the harlot was also justified out of works, having received the messengers, and sending them out by another way. For as the body is dead apart from the spirit, so also faith is dead apart from works. This clearly shows that someone who says he has faith but has no works to justify, or prove, that his faith is real, does not have true faith. He has false faith. Faith without accompanying works is a false faith. The antinomians will tell us that faith is true faith even without good works. The Bible opposes this deadly error. Faith is ALWAYS accompanied by good works, NO EXCEPTIONS. No good works means false faith.

And, of course, false faith includes belief in a false god. False gods come in many shapes and forms. The false god that is the most prevalent among those who call themselves Christians is the god who sent a christ to die for everyone without exception and who sends people to hell whom he promised he would save in christ.

Now let's go into false hope. Remember that true hope is an expectation that God will fulfill His promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. Of course, it is obvious from our previous polemics, that anyone who does not believe this is lost, and thus has a false hope. There are people who call themselves Christians out there who think that everything is right between them and God and that when they die, they will be ushered into the eternal bliss of heaven. But they will encounter a horrible surprise when they die. Instead of the glory of heaven, they will be put in hell, to suffer the awful torments of fire for eternity. How is it that professing Christians will end up in hell? It is because they did not have a righteousness that

equals the perfect righteousness of God. Their hope was really not based on the work of Christ alone; instead, it was based on themselves. They thought that something they did or continued to do or something that the Holy Spirit enabled them to do formed at least some part of the ground of their hope of final glory. They thought that their good works gave them the right to enter into glory. And God will say to them, "Depart, I never knew you." Turn over to 1Th 5:1-3 : But concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need [for it] to be written. For you yourselves know accurately that the day of [the] Lord, as a thief in [the] night, so it comes. For when they say, Peace and safety! Then suddenly destruction comes upon them, like the travail to the [one having babe] in womb, and not at all shall they escape.

These people who think they believe in Jesus Christ, who think they have peace and safety, will be destroyed. Why? Their peace and safety is not based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. They think that their faith or their commitment or their perseverance or their earthly stewardship or good deeds will give them peace with God and safety from the wrath of God in hell. Their hope was based on their works. And in that terrible day, their hope will be seen as a false hope. None of them will escape.

Lastly, let's turn to Isa 28:14-17 : So hear the Word of Jehovah, scornful men, rulers of this people in Jerusalem. Because you have said, We have cut a covenant with death; and, We have made a vision with Sheol, when the overwhelming rod passes through it will not come to us for we have made the lie our refuge, and we have hidden in falsehood. So, the Lord Jehovah says this: Behold, I place in Zion a Stone for a foundation, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation; he who believes shall not hasten. And I will lay justice for a line, and righteousness for a plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of the lie; and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

These false religionists thought they were safe from destruction because they made themselves a refuge. But it was not a true refuge; it was a false refuge. It was a refuge of lies. In Isa 28:16, God shows what the true refuge is. And anyone outside that refuge will be destroyed. The true refuge is the precious Cornerstone, Jesus Christ. All who believe God's promise of salvation conditioned on Christ alone shall be saved. They have a hope. They have full assurance and expectation that when the wrath of God against the wicked comes, they will be spared, because they are covered with the garment of the imputed righteousness of Christ. But the false religionists, even those singing and worshiping this morning in churches that claim to come in the name of Christ, are covered with the filthy rags of the righteousness of self. That is their refuge. They may be singing and preaching that Christ is their refuge, but their doctrine shows that they do not believe that it is the work of Christ alone that makes the difference between heaven and hell. Their refuge is one of lies. And this refuge of lies is their hope. They have a hope of final glory based on their refuge of lies. They are saying to themselves and others, "when the overwhelming rod passes through, it will not come to us." "Peace and safety." Yet in Isa 28:17 we see that God will measure them according to the standard of His justice and righteousness. In His perfect justice, He will condemn to hell all who do not have perfect righteousness. He will expose their refuge as nothing but lies. Their works, their faith, their perseverance, their stewardship, and anything else they believed recommended them to God or entitled them to heaven, will be swept away, and they will be trampled. Praise God. And God will also measure His people according to the standard of His justice and righteousness. In His perfect justice, He will bring to heaven those who DO have a perfect righteousness, those who plead the righteousness of Christ alone as the ground of their

salvation, those whose sins have been paid for by the blood of Christ. Praise God.

What is YOUR hope? What is YOUR assurance? Where is YOUR peace? What do YOU believe makes the difference between heaven and hell? May God cause His Word to go forth. Amen.

S. True And False God

TRUE AND FALSE GOD (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 11/12/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Let's turn to Psa 119:1-176, and I'll be reading the entire section called "Mem," which is Psa 119:97-104 :

Oh how I love Your Law! It [is] my meditation all the day. You make me wiser than my enemies by Your Commands; for they [are] forever mine. I have more understanding than all my teachers; for Your Testimonies [are] a meditation to me. I understand more than the aged, for I keep Your Precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil way, to keep Your Word. I turned not from Your judgments; for You have taught me. How sweet are Your Words to my palate! More than honey to my mouth! By Your Precepts I know; so then I hate every false way.

Today I'm starting a series of messages under the heading, "True and False." The Lord willing, I'll be going into many things that are counterfeited by Satan and his children but can be distinguished from the true by God's Word. God's people are to hate every false way. Today, the Lord willing, I'll be going into the true God versus false gods. In future sermons, the Lord willing, I'll be going over things like true and false Christ, true and false Holy Spirit, true and false gospel, true and false grace, true and false repentance, true and false humility, true and false love, and probably more than that. I pray that God will use this to edify the saints and bring lost sheep to repentance of the lie and belief of the truth.

Let's take some time this morning to think about and read what God says about the true God versus false gods. Let's turn to Exo 34:12-17 :

Take heed to yourself, that you not cut a covenant with the people of the land to which you are going in, that it not be a snare in your midst. But you shall cut down their altars, break their pillars, and you shall cut off their Asherahs. For you shall not bow to another god, for Jehovah whose name [is] Jealous, He [is] a jealous God; that you not cut a covenant with the people of the land, and they fornicate with their gods, and they call to you, and you eat from his sacrifice; and you take from their daughters for your sons, and their daughters fornicate with their gods, and they lead your sons to fornicate with their gods. You shall not make for yourself casted gods. Not only does God say that He is jealous, but He says that His NAME is jealous. This is to emphasize and show without any doubt that JEALOUSY is an integral part of WHO GOD IS. His NAME reveals His CHARACTER. His NAME reveals His PERFECTIONS. His NAME reveals His VIRTUES. And God says in Exo 34:14 that His NAME is JEALOUS. What does JEALOUS mean? To be jealous means to DEMAND EXCLUSIVE DEVOTION and to be INTOLERANT OF RIVALRY. God DEMANDS that He and He ALONE be worshiped. He is INTOLERANT of all other false gods. There is a picture of this in the Christian marriage relationship. A husband is to be JEALOUS over his wife. He is not to tolerate ANYONE who lusts after or shows this kind of interest in his wife. The world uses the term "jealous husband" in a derogatory way, but ANY HUSBAND who is NOT jealous of

his wife DOES NOT love his wife.

There are many passages that speak of God as a jealous God. We won't turn to them, but it's a good study to go over the JEALOUSY of God. Let's turn to some other passages that show God's love of Himself and his intolerance of any rivals.

Isa 42:8 :

I [am] Jehovah; that is My name; and I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to engraved images.

Isa 48:11 : For My sake, for My sake, I will act; for how is it defiled? And I will not give My glory to another.

God is JEALOUS over His GLORY. He will not tolerate His glory being attributed to another. And why does He act? FOR HIS OWN SAKE. For His own GLORY. Look at another passage that clearly shows this: Eze 36:16-23 : And the Word of Jehovah was to me, saying, Son of man, [when] the house of Israel dwelt on their land, they even defiled it by their ways and by their doings. As the defilement of woman's impurity, their way was before Me. So I poured out My fury on them, because of the blood that they had poured out on the land, and for their idols [by which] they defiled it. And I scattered them among the nations, and they were sown among the lands; I judged them by their way and by their doings. And when they entered into the nations, there where they went, they even profaned My holy name, by saying to them, These [are] the people of Jehovah, and they are gone out of His land. But I had pity for My holy name which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations, there where they went. Therefore, say to the house of Israel, So says the Lord Jehovah: I do not do [this] for your sake, O house of Israel, but only for My holy name which you profaned among the nations, there where you went. And I will sanctify My great name which was profaned among the nations, which you profaned among them. And the nations shall know that I [am] Jehovah, declares the Lord Jehovah, when I am sanctified in you in their eyes.

God does things for HIS OWN SAKE, for His OWN NAME, for His OWN GLORY. Notice in the last part of Eze 36:23, God says, "And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah." If you've read through the Old Testament, you will know that the phrase "and they shall know that I am Jehovah" or "that I am the Lord," depending on which translation you use - this phrase is a very common phrase. "Why does God use it so much? Because He is PERFECTLY SELF-INTERESTED. He will have His name glorified. You will also see the phrase "other gods" throughout the Old Testament, in contrast to the one true and living God.

Now if God is jealous for His own glory, that His name be glorified, should we not also be jealous for the name of our God? Should we not be zealous to stand up and refute the God-haters when they talk of God in a way that dishonors God's glory? Now I'm not talking about the unconcerned and irreligious person who uses the name "God" throughout his speech. That most certainly IS an abomination to God. But what I'm specifically talking about are those who use the name of God in their RELIGION who dishonor every attribute of God's character by their doctrine. These people, who say things like "God loves you and wants you to be saved," are blaspheming the name of God. Should we not stand up and lift our voices against such blasphemy? Yes we should. We should say, "YOU worship a false god. HERE'S what the TRUE GOD is and does." As you know,

another word for false gods is IDOLS. And anyone who worships a false god is an IDOLATER. I won't go into the verses on idolatry, but many of them talk about images that were made by hand. They were made of things like wood, stone, brass, and iron. People bowed down to these statues, thinking that they were worshipping God. We still have some of this today, where some of the tribal and eastern religions use images and bow down to them. There's also image use in false Christianity, where people use things like statues, crosses, stained glass windows or paintings of pseudo-Jesus; even though they might not bow down to them, they use them as "reminders" in worship, which is just as idolatrous as if they were bowing to them. But idolatry does not only mean the use of tangible images. In fact, the majority of idolatry today is one that is manifested in people's DOCTRINE. Idolatry is attributing to God qualities of character that DO NOT belong to Him, or NOT attributing to God qualities of character that DO belong to Him. Now that opens it wide up, doesn't it? We see that ALL of false religion, including Arminianism and tolerant Calvinism, is nothing but idolatry. So let's go into what distinguishes the true God from all false gods. Now, we could just say, "The God of the Bible is the true God, and any god that's contrary to the God of the Bible is a false God." And we would be right in saying this. But how many religionists who come in the name of Christianity, at least conservative Christianity would say they agree with this statement? Pretty close to 100% of religionists who come in the name of conservative Christianity or "evangelicalism" would say they agree with this statement. So we need to be more specific in naming the things that distinguish the true God from all idols.

One of the first things we see in many passages that talk of God in contrast with idols is that God is the creator. I'll just give a few examples. First, 1Ch 16:26 :

All gods of the peoples [are] nothings; yea, Jehovah has made the heavens.

Now we'll go back to Isa 42:1-25. I read Isa 42:8 before, but now I'll read some of what led up to Isa 42:8. I'll start with Isa 42:5 : So says Jehovah God, creating the heavens and stretching them out; spreading out the earth and its offspring, giving breath to the people on it, and spirit to those walking in it. I, Jehovah, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand, and will keep You, and give You for a covenant of the people, for a Light of the nations; to open blind eyes, to lead out the prisoner from the prison; those who sit in darkness from the prison. I [am] Jehovah; that is My name; and I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to engraved images. So here are some examples of God distinguishing himself from idols by saying that He is the Creator. Any god that did not create the universe is an idol. Many of the so-called "evangelicals" would agree with us up to this point. But if we look at what comes AFTER Isa 42:8, we'll see what is directly tied to God's creatorship. Let's read Isa 42:8-9 :

I [am] Jehovah; that is My name; and I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to engraved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and I declare new things before they happen, I cause you to hear.

God is distinguished from false gods in that He CONTROLS what He CREATES. There are two very powerful passages a before and after Isa 42:1-25 that directly link God as Creator with God as Sovereign. Let's first read Isa 40:12-28 :

[He] who has measured in His hand the waters and the heavens by a span meted out; and enclosed in the measure the dust of the earth, and weighed in the balance the mountains, and the

hills in the scales, Who has meted out the Spirit of Jehovah, or a man His counsel taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and [who] trained Him and taught Him in the path of justice; and taught Him knowledge, and made known to Him the way of discernment? Lo, nations [are] as a drop from a bucket, and are reckoned as dust of the scales. Lo, He takes up coasts as a little thing. And Lebanon [is] not enough to burn, nor are its beasts enough [for] a burnt offering. All the nations [are] as nothing before Him; to Him they are reckoned less than nothing and emptiness. And to whom will you liken God? Or what likeness will you array to Him? The craftsman pours out the casted image, the smelter spreads it with gold; and he casts the chains of silver. He too poor for [that] offering chooses a tree that will not rot; he seeks a skilled artisan for him, to prepare a carved image that will not be shaken. Have you not known? Have you not heard? Was it not told to you from the beginning? Did you not discern [from] the foundations of the earth? He who sits on the circle of the earth, even those living in it are like grasshoppers; He who stretches the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in; who gives potentates into nothing. He makes judges of the earth as nothing. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they are not sown; yea, their stem [is] not taking root in the earth. And He shall also blow on them, and they shall wither, and the tempest shall lift them up like stubble. To whom then will you compare Me, or [am] I equaled, says the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high and look: Who has created these? Who brings out their host by number? By greatness of vigor, and might of power, He calls them all by names; not one is lacking. Why will you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel; My way is hidden from Jehovah, and my judgment is passed over by my God? Have you not known? Have you not heard? Jehovah, the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth; He is not faint, nor does [He] grow weary; [there is] no searching to His understanding.

Now let's read Isa 46:5-11 : To whom will you compare and make Me equal; yea, compare Me, that we may be alike? Those who lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver on the measuring rod; they hire a refiner and he makes it a god. They fall down; yea, they worship. They carry it on the shoulder; they bear it and set it in its place, and it stands; it shall not move from its place. Yes, he cries to it, but it does not answer, it does not save him from his distress. Remember this and be a man; return [it] on [your] heart, transgressors. Remember former things from forever, for I [am] God, and no one else [is] God, even none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past those things which were not done, saying, My counsel shall rise; and, I will do all My desire; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My counsel from a far off land. Yes, I have spoken; yes, I will cause it to come; I have formed; yes, I will do it. So not only is God the Creator of all things, God is Sovereign over all things, and He accomplishes whatever He desires in all things. Any god who is not in total control of all things is an idol. Many so-called "evangelicals" will even say they agree with THIS, although there are fewer that agree with this than agree that God is the creator. But you weed out many of them when you show them the truth that God is in ACTIVE control of all things, INCLUDING all actions of human beings. God does not have a "permissive will." For if God merely "permits" something to happen rather than actively controlling what happens, then there is some kind of power that is independent of God, that God just lets happen or does not let happen. This is not the God of the Bible. Let's look at some Scripture passages that prove this. Notice how these passages are also used in the context of the true God versus all false gods.

Deu 32:39 :

See now that I, I [am] He, and there [is] no other God with Me. I kill, and I keep alive. I wound and I heal, and there [is] no deliverer from My hand.

Psa 115:1-8 : Not to us, O Jehovah, not to us, but to Your name give glory; on account of Your mercy, on account of Your truth. Why do the nations say, Where [is] their God now? But our God [is] in Heaven; He has done all that He has pleased. Their idols [are] silver and gold, the work of man's hands; they [have] mouths, but they do not speak; they [have] eyes, but they do not see; they [have] ears, but they do not hear; they [have] a nose, but they do not smell; their hands do not feel; their feet do not walk; they do not mutter through their throat. The ones who make them are like them, [and] everyone trusting in them.

Psa 135:5-12 : For I know that Jehovah [is] great, and our Lord [is] above all gods. Every [thing] which Jehovah [was] pleased to do, He did, in the heavens and in the earth, and in the seas and all deep places. He causes the vapors to rise from the end of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His storehouses; [He] who struck the first-born of Egypt, from man to animal; [who] sent signs and wonders into your midst, O Egypt, on Pharaoh and on all his servants; who struck great nations, and killed mighty kings; Sihon, king Of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan. And He gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to His people Israel.

Isa 45:5-7 :

I [am] Jehovah, and [there is] none else; there is no God except Me. I will clothe you, though you do not know Me, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and to its going down, that [there is] none besides Me; I [am] Jehovah, and there is none else; forming light, and creating darkness; making peace, and creating evil. I, Jehovah, do all these things.

Now let's turn to a few passages that show that God is in control of the actions of men: Pro 16:4 :

Jehovah has made all for His purpose, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

Pro 21:1 :

[As] streams of waters, the king's heart [is] in the hand of Jehovah; He turns it wherever He desires.

Exo 7:3-5 : And I will harden the heart of Pharaoh. And I will multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh will not listen to you. And I will put My hand on Egypt, and will bring My armies, My people, the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt with great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I [am] Jehovah when I send forth My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst.

Exo 14:17-18 : And behold! I [am] making strong the heart of the Egyptians. And they will go after them. And I will be honored through Pharaoh and through his armies, through his chariots, and through his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I [am] Jehovah, in My being honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots, and through his horsemen.

Deu 2:30 : And Sihon the king of Heshbon was not willing to let us pass by him, for Jehovah your God had hardened his spirit, and had emboldened his heart, so as to give him into your hand, as [it

is] this day.

2Sa 17:14 : And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel. And Jehovah had ordained to break down the good counsel of Ahithophel, for the sake of bringing the evil of Jehovah to Absalom.

2Ch 25:20 : And Amaziah would not listen, for it [was] from God, in order to give them into their hand, because they had sought to the gods of Edom.

Ezr 6:22 : And [they] performed the Feast of Unleavened [Bread] seven days with joy. For Jehovah had made them joyful, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, to make their hands strong in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. And Pro 16:33 says that when the lot is cast into the lap, the ordering of it is from Jehovah. The true God actively controls everything. The false god doesn't control everything; he merely lets it happen. This all ties into God's infinity, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, which we won't go into in this sermon. But you know what? We haven't even gotten to the MAIN THING -- THE MOST IMPORTANT THING -- that distinguishes the true God from all idols. We did need to establish that God is the creator and is in control of every single bit of His creation. But these truths serve to LEAD INTO the HEART of it all. Let's read a passage of Scripture that gets to the heart of the truth of who the true God is versus who all false gods are. Let's turn to Isaiah 45, and let's read Isa 45:18-25 : For so says Jehovah, Creator of the heavens; He [is] God, forming the earth and making it; He makes it stand, not creating it empty, [but] forming it to be lived in. I [am] Jehovah, and [there is] none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to Jacob's seed, Seek Me in vain. I Jehovah speak righteousness, declaring right things. Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, escaped ones of the nations; the ones who set up the wood of their carved image, and the ones who pray to a god who cannot save; they know nothing. Declare and bring near; yea, let them consult together. Who has revealed this of old; [who] has told it from then? Is it not I, Jehovah? And there [is] no God other than Me; a just God and a Savior; [there is] none except Me. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I [am] God, and there [is] no other. I have sworn by Myself, the Word has gone out of My mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. He shall say, Only in Jehovah do I have righteousness and strength; to Him he comes; and they are ashamed, all who are angry with Him. In Jehovah all of the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory. In Isa 45:18, God again says that He is the creator and that there is no other God. In Isa 45:20, He describes the false god - it is a god who CANNOT SAVE. And in Isa 45:21-25, God describes Himself in contrast with the false god. HERE is where the crux of the matter is. Here is where all false religionists, even those who come in the name of Christianity, show that they DO NOT believe the true God but are the same as the idolaters in Isa 45:20.

There is NO OTHER GOD who is both a JUST GOD and a SAVIOR. No other god. Any god that is not both a JUST GOD and a SAVIOR is an idol. Let's look at this for the remaining time.

First of all, the true God is HOLY, RIGHTEOUS, and JUST. He is totally pure of all taint. He is so pure that He cannot fellowship with anyone who is not as pure as He is. And if anyone is not as pure as He is, he must exact His righteous justice. God shows His righteousness and holiness by His Law. Sin is any transgression of God's Law, even down to the thoughts and intents of the heart. God's righteous justice DEMANDS that ALL SIN must be punished. And it must be punished

in proportion to His righteousness. Let's turn to a few passages that show God's holiness and righteousness.

Deu 32:4 :

[He is] the Rock; His work [is] perfect. For all His ways [are] just, a God of faithfulness, and without evil; just and upright [is] He.

Psa 33:4 : For the Word of Jehovah [is] right, and all His works [are] in truth.

Psa 92:15 : to declare that Jehovah [is] upright, my Rock! And in Him [is] no evil.

Isa 5:16 : But Jehovah of Hosts is exalted in judgment, and God the Holy One is proven holy in righteousness.

Now let's turn to a few passages that show God's justice and judgment.

Deu 27:26 :

Cursed [is] he who does not rise to all the Words of this Law, to do them! And all the people shall say, Amen!

Jos 24:19 : And Joshua said to the people, You cannot serve Jehovah, for He [is] a holy God; He [is] a jealous God. He will not lift up [from you] your transgressions or your sins.

1Sa 2:10 :

They who strive [with] Jehovah will be smashed; He thunders in the heavens against him. Jehovah judges the ends of the earth and gives strength to His king; and [He] exalts the horn of His anointed.

Psa 7:11 :

God is a righteous judge; and God is angry with evildoers every day.

Psa 9:7-8 : But Jehovah is seated forever; He has established His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness; He shall judge the peoples in uprightness.

Psa 11:4-7 :

Jehovah [is] in His holy temple; Jehovah, His throne is in the heavens; His eyes see; His eyelids will examine the sons of man. Jehovah tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the [one] loving violence. He shall rain snares on the wicked; fire and brimstone and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. For Jehovah is righteous; He loves righteous deeds; the upright look upon His face.

Psa 19:9 : The fear of Jehovah [is] clean, enduring forever. The judgments of Jehovah [are] true, they are righteous altogether.

Psa 96:13 : before Jehovah; for He comes; for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His faithfulness.

Pro 17:15 :

He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, even both of them [are] disgusting to Jehovah.

Pro 24:12 : For you say, Behold, we did not know this. Does not He who weighs the heart consider it? And the One who keeps your soul, does He [not] know? Yea, He repays to a man according to his work.

Ecc 3:17 :

I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for [there is] a time there for every good purpose and for every work.

Ecc 12:14 : For God shall bring every work into judgment, with all that is hidden, whether [it is] good, or whether [it is] evil.

Isa 28:17 : And I will lay justice for a line, and righteousness for a plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of the lie; and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Nah 1:3-6 :

Jehovah [takes] long to anger, and [is] great of power, and He does not by any means acquit [the guilty]. Jehovah [has] His way in the tempest and in the storm, and the clouds [are] the dust of His feet. He rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up the rivers. Bashan and Carmel wither, and the flower of Lebanon withers. The mountains quake from Him, and the hills melt; and the earth is lifted up from before Him, even the world and all who dwell in it. Who can stand before His fury? And who can rise against the heat of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken down because of Him.

Zep 3:5 : The righteous Jehovah is in her midst; He will not act perversely. Every morning He gives His justice to the light; He does not fail, but the unjust knows no shame.

Mat 13:40-42 :

Then as the darnel is gathered and is consumed in the fire, so it will be in the completion of this age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all the offenses, and those who practice lawlessness. And they will throw them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and gnashing of the teeth.

Heb 10:30-31 : For we know Him who has said, "Vengeance [belongs] to Me; I will repay," says [the] Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." [It is] a fearful thing to fall into [the] hands of [the] living God.

Rev 14:9-11 : And a third angel followed them, saying in a great voice, If anyone worships the beast and its image, and receives a mark on his forehead, or in his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the anger of God having been mixed undiluted in the cup of His wrath. And he will be tormented by fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. And those worshiping the beast and its image have no rest night and day, even if anyone receives the mark of its name.

We've seen in previous messages that ALL HUMAN BEINGS WITHOUT EXCEPTION have sinned, and all human beings without exception by nature are enemies of God and are under God's just wrath. It can be no other way, because God is holy, righteous, and just. Any god who would admit someone who is not perfectly holy into his fellowship is an idol. But Isa 45:1-25 does not just say that God is a just God. It also says that God is a SAVIOR. God, as a Savior, is loving, gracious, merciful, and compassionate. Let's turn to a few passages that show God's love and mercy.

Deu 33:3 :

Yes, He loves the peoples; all His holy ones [are] in Your hand; and they sit down at Your feet; He lifts up [each] at Your Words.

Psa 86:5; Psa 86:13-15 : For You, O Lord, [are] good and ready to forgive, and rich in mercy to all who call on You. ... For Your mercy toward me [is] great; and You have delivered my soul from the lowest Sheol. O God, the proud have risen against me; and the assembly of the violent have sought after my life, and have not set You before their eyes. But You, O God, [are] God, full of pity; and gracious, longsuffering and rich in mercy and truth.

Psa 100:5 : For Jehovah [is] good; His mercy [is] everlasting, and His faithfulness to generation and generation.

Psa 145:8-9 :

Jehovah [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great mercy; Jehovah [is] good to all; and His tender mercies [are] over all His works.

Isa 43:4 :

Since you were precious in My eyes, you are honored, and I love you; and I give men instead of you; and peoples instead of your soul.

Jer 31:3 :

Jehovah has appeared to me from far away, [saying], Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love! On account of this, with loving kindness I have drawn you.

John 3:16 : For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

1Jn 3:1 :

See what manner of love the Father has given us, that we may be called children of God. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

1Jn 4:8 : The [one] who does not love has not known God, because God is love. So God is holy, righteous, and just, and at the same time, He is loving, gracious, merciful, and compassionate. There are some Scripture passages that mention the justice and love of God in the same sentence. Let's turn to Exo 20:5-6 : And the officers shall speak to the people, saying, Who [is] the man that has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, that he not die in battle and another man dedicate it. And who [is] the man that has planted a vineyard,

and has not used its fruit? Let him go and return to his house, that he not die in battle, and another man use its fruit.

Now let's turn to Num 14:18 :

Jehovah [is] slow to anger, and of great mercy, bearing away iniquity and transgression; and by no means will clear [the guilty], visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the sons, on the third and on the fourth [generation] . And lastly, Psa 89:14 :

Justice and righteousness [are] Your throne's foundation; mercy and truth go before Your face.

How can this be? How can it be that God is both just and merciful? If He is merciful to a sinner is he not violating His justice? We just read in Exo 20:1-26 that God is wrathful toward those who hate Him, and He is merciful toward those who keep His commandments. Now how many people hate God by nature? EVERY SINGLE PERSON WITHOUT EXCEPTION! And how many people keep His commandments perfectly? ABSOLUTELY NO ONE! And in Num 14:1-45, we read that God will by no means clear the guilty! How many people by nature are guilty? EVERY SINGLE PERSON WITHOUT EXCEPTION! So God will not clear the guilty, yet all are guilty by nature. In Pro 17:15, God said that he who justifies the wicked is an abomination to God. So are these attributes in opposition to each other? Is there a struggle within God? Does God show one attribute at the expense of another? This cannot be. And those who believe so believe in an idol. The attributes of God are in perfect harmony with each other. They work consistently in each other. So how can God be both a just God and a Savior? The answer is in the gospel. The gospel is God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. JESUS CHRIST is the answer! Let's turn to Psa 85:7-13 :

Cause us to see Your mercy, O Jehovah, and give us Your salvation. I will hear what Jehovah God will say; for He will speak peace to His people, and His saints; but let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation [is] near to the [ones] fearing Him, for glory to dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace kissed [each other]. Truth shall sprout out of the earth, and righteousness looks down from Heaven. Yea, Jehovah shall give good, and our land shall give its produce. Righteousness shall go before Him and shall make a way for His footsteps.

Mercy and truth have met together! Righteousness and peace have kissed each other! These are not opposed to each other; they are in total agreement with each other in Jesus Christ. Let's turn to Rom 3:9-28 :

What then? Do we excel? Not at all! For we have charged both Jews and Greeks before, all [with] being under sin; according as it has been written, "[There is] not a righteous [one], not even one!" "[There is] not [one] understanding; [there is] not [one] seeking God." All turned away, [they] became worthless together, not [one is] doing goodness, not so much as one!" "Their throat [is] a tomb being opened;" "they used deceit with their tongues; [the] poison of asps [is] under their lips; whose mouth [is] full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet [are] swift to shed blood; ruin and misery [are] in their way; and they did not know a way of peace; there is no fear of God before their eyes." But we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those within the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God. Because by works of Law not one of all flesh will be justified before Him, for through Law [is] full knowledge of sin. So here we see that

all without exception have fallen short of perfect righteousness that God demands. No one keeps God's law perfectly. Let's go on: But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ toward all and upon all those believing; for there is no difference, for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a propitiation through faith in His blood, as a demonstration of His righteousness through the passing over of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God, for a demonstration of His righteousness in the present time, for His being just and justifying the [one] that [is] of the faith of Jesus. Then where [is] the boasting? It was excluded. Through what law? Of works? No, but through a Law of faith. Then we conclude a man to be justified by faith without works of Law. So God is both JUST and a JUSTIFIER through the work of Christ! In 2Co 5:21, we see that Jesus Christ was MADE SIN for us, that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Christ. The SIN of all God's people was IMPUTED to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ suffered the FULL PENALTY that our disobedience to the law deserved. And the PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS of Jesus Christ is IMPUTED to God's people, so that God's people are actually declared PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS. THIS is how God is a just God and a Savior. THIS is how God is both just and justifier. God remains just because He did NOT let the sins of His people go unpunished. God remains holy because He is only fellowshiping with those whose righteousness equals His righteousness! This all happens by imputation - legally charging to the account of. God is holy, righteous, and just, and at the same time, He is loving, gracious, merciful, and compassionate, because of the work of Jesus Christ. This is the true God.

Now let's compare this to the false gods. All false gods are NOT both just and merciful. Some false gods lower the standard of the law to the point that human beings are able to keep this watered-down law. Some false gods, although keeping the high standard of the law, accept those who do the best they can to keep the law.

These false gods are not holy and are not just. Some false gods keep the high standard of the law, won't accept anything less than perfect obedience, but only make salvation possible if human beings would just accept this salvation that is offered to them. They do not actually SECURE the salvation of ANYONE. These false gods are not loving, gracious, merciful, or compassionate. These false gods are not saviors. Remember in Isa 45:1-25, when we read about the idolaters who pray to a god who cannot save? That is what these people do who pray to these gods. They pray to a god who cannot save. Some false gods say that God shows love and mercy and grace at the expense of His justice and holiness. They say that God loves everyone, is gracious toward everyone, and has mercy on everyone. Some false gods punish sinners in hell for whom Christ died. So these false gods not only punished Christ on the cross for everyone's sins, but they punish some sins a SECOND time. They throw people whose sins have already been paid for into everlasting torment. These false gods are infinitely more unjust than the most corrupt judge who has ever lived. Some false gods are schizophrenic. These false gods show mercy, grace, and love to people while they are still living, and then when they die, these false gods turn around and show wrath and condemnation to the ones who used to be the objects of mercy, grace, and love.

Psa 14:1 says, "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God." He's not just talking about atheists here! He's talking about ANYONE who does not believe in the true and living God as He is revealed in His Holy Word. When we present the true God, they'll say things like, "I believe in

God, but I don't believe in THAT God." They've just told you that they say in their heart, "There is no God." They want a god, but they don't want THIS God. They will not have THIS God to reign over them. Those who worship a god who is not the creator, who is not in sovereign control of all things, who is not all-knowing, who is not all-powerful, who is not everywhere present, who is not just, who is not merciful, who shows mercy at the expense of his justice, who shows ANY of his attributes at the expense of ANY OTHER of his attributes, are worshipping and serving a false god - an idol. They are saying in their heart, "There is no god." They are fools. They are God-haters. But none of these gods are OUR GOD. OUR GOD is a just God AND a Savior. Our God is powerful to keep His promises. Our God will by no means clear the guilty, so He HAD to punish Christ for the sins of His people, and Christ's work MUST demand the everlasting salvation of ALL whom He represented. Our God CAN ONLY fellowship with those who are as righteous as He is, so Christ's righteousness MUST be imputed to all with whom Christ fellowships. There is NO OTHER WAY. There is NO OTHER GOD. All other gods are as the ones carved out of wood, stone, or metal. They are just dumb pieces of trash. And, as we've seen those who serve them are like them. My hearers, do you believe in the true and living God? The one whose mercy and justice are revealed in the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone? God is JEALOUS for His name. He is JEALOUS for His glory. He WILL NOT give His glory to another.

Think on these things. Consider the TRUE God, righteous and holy and full of truth, who shows mercy and grace and love to His people based on the work of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

S. True And False Gospel

TRUE AND FALSE GOSPEL (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 12/3/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Today, the Lord willing, I'm going to be talking about the true gospel versus false gospels. You may be wondering why I'm doing this, because not too long ago I preached a ten-part series on the gospel, and for the past three sermons, I've preached on the true God versus false gods, the true Christ versus false christs, and the true Holy Spirit versus false spirits. But what I'd like to do today is something a little bit different. I'd like to address this sermon specifically to lost people. Hopefully, this is a sermon you can give to your lost friends and relatives and anybody else who's willing to listen. I pray that God will use this to bring His lost sheep unto Himself. So now I'm going to address the lost people who are hearing this sermon. By "lost," I mean people who have not been given new life. When I say that a person is "lost," I don't mean that this person will necessarily be damned to hell. I'm saying that the person's present spiritual state is death. The person is not saved. Okay? So how many of you people listening to this sermon think you're lost? How many of you think that if you continue in your present spiritual state until you die, or if you die right now, you will go to hell? Well, I don't know who will be listening to this sermon, so I can't address you individually, but I would be very surprised if any of you who are listening to this sermon will say that you are lost and that you will go to hell if you died believing what you do now. So even though I'm preaching this sermon to the lost, you don't know it. What I hope to do is show you, by God's infallible and inerrant Word, that you are lost, and show you by this same Word of God the only way of salvation. So I want you to listen very closely, even if you think everything's okay between you and God.

Let's turn to Rom 9:1-33, and I'll begin reading with Rom 9:30-33, and I'll go through Rom 10:1-15 :

What then shall we say? That [the] nations not following after righteousness have taken on righteousness, but a righteousness of faith; but Israel following after a Law of righteousness did not arrive at a Law of righteousness? Why? Because [it was] not of faith, but as of works of Law. For they stumbled at the Stone-of-stumbling, as it has been written, "Behold, I place in" "Zion a Stone-of-stumbling," "and a Rock-of-offense," "and everyone believing on Him will not be shamed." Brothers, truly my heart's pleasure and supplication to God on behalf of Israel is for [it] to be saved. For I testify to them that they have zeal to God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ [is] the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. For Moses writes [of] the righteousness [which is] of the Law: "The man doing these things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith says this: "Do not say in your heart, Who will go up into Heaven?" (that is, to bring down Christ); or, "Who will go down into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from [the] dead.) But what does it say? "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the Word of faith which we proclaim) Because if you

confess [the] Lord Jesus with your mouth, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from [the] dead, you will be saved. For with [the] heart [one] believes unto righteousness, and with [the] mouth [one] confesses unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Everyone believing on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no difference both of Jew and of Greek, for the same Lord of all is rich toward all the ones calling on Him. For everyone, "whoever may call on the name of [the] Lord will be saved." How then may they call on [One] into whom they have not believed? And how may they believe [One] of whom they have not heard? And how may they hear without preaching? And how may they preach if they are not sent? Even as it has been written, "How beautiful" "the feet of those preaching the gospel of peace, of those preaching the gospel of good things." The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, first speaks about the Jews and compares them to the Gentiles. He said that although the Jews were FOLLOWING AFTER a law of righteousness, they DID NOT ARRIVE at righteousness. Yet the Gentiles, who did NOT FOLLOW AFTER righteousness have TAKEN ON righteousness. How can this be? It is because the lost Jews thought that their own personal righteousness gained them acceptance before God, while the believing Gentiles believed that their acceptance before God was based on the merits of the obedience and death of the Messiah. The Jews stumbled at Jesus Christ. What exactly does "stumbling at Jesus Christ" mean? It means that they were not submitted to Jesus Christ as the only ground of acceptance before God. They did not believe that salvation is conditioned on the work of Jesus Christ alone, with no contribution AT ALL from the sinner's best efforts. They wanted to hold onto their own righteousness. They thought that their own works made the difference between heaven and hell. They did not believe that the work of Christ demanded and ensured the salvation of all whom Christ represented. They still wanted a piece of the glory.

Now were these Jews immoral or insincere? Look at Rom 10:2. They have a ZEAL TO GOD! These people were DOING THEIR BEST to serve God and to keep His commandments! So what's wrong with that? Well, look at the second half of Rom 10:2. They were missing some KNOWLEDGE. Paul clearly shows here that zeal without this specific knowledge means death. So what IS this specific knowledge? We see it in Rom 10:3-4. The knowledge that the Jews were ignorant of was the knowledge of the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. Now does this mean that they didn't profess that God was holy and just? No - that's not what the righteousness of God means here. Look at Rom 10:4 : For Christ [is] the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. The righteousness of God is revealed in Christ, and not just Christ as the God-man born of a virgin - it is Christ as the END OF THE LAW for RIGHTEOUSNESS. Rom 1:16-17 states that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. So Christ as the end of the law for righteousness must be talking about the gospel. And anything that is opposed to Christ as the end of the law for righteousness must be a false gospel. And notice back in verse three that those who are IGNORANT of the righteousness of God are AUTOMATICALLY, whether they know it or not, they are AUTOMATICALLY seeking to establish their own righteousness and not submitting to the righteousness of God. You don't necessarily have to be in open rebellion against God to be lost. All you have to be is IGNORANT of the righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel, and if you are IGNORANT of this righteousness, then you MUST be going about to establish your own righteousness, and you MUST be unsubmitted to the righteousness of God. You can't be submitted to what you don't know. So what does it mean that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness? It means that the work of Christ is the ONLY ground of acceptance before God, and that law-keeping or doing your best to please God and to be good to others DOES NOT

MAKE YOU acceptable before God. Do you stumble over that? Are you offended by that? Well, let's see about that when we get to specifics about what some of you listening to this might believe. Before we do that, I want to go over to another Scripture passage that explains the fact that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Let's turn over to Rom 3:19-28 : But we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those within the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God. Because by works of Law not one of all flesh will be justified before Him, for through Law [is] full knowledge of sin. But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ toward all and upon all those believing; for there is no difference, for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a propitiation through faith in His blood, as a demonstration of His righteousness through the passing over of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God, for a demonstration of His righteousness in the present time, for His being just and justifying the [one] that [is] of the faith of Jesus. Then where [is] the boasting? It was excluded. Through what law? Of works? No, but through a Law of faith. Then we conclude a man to be justified by faith without works of Law.

What do you see first about the works of the law? Look at Rom 3:20. NO ONE will be justified before God by the works of the law. And in Rom 3:21, we see that the righteousness of God is revealed APART FROM the law. Doesn't this sound like Rom 10:4? Christ is the END OF THE LAW. And in Rom 3:22-26, we see that justification is through the work of Christ alone, so there is no boasting in our own works. In Rom 3:25, we see that the blood of Jesus Christ was the propitiation. That means that Jesus Christ's blood TOTALLY APPEASED the wrath of God the Father for EVERY ONE for whom Christ died. The sins of God's people were imputed, or legally charged to, Christ, and Christ paid the full penalty for those sins. NO ONE for whom Christ died will pay the penalty that his sins deserved. NONE OF THEM will go to hell. And further down, in chapter 4, we see that the righteousness of Christ - the perfect law-keeping of Christ - is imputed to His people apart from works. THIS is what the righteousness of God is - it is the end of the law for righteousness through Christ. Do you believe this? Back in Rom 10:1-21, we see in several places that Paul talks about believing. What does it mean to believe? It means to believe the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel - it means to believe that salvation is conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ ALONE. It means to believe that Christ's work ALONE demands and ensures the salvation of all whom He represented, and Christ's work ALONE is what makes the difference between heaven and hell. Do you believe this?

I'd like to first talk to you who don't believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God. If you say this, then you should just come out and admit that you do not believe the Bible, because Jesus Himself said in John 14:6, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." So if you think that Buddhism is a path to God, or meditation or some kind of spirituality devoid of Christ is a path to God, you believe a false gospel. You believe that your own works can get you closer to God and put you in communion with God. But here's the truth for all of you who will listen: The ONLY way that a man can be in communion with God is that God's wrath must be appeased toward that person, and that this person must have a perfect righteousness. The ONLY WAY is through the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. Christ was punished for the sins of His people, and Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to His people.

The ONLY ones who have communion with God are the ones for whom Christ died and to whom God imputes Christ's righteousness. There is no other way.

I'd now like to talk to you who say you believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, but you also believe that Jesus Christ died for every single person without exception. You may be a zealous, sincere, conservative church-goer. You may despise immorality. Yet you're lost. You're just as lost as the person who follows the Buddhist path to god, or even the atheist who's a god unto himself. You believe a false gospel of works salvation. You might protest, "I despise works-salvation! I believe in salvation by grace alone!" Yet what you believe about the work of Christ shows that you are still not submitted to the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. Let me explain. You believe that Jesus Christ died for every single person without exception. Thus, you believe that Jesus Christ died for those who are in heaven as well as those who are in hell. So what do you believe makes the ultimate difference between heaven and hell? Before you say, "Jesus Christ," think about it. You believe that Jesus Christ died for those in hell. So did the death of Christ make the difference for these people? You might say, "they rejected Christ." So their rejection of Christ is what overrides the death of Christ for them, right? The death of Christ had no effect for them, because the death of Christ did not actually secure ANYTHING for them. So what about those in heaven? Did the death of Christ make the ultimate difference between them and those in hell? Think about it. You believe that Christ died for those in heaven AND those in hell. Thus, you must believe that it is NOT the work of Christ that makes the difference between heaven and hell, since Christ did the same thing for those in heaven as he did for those in hell. So what makes the ultimate difference is what? It is the WORK OF THE PERSON. This is the epitome of the false gospel. You believe that your FAITH is what makes the difference between your going to heaven and your going to hell. You believe that Jesus Christ did all he could do on the cross for everyone without exception, and now it's up to YOU to make the difference. This is absolute blasphemy against God. Do you know how much you trample on the blood of Christ? Do you really know how much you make the blood of Christ of no effect? Think about it! What did the blood of Christ actually ACCOMPLISH? What did it DO, in and of itself? Did it really do ANYTHING? We're talking about the precious blood of Christ here! And you're saying that it did not actually accomplish salvation for all for whom it was intended? What VALUE do you put on the blood of Christ? You put on it no value at all. You spit in the face of Christ and trample on His blood as if it were nothing. You believe in a God who is a liar - who said that his wrath was appeased at the cross, but yet sends to hell some of those for whom his wrath was appeased. Your God punishes the same sins twice - first in the person of Christ and then in the sinner in hell. You also believe in a weak Christ who wishes that everyone without exception would be saved but who is thwarted by the work of mortal man. What a horrendous blasphemy. The TRUE GOSPEL is one of Christ's EFFECTUAL WORK. Christ's blood DID accomplish something. It accomplished what Christ intended to accomplish - the salvation of ALL for whom He died on the cross. It is the work of Christ ALONE that makes the only difference between heaven and hell. It is the work of Christ ALONE that appeases God's wrath so that NOT ONE PERSON for whom Christ died will end up in hell. It is the work of Christ ALONE that MAKES SALVATION TOTALLY SURE AND CERTAIN for ALL whom Christ represented on the cross. Anything less is a hellish false gospel - a doctrine of demons. I hope you will see this. I hope you will see how much your gospel casts shame and reproach on the one true gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, I'd like to address those who say that Jesus Christ is the only way to God and that Christ's death actually accomplished salvation for all whom He represented, yet you say that some who believe that Christ died for everyone are your brothers in Christ. You, too, are lost. 2Jn 1:9-11 says that when you speak peace to such a person, you are a participant in the evil deeds of the one who believes the blasphemy of the false gospel. You are as much a blasphemer as the one who tramples the blood of Christ underfoot. You say you believe the true gospel of sovereign grace, but you do not value it. You do not value it because you do not judge by it. You actually believe that the gospel of universal atonement is the same gospel you believe, even though it might be a little less consistent. You have not yet repented of dead works and idolatry, because what God calls dead works and idolatry, you call works of a believer. You are yet dead in your sins.

Now whatever category you fit under, or even if you don't neatly fit into one of these categories but believe that salvation is conditioned on the sinner in ANY way, to ANY degree, or believe that you believe the same gospel as those who believe that salvation is conditioned on the sinner, you are in need of a righteousness that you can't produce. You can't even take the first step in producing it. In order for you to have peace with God, you need to be reconciled with God. But how can you, who cannot produce a righteousness that God requires, be reconciled to God? It is through the work of Jesus Christ alone. You don't have a righteousness that answers the demands of God's law and justice. Jesus Christ does. And the only way that any person can obtain that righteousness is by imputation. Imputation is something you have nothing to do with. The righteousness of Christ is imputed freely, without any work of the sinner. But once this righteousness is imputed to a person, that person will immediately receive it and rest in it by faith.

If you believe that there are many paths to God, or if you believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, or if you believe that those who believe universal atonement are your brothers in Christ, or if you believe in any other form of salvation conditioned on the sinner, then you're not resting in the righteousness of Christ as the only ground of salvation. God commands you to REPENT of your blasphemy and idolatry and to BELIEVE in the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. But perhaps one of you or some of you have just been awakened to the realization that when you believed that there were many paths to God, or when you believed that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, or when you believed that those who hold to universal atonement are saved, or when you believed in any other form of salvation conditioned on the sinner, you were lost. Perhaps you've just been awakened to the realization that it is the work of Christ ALONE that makes the only difference between saved and lost, that the work of Christ ALONE demands and ensures the salvation of EVERYONE for whom Christ lived and died. Perhaps you've just been awakened to the realization that you'd been participating in the evil deeds of those who hold to universal atonement and you were thus lost. If this is the case, then PLEASE, PLEASE contact someone who believes the same thing. If you don't know anyone who believes the true gospel, please contact me at the address on the tape label.

It is my prayer and desire that God will use this to bring His lost sheep to Himself. We who believe the true gospel would rejoice with immeasurable joy. If you're not sure about all this, listen to the tape again, and ask me or the person who gave you this to send you more gospel tapes. I'm always happy to answer your questions. If you're within driving distance of an assembly that believes the true gospel, go there and listen and learn. As Rom 10:14 says, "How then may they

call on the [One] in whom they have not believed? And how may they believe [One] of whom they have not heard? And how may they hear without preaching?" Put yourself under the preaching of those who say what I've just said in this sermon. Listen to what God has to say.

Let's turn to 2Co 5:18-21 : And all things [are] from God, the [One] having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and having given to us the ministry of reconciliation, as, that God was in Christ reconciling [the] world to Himself, not charging their deviations to them, and having put the Word of reconciliation in us. Then on behalf of Christ, we are ambassadors, as God [is] exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God. For He made the [One] who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become [the] righteousness of God in Him. As an ambassador of Christ, I exhort you to be reconciled to God. And the only way one can be reconciled to God is through the unilateral and unconditional work of Christ, who lived a righteous life for His people and became sin for His people, to make TOTALLY CERTAIN that ALL for whom He lived and died would be saved. Believe in the TRUE Christ, and reject all counterfeit christs. Believe in the TRUE gospel and reject all counterfeit gospels. No one comes to the TRUE God except through the TRUE Christ, who is revealed in the DOCTRINE of Christ, which is the gospel. Amen.

S. True And False Love (1)

TRUE AND FALSE LOVE (1) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 1/14/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Turn in your Bibles to 1Co 13:1-13. I'll be reading the entire chapter:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I have become [as] sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophecies, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give out all my goods, and if I deliver my body that I be burned, but I do not have love, I am not profited anything. Love has patience, is kind; love is not envious; love is not vain, is not puffed up; does not behave indecently, does not pursue its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth. [Love] quietly covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But if [there are] prophecies, they will be caused to cease; if tongues, they shall cease; if knowledge, it will be caused to cease. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect thing comes, then that [which is] in part will be caused to cease. When I was an infant, I spoke as an infant, I thought as an infant, I reasoned as an infant. But when I became a man, I caused to cease the things of the infant. For now we see through a mirror in dimness, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will fully know even as I also was fully known. And now faith, hope, and love, these three things remain; but the greatest of these [is] love.

Today, in our continuing series on the true versus the false, I will be speaking of true and false love. This topic is very much needed to be preached, because everyone is talking about love, from the atheist to the Buddhist to the Jehovah's Witness to the Arminian to the Calvinist to the Christian. Everybody has their own concept of what love is, but very few get their concept of love from God's Word. This is another topic that could be a series in and of itself, but I hope to give you some of the main points that at least will give us the essentials.

Love is both a noun and a verb. It is used as a noun, for example, in this sentence: "I know of your love." It is used as a verb, for example, in this sentence: "I love you." In the New Testament, there are two main Greek verbs that are translated "love." The first Greek verb is a-ga-PAH-o, and its noun form is a-GAH-pay. This is the most common word for "love" in the New Testament. This is what is translated "love" in 1Co 13:1-13. This kind of love is an assent of the mind of good will, and it is an action demonstrating this good will. It has a moral sense to it. The second Greek verb is fil-EH-o. It is an affectionate love. It is a love of attachment or fondness or friendship. The root of this word is used in many other words, such as fil-a-del-FEE-a, which is brotherly love, fil-AN-dross, which is love to one's husband, fil-ar-goo-REE-ah, which is love of money, fil-OW-toss, which is self-love, and fil-AY-don-oss, which is love of pleasure. An example of fil-EH-o is in Tit 3:15 :

All those with me greet you. Greet those who love us in [the] faith. Grace [be] with you all. Amen.

Some of the so-called Bible scholars make the distinction between a-ga-PAH-o and fil-EH-o by saying that the former is a head-love, and the latter is a heart-love. But this is nothing but foolishness. The Bible makes no such distinction between head and heart. In the Bible, the heart includes the intellect, and, as we have seen before, the heart is what thinks, ponders, and imagines. And of course, what do these so-called theologians think is the most important kind of love? It's the HEART love. They say things like, "It doesn't matter if you have love in your head; it's the love from the heart that counts." Well, let's see some places where that supposed "head love" comes up in Scripture.

John 10:17 : For this reason My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again.

God the Father has what they call a head-love for God the Son.

John 13:23 : But there was one of His disciples reclining at the bosom of Jesus, whom Jesus loved. So Jesus had what they call a head-love for John.

John 13:34 :

I give a new commandment to you, that you should love one another; according as I loved you, you should also love one another. So Jesus commands His people to have what they call a head-love for each other, just as Jesus has what they call a head-love for them. And I could go on and on. The main kind of love in Scripture is what these people call "head love." It is an assent of the intellect and actions that proceed from that assent. Now let's see some examples of what they call "heart-love." Mat 6:5; Mat 23:6 say that the Pharisees LOVE to pray out in the open to be seen of men and LOVE the first couch in the suppers and the first seats in the synagogues. THIS is that so-called "heart-love." In John 15:19, the world LOVES its own with that so-called "heart-love." Rarely is the so-called "heart-love" used as a love that Christians have. So the heart love that Spurgeon and others like him so highly esteem in contrast with the head love might sound good to the silly women who love romance, but the love that is the main emphasis of Scripture is a moral love that stems from an assent of the mind. When it comes to spiritual things, there are four ways which love can be shown. There can be love from one person to another, love from a person to God, love from God to a person, and love from God to Himself. We are going to be focusing today on the love between humans. We know that there is a true love that God shows that is consistent with His law and justice, and this love is only shown toward His people, and we know that unbelievers talk about a love of God toward all without exception at the expense of His law and justice. But for today, I'll be talking about love to other people.

Let's first go over love toward unbelievers. Let's turn to Luk 6:27-36 : But I say to you, Those hearing: Love the [ones] hostile to you, do good to those hating you, bless those cursing you and pray for those insulting you. To those striking you on the cheek, turn the other also. And from those taking your garment, do not keep back the tunic also. And to everyone asking you, give. And do not ask back from those taking your things. And according as you desire that men should do to you, you also do the same to them. And if you love those who love you, what thanks is there to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks is there to you? For even the sinners do the same. And if you lend [to those] from whom you hope to receive, what thanks is there to you? For the sinners lend to sinners so that

they may receive the equal things. But love the [ones] hostile [to] you, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing [in return]; and your reward will be much; and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unthankful and evil ones. Therefore, be merciful, even as your Father also is merciful. The Greek word for "bless" means "speak well of." So how are Christians to conduct themselves toward the ones who hate them? Are they to be mean to them? Are they to strike back physically or verbally? No. We are to be kind, even at our own expense. We are to give. We are not to retaliate. Loving ones who love you isn't difficult - God calls us to love the ones who HATE us! We are to have their well-being in mind. THAT is true Christian love. Whenever we do something toward an unbeliever, we need to ask ourselves, "Am I doing this for the person's good?"

Thus far, all of those who call themselves Christians would say they agree. But let's look at some examples of love for the ungodly. Before we get into some examples, we need to remind ourselves that whatever the apostles wrote in the epistles was inspired of God the Holy Spirit. These words are perfect words, putting forth perfect doctrines and perfect attitudes. For example, in Php 1:18, when Paul rejoiced that Christ is preached by some who are insincere, that attitude was not sinful; in fact, it shows a GODLY attitude. If we said that Paul was mistaken when he rejoiced in this, we would have to say that the Holy Spirit who inspired him was mistaken, and we then destroy the infallibility of Scripture. Okay? Do we have that concept? This is important as we see some examples we see in the epistles of love for the ungodly.

Let's first look at Rom 10:1 :

Brothers, truly my heart's pleasure and supplication to God on behalf of Israel is for [it] to be saved.

Paul is showing love for Israel here. First of all, he desires and prays for their salvation. If he is desiring and praying for their salvation, how does he judge their spiritual state? Well, he wouldn't be desiring and praying for the salvation of someone who's already saved, would he? Paul is here judging them to be LOST. And he goes on to make it very clear that they are lost in the following verses. He says that they are lacking knowledge of the righteousness of God. They do not believe in the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. Now I ask you: When Paul judges Israel lost because they are ignorant of the righteousness of God, is he showing love for them? Well, he MUST be, because the Holy Spirit would not inspire Paul to put forth a sinful attitude! So Paul is LOVING these people WHILE he is declaring that they are lost.

Let's turn to 2Co 11:13 : For such ones [are] false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. Was Paul showing love toward the false apostles by saying such things? Let's turn to Gal 2:4-5 : But [it was] because of those false brothers stealing in, who stole in to spy on our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, they desiring to enslave us, to whom not even for an hour did we yield in subjection, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. Was Paul showing love to the false brothers by calling them false brothers and not yielding to them for even an hour? Now over to Gal 5:12 :

O that the [ones] causing you to doubt will sever themselves. Was Paul showing love to the ones whom he wished would emasculate themselves? The answers to all these questions is YES! Paul

was showing LOVE by judging them LOST. And what about the commands for believers to separate from unbelievers, like we went over in last week's sermon? Is the Holy Spirit commanding Christians to do something that is unloving? Of course not. God never commands His people to sin. Let's look at Rom 16:17 : And brothers I exhort you to watch those making divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and turn away from them. Is Paul commanding the people to do something that is unloving? Now over to 1Ti 6:3-5 :

If anyone teaches differently, and does not consent to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to godliness, he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but [is] sick concerning doubts and arguments, out of which comes envy, strife, evil-speakings, evil suspicions, meddling, of men whose mind has been corrupted and deprived of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness. Withdraw from such [persons]. Is Paul commanding Timothy to do something that is unloving? NO! Judging someone to be lost and not fellowshiping with them is the only LOVING thing to do! This is TRUE LOVE toward our enemies. We are to be kind to them and to seek their good by telling them that they are lost and their deeds are evil and separating from them. Yet religionists who come in the name of Christianity say that this is the most UNLOVING thing to do! They say that it is mean and harsh to judge someone lost based on their false doctrine. Hardly a week goes by without someone telling us that it is unloving to judge people lost. And that's were we get into FALSE love for unbelievers.

What is it that religious people do or think that show a FALSE love for an unbeliever? Well, of course, at the top of the list is SPEAKING PEACE to them. Like the false prophets in the Old Testament, they say, "Peace, peace" when there really is no peace. They say, "Everything's okay between you and God," when everything is NOT okay between them and God. They say, "You're not under the wrath of God," when they ARE under the wrath of God. They say, "Let's all rejoice together in Christ," when they don't know Christ. Now don't all these things sound so loving and compassionate to the natural ear? What can be more loving than to say, "You're okay, and I love you, brother"? Yet to say this to an unbeliever is actually HATRED! Think about it! It is HATRED! It is MEAN, UNLOVING, UNCOMPASSIONATE, and HATEFUL. What they call love, we call hate! And what we call hate, they call love!

Now how can it be unloving to say that someone is a brother in Christ who is not? It's because the person who says it is PROMOTING THE PERSON'S ETERNAL DESTRUCTION. Remember what it is to show love? It is to have someone's well-being in mind. When someone lets a person be comfortable in his lostness and even says that he's not really lost and doesn't have anything to be concerned about, is this a concern for the good of the person? No! It is to say to a person whose house is on fire that he should stay in the burning house because everything is okay. Paul, in Rom 10:1-21, said that he desired and prayed for the salvation of his kinsmen according to the flesh. THIS is LOVE. He said that they were LOST because they were ignorantly going about to establish a righteousness of their own. He didn't say this to be mean or unloving; he said this and then told them about the only righteousness whereby a sinner is justified! So all you Calvinists or Sovereign-Gracers out there who are telling your Arminian friends that they are your brothers in Christ - you are pushing your Arminian friends into hell. You're not loving them. You're hating them. And as 2Jn 1:11 plainly declares, not only are you pushing them into hell, but you are headed there as well. You are a participant in their evil deeds. And I say this out of love for you that you are a disgusting, rotten, wretched unbeliever who is without a righteousness that answers

the demands of God's law and justice, and you are to repent and believe the gospel.

Let's look at 1Co 13:1-13 again. This is something you may have never seen before. Look at 1Co 13:3 : And if I give out all my goods, and if I deliver my body that I be burned, but I do not have love, I am not profited anything.

Notice - if we GIVE OUT ALL OUR GOODS. The KJV says, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor," with "the poor" in parenthesis. If we GIVE OUT ALL OUR GOODS, and DO NOT HAVE LOVE - wait a minute! Isn't giving out all our goods a sure sign of love? How can it be that someone can give out all their goods and not have love? Well, it is only love if it comes from a person who believes the truth. Good deeds are an abomination to God if they come from an unbeliever. And if one does a ton of good things for someone who confesses a false gospel and then calls him a brother in Christ, it is not truly love. Look down at 1Co 13:6 : does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth.

TRUE love DOES NOT rejoice in unrighteousness. To say that one who believes in universal atonement believes the true gospel is to rejoice in unrighteousness. TRUE love only rejoices in the TRUTH. And you know what? This passage strongly implies that those who show true love KNOW THE DIFFERENCE between unrighteousness and the truth. They JUDGE the difference, and they REJOICE in the truth and REJECT unrighteousness.

I'll have to stop here and preach a separate sermon on love for the brethren. Let us remember from this message that TRUE LOVE of unbelievers promotes their good and well-being, which includes telling them that they are lost and presenting the gospel to them. FALSE LOVE promotes their destruction by telling them that they already believe the gospel and are at peace with God. Let us speak the truth to unbelievers in love, desiring and praying for their salvation. Amen.

S. True And False Love (2)

TRUE AND FALSE LOVE (2) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 1/21/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Today, the Lord willing, I will continue on the subject of true and false love. Last week, we focused on love for unbelievers. We saw that we are to do good to unbelievers and have their best interests in mind, and this includes telling them that they are lost and their deeds are evil and telling them the gospel. Before I get into the main subject of today's sermon, I'd like to mention something that I didn't mention in last week's sermon. Let's turn over to 1Co 13:1-13, which is the chapter I read at the beginning of last week's sermon. Let's look at 1Co 13:7 :

[Love] quietly covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. The reason I wanted to go over this verse is that the false religionists use this verse as an excuse to speak peace when there is no peace, and they also use this verse to accuse us of being unloving when we say that universal atonement advocates are unbelievers. They'll say, "See? Love believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. That means that when someone says they love Jesus, we believe the best about them, even though they might be wrong in some doctrines. Those of you who do not give them the benefit of the doubt are unloving." Well, this is not what this verse is talking about at all. This verse is not saying that we are to believe that a person is saved who confesses salvation conditioned on the sinner. Think about it. If "love believes all things" means that love believes everything without exception, you can see where that goes. It would mean that love believes everything that is true AND everything that is false. It would mean that love believes that Satan is God. It would mean that love believes in a false gospel. It would mean that love believes Bill Clinton. We KNOW it CAN'T mean that love believes every single thing without exception. Paul didn't believe everything. He told people NOT to believe certain things and certain people. So those who use this verse to justify their peace-speaking and to call us unloving are just fooling themselves. Okay, I just wanted to mention that before we went on.

Okay, let's go into the topic for today. Today, the Lord willing, I will be speaking on love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. One of the things I need to say right up front is that NONE of the commands to love the brothers are directed at unbelievers. This is a command for Christians only. Because one can only have a brother in Christ if one is already in Christ! So those of you listening to this who believe in a false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner, including the belief that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, are NOT being addressed when we call on people to have love for their brothers in Christ. Your brothers are not in Christ; they are in Satan. You and all who believe in salvation conditioned on the sinner have one father, which is Satan. Your love is a false love. The only ones who truly love their brothers and sisters in Christ are the ones who believe the DOCTRINE of Christ, which is the gospel of God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. As I mentioned last week, there is a noun called fil-a-del-FEE-ah in New Testament Greek, that means "brotherly love." And there is an adjective, fil-a-DEL-foss, which means "loving the brothers."

Fil-a-del-FEE-ah is used five times in the Bible, and I'd like for us to turn to each one of these.

Heb 13:1 :

Let brotherly love continue.

2Pe 1:5-7 : But also in this very thing, having brought in all diligence, having fully supplied in your faith virtue, and with virtue knowledge, and with the knowledge self-control, and with the self-control patience, and with the patience godliness, and with the godliness brotherly love, and with brotherly love, love. The "brotherly love" there is fil-a-del-FEE-ah, and the "love" there is a-GA-pay.

1Pe 1:22 :

Having purified your souls in the obedience of the truth through the Spirit to unpretended brotherly love, love one another fervently out of a pure heart, Here is fil-a-del-FEE-a and a-ga-PA-oh.

1Th 4:9 :

Now as to brotherly love, you have no need [for me] to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.

Here again is fil-a-del-FEE-a and a-ga-PA-oh.

Now let's turn to Rom 12:9-13.

[Let] love [be] without dissimulation, [in horror] fleeing from evil, cleaving to the good, in brotherly love to one another, loving fervently, having gone before one another in honor; in diligence, not slothful, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; in hope, rejoicing; in affliction, enduring; in prayer, steadfastly continuing; imparting to the needs of the saints, pursuing hospitality. The first "love," which appears in Rom 12:9, is a-GA-pay, then we have the brotherly love in Rom 12:10, and then also in Rom 12:10, the word translated "loving fervently" is fil-OSS-tor-goss, which is a familial or fraternal love. It's the only time this word is used in the Bible.

Let's take a look at what this love toward the brothers looks like. First, in verse 9, it is WITHOUT DISSIMULATION. Dissimulation is pretense. Our love to our brothers is not to be a pretended love. It is to be a genuine love. This is like what we read in 1Pe 1:22, about UNPRETENDED brotherly love. In verse 10, God tells us that we are to show our love to our brothers by going before one another in honor. The King James version translates it, "in honour preferring one another," but this is a wrong translation. Although it is true that we are to consider others better than ourselves, as in Php 3:3, this is not what Rom 12:10 is talking about. It means that we are to take the lead, or to be an example to our brothers. True love to our brothers is one in which we are good examples to them in our obedience. In verse 13, we see that we show true love to our brothers when we give to our brothers in need and are hospitable to our brothers. And speaking of brothers in need, let's turn to 1Jn 3:10-18 : By this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed: Everyone not practicing righteousness is not of God; also the [one] not loving his brother. Because this is the message which you heard from [the] beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain was of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what did he kill him? Because his works were evil, but the things of his brother [were] righteous. Do not marvel, my

brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. The [one] not loving the brother remains in death. Everyone hating the brother is a murderer, and you know that every murderer does not have everlasting life abiding in him. By this we have known the love [of God], because that [One] laid down His life for us; and on behalf of the brothers we ought to lay down [our] lives. Whoever has the means of life of the world, and sees his brother having need, and shuts up his heart [of compassion] from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

1 John makes some powerful statements about love toward the brothers and the state of those who do not love the brothers. Here we get into true and false love toward the brothers. Look at 1Jn 3:17 :

Whoever has the means of life of the world, and sees his brother having need, and shuts up his heart [of compassion] from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

What is this saying? It is saying that if there is one of our brothers who is in need of the basic things of life, and we have the means to help him and we don't, it shows that we do not have the love of God abiding in us! It shows that we are really FALSE brothers! True love gives to brothers in need. False love withholds from brothers in need. As verse 18 says, false love is just in word and tongue, while true love is in deed and truth. Let's turn over to Jas 2:15-17 as an example of this: But if a brother or a sister is naked and may be lacking in daily food, and any one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but does not give them the things the body needs, what gain [is it]? So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead being by itself. So the person who says, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," yet does nothing to help his brother to BE warmed and filled, is not one who is showing true love. It is the one who has the deeds to back up his words. Let's go back to 1Jn 3:1-14 and look at something very interesting. BEFORE John talks about not giving to a brother's physical needs as a sign of hatred, look at what he says in 1Jn 3:11-12 :

Because this is the message which you heard from [the] beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain was of the evil one, and killed his brother. And for what did he kill him? Because his works were evil, but the things of his brother [were] righteous. The Holy Spirit through the apostle John here introduces Cain as an example of one who is the opposite of love to the brothers. Now why would he pick Cain out as an example right in the middle of something about love? This is very important. What did Cain do? He killed his brother, Abel. But what did Cain do BEFORE he killed his brother? He brought a SACRIFICE. Remember that? Let's turn back to Gen 4:1-5 : And the man knew his wife Eve. And she conceived and bore Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah. And she continued to bear his brother, Abel. And Abel became a shepherd of flocks. And Cain became a tiller of the ground. And in the end of days, it happened that Cain brought an offering to Jehovah from the fruit of the ground. And Abel brought, he also, from the firstlings of his flocks, even from their fat. And Jehovah looked to Abel and to his offering. And He did not look to Cain and to his offering. And Cain glowed greatly with anger, and his face fell.

God accepted Abel's offering and didn't accept Cain's offering. And this made Cain angry to the point of killing Abel. The false religionists would say that God was unfair in not accepting Cain's offering. After all, in Gen 4:2, Cain's occupation was a farmer, and so Cain brought an offering from what he produced, while Abel's occupation was a shepherd, and Abel brought an offering

from what HE produced. Didn't both of them do their best? They sure did. But Abel's offering was accepted, and Cain's offering was rejected. Why? Because Abel brought the blood of sacrifice, which was a picture of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Abel pled the blood of the coming Messiah as the only ground of his salvation. Cain pled the best he could offer, which was only dead works. And Cain hated Abel because of this. Now think of this: Had Abel spoken peace to Cain, would Cain have been angry at Abel? No. Abel agreed with God that Cain's works were evil, and Cain hated Abel for this. Now back to 1Jn 3:1-14. See what John says after the story of Cain. Let's read 1Jn 3:13-15 : Do not marvel, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. The [one] not loving the brother remains in death. Everyone hating the brother is a murderer, and you know that every murderer does not have everlasting life abiding in him.

God compares Abel to the ones who love and Cain to the ones who do not love. God's people are hated by the world. Why are God's people hated? Because they will not speak peace when there is no peace. They tell the world that it is lost and its deeds are evil. And how do God's people show love to one another? By speaking peace to each other and taking sides with each other against the world. Let me tell you one big way in which you know that you love your brothers and sisters in Christ: you will not speak peace to their enemies. Now if I had a friend, and my friend had an enemy, what would happen if I made friends with that enemy? Well, I would show that I really wasn't a friend after all. It's the same way with brothers in Christ. If I call you a brother in Christ, and yet I speak peace to your enemies, I show that I am not really your brother in Christ. We've just had this happen recently, haven't we? We had someone who we thought was a brother in Christ, but now he knowingly speaks peace to our enemy, which is God's enemy. This is what God calls hatred.

Let's look through 1 John to see what God says about those who love their brothers and those who hate their brothers. Let's first look at 1Jn 2:9-11 : The [one] claiming to be in the light, and hating his brother, is in the darkness until now. The [one] loving his brother rests in the light, and no offense is in him. But the [one] hating his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness blinded his eyes.

1Jn 3:9 and 1Jn 3:11 talk about one who claims to believe the true gospel but who hates his brother. What does God say about such a person? Well, there's no beating around the bush here: God says that this person is IN the darkness, WALKS in the darkness, and has his eyes blinded by the darkness. It is clear that God is saying that such a person is LOST. No saved person walks in the darkness. But this person professes to believe the truth! What about his profession of faith? Doesn't that count for something? Well, as we see here and in many other passages, if a man's WALK is in darkness, his PROFESSION is false. Walk and profession are connected. We see this especially in the issue of loving the brothers. If someone claims to love his brother and claims to believe the true gospel but speaks peace to his brother's enemies, then he actually HATES his brother and walks in darkness. And when the Bible speaks of HATING one's brother, it's not saying that the hated person is the actual brother of the one hating him; it means that the hated person is someone whom the hater BELIEVES to be his brother. The hated one is NOT THE TRUE BROTHER of the one hating him.

Let's next look at 1Jn 3:14-15 :

1 John 3 : (14) We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. The [one] not loving the brother remains in death. (15) Everyone hating the brother is a murderer, and you know that every murderer does not have everlasting life abiding in him.

How do we know that we have passed from death to life? It is because we love the brothers. We speak peace to them and their brothers, and we take sides with them against their enemies. And look again at what God says about those who do not love the brothers: He says that they remain in death and do not have everlasting life abiding in them. It can't get any clearer than that. These people who do not love the brothers are LOST. Note that God says that everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. And not only that, but that every murderer is lost. Some people would say that all Christians are murderers, since we all fall short of the love for our brothers that God requires. Well, even though we do not have perfect love for our brothers, God says that EVERY MURDERER does not have everlasting life abiding in him. Do you want to call yourself a murderer? Well, you're free to do that, but just remember that when you're doing that, you're saying that you do not have everlasting life abiding in you.

Now let's turn to 1Jn 4:7-8 :

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been generated from God, and knows God. The [one] who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

God repeats Himself again. There's no mistaking this. EVERYONE WHO LOVES is regenerate, and EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT LOVE is unregenerate. Is this clear enough? Think of all the unregenerate religionists in the world who claim to love. God says that they DO NOT LOVE. Their love is a false love. Their love does not flow from a heart that believes the true gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone and that judges by this gospel. Now to 1Jn 4:12 : No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love having been perfected is in us.

Again, our love for each other is evidence that God abides in us. And 1Jn 4:20-21 :

If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the [one] not loving his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God whom he has not seen? And we have this commandment from Him, that the [one] who loves God also loves his brother. Are we getting the picture here? One who claims to love God shows himself to be unregenerate by hating the brothers, which is mainly manifested in speaking peace to his enemies. Notice the end of 1Jn 4:21 : the one who loves God also loves his brother. It's a fact. One who truly loves God loves God's people. So I ask all of you who are listening to this: Do you love the people of God? Do you give to them if they are needy and you have the means to meet their need? Do you take sides with them against this wicked world, which includes the irreligious as well as the religious? You might claim to believe the doctrines of grace and to love your brothers who believe the same thing you do, but do you speak peace to those who confess a false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner? If you do speak peace to those who confess a false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner, including those who believe in universal atonement, then your profession of belief in the true gospel of sovereign grace is a sham. God says that you are a liar, you are a murderer, you walk in darkness, you remain in death, you do not have everlasting life abiding in you, you have not been

born of God, and you do not know God. But to those of you, my brothers, who believe in the true gospel and do not speak peace to the enemies of God's people, God says that you rest in the light, you have passed from death unto life, you have been born of God, and that God abides in you.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us love our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in word and in deed. Amen.

S. True And False Teachers (1)

TRUE AND FALSE TEACHERS (1) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 12/17/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to 2Pe 2:1-22. I'll be reading the entire chapter: But false prophets were also among the people, as also false teachers will be among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, and denying the Master who has bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. And many will follow their destructive ways, by whom the way of truth will be evil spoken of. And by covetousness, with well-turned words, they will use you for gain, for whom judgment of old does not linger, and their destruction does not slumber. For if God did not spare sinning angels, but delivered [them] to chains of darkness, thrust down into Tartarus, having been kept to judgment; and did not spare [the] ancient world, but preserved Noah [the] eighth, a herald of righteousness, bringing a flood on a world of ungodly ones; and covering the cities [of] Sodom and Gomorrah with ashes, [He] [condemned] them with an overthrow, setting an example to men intending to live ungodly. And He delivered righteous Lot, who had been oppressed by the behavior of the lawless in lustfulness. For that righteous one living among them day after day, in seeing and in hearing, [his] righteous soul [was] tormented [with] their lawless deeds. [But the] Lord knows to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unjust for a day of judgment, being punished, and most of all those going after flesh [in] the lust of defilement, and despising rulership, darers, self-pleasing; they do not tremble [at] glories, speaking evil; where angels being greater in strength and power do not bring against them a reproaching charge before [the] Lord. But these as unreasoning natural beasts, having been born for capture and corruption, speaking evil in that [of] which they are ignorant, they shall utterly perish in their corruption, being about to receive [the] wages of unrighteousness, having deemed indulgence in the day [to be] pleasure; spots and blemishes reveling [in] their deceits, feasting along with you, having eyes full of an adulteress, and never ceasing from sin; alluring unsettled souls; having a heart being busied [with] covetousness; cursed children; forsaking a straight path, they went astray, following the way of Balaam the [son] of Beor, who loved [the] wages of unrighteousness, but had reproof of [his] own transgression, the dumb ass speaking in a man's voice held back the madness of the prophet. These are springs without water, clouds being driven by tempest, for whom the blackness of darkness has been kept to the ages. For speaking over-swollen [words] of vanity, by [the] lusts of the flesh, by unbridled lusts, they allure those indeed escaping, the ones walking in error, promising to them freedom, [though] themselves being slaves of corruption; for by whom anyone has been overcome, even to this one he has been enslaved. For if by a recognition of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, [they] have escaped the defilements of the world, and again being entangled [they] have been overcome by these, [then their] last things have become worse [than] the first. For it was better for them not to have recognized the way of righteousness than having recognized it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But [the] word of the true proverb has happened to them: "[The] dog turning to [his] own vomit;" also, [the] washed sow to wallowing [in] mud.

Today, in our continuing series on the true versus the false, we come to true and false teachers. Peter said that not only were there false prophets among the Old Testament professing church, but that false teachers will be among the New Testament professing church as well. The Bible speaks a lot about false teachers. In fact, if my research is correct, I'm pretty sure that the Bible gives descriptions of FALSE teachers, including false prophets, MORE than it gives descriptions of TRUE teachers, including true prophets. We see time and time again warning after warning about false teachers. I guess the people who say that we should only dwell on the positive don't mind shaking their fists at God for all these negative things about false teachers that He put in the Bible. God shows us that we need to make a clear distinction between the true and the false, not only by describing the true, but also by describing the false.

Because of all the warnings against false teachers in the Bible, I'm going to start with the false teachers. But before I do that, I'd like to briefly talk about the word "prophet." The word comes from the Greek word pro-fay-tays, which is a combination of "pro" and "fay-mee." "Pro" means "forth," and "fay-mee" means "to speak" or "to say." So a prophet is one who speaks forth. Many think of a prophet as one who foretells. But the accurate way to think of a prophet is one who FORTH-tells. There ARE prophets mentioned in the Bible who told what was going to happen. But even these were FORTH-telling the Word of God. In the case of a true prophet, he is one who speaks forth the truth of the Word of God. In the case of a false prophet, he is one who speaks forth lies. We saw in 2Pe 2:1 that Peter was equating the false prophets of the Old Testament to the false teachers of the New Testament. Both prophets and teachers are those who speak forth. So when John spoke about false prophets in 1Jn 4:1, for example, he was talking about those who were speaking forth lies. They could just as easily be called false teachers. There ARE differences between the Greek words for "prophet" and "teacher," but in a passage such as 1Jn 4:1, we see that these false prophets WERE and ARE teachers. I don't want to get too deeply into that in this sermon. As I said before, a false prophet, or a false teacher, is one who speaks forth lies. But we see in many passages that the Bible concentrates on SPECIFIC lies that the false teachers speak. In most cases, these lies are about the character of God - who He is and what He does. Even when the false teachers speak lies about man, they ultimately reflect on the character of God. Let's first go to some descriptions of false prophets in the Old Testament and how they relate to false teachers in our day. Let's first turn to Deu 13:1-5 :

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams rises among you, and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder which he spoke to you occurs, saying, Let us go after other gods which you have not known, and let us serve them, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams. For Jehovah your God [is] testing you, to know if you love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after Jehovah your God, and you shall fear Him. And you shall keep His commandments, and you shall hear His voice, and you shall serve Him, and you shall cleave to Him. And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall die, because he has spoken apostasy against Jehovah your God, who is bringing you out of the land of Egypt, and has redeemed you out of the house of slaves, to thrust you out of the way in which Jehovah your God has commanded you to walk. And you shall put away evil from among you.

Notice that the sign or wonder ACTUALLY HAPPENS. And when it happens, the false prophet tells the people to serve other gods. Now in modern day charisma circles, the sign or wonder is proof that this is a man of God. Doctrine is put on the back shelf. But what does God say here?

Which do you go by to tell that it is a false prophet? It's his DOCTRINE. It's his TEACHING. The FALSE DOCTRINE that a man teaches overrides everything else. It doesn't matter what else it is. If a teacher teaches FALSE DOCTRINE concerning the character of God, then he is a FALSE TEACHER. I'm sure you can think of many examples in modern-day evangelicalism that relate to this. "But he's so kind and loving and moral and sincere." Can't you hear them say it? Yet these false teachers of today are telling their hearers to go seek other gods. They're telling their hearers to go seek a christ who died for everyone without exception and wants everyone to be saved. They're telling their hearers to pray to and worship a god who is neither a just God nor a Savior. They are false teachers.

Let's turn over a few pages to Deu 18:20 : But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, that which I have not commanded him to speak, and who speaks in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

Again, we see that a false prophet speaks in the name of other gods. A Muslim teacher speaks in the name of a false god. A Mormon teacher speaks in the name of a false god. An Arminian teacher speaks in the name of a false god.

Let's turn to Isa 8:19-20 : And when they say to you, Seek to the mediums, and to spirit-knowers who peep and mutter; should not a people seek to its God, [than] for the living to [seek] the ones who died? To the Law and to the Testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word, [it is] because there is no dawn to them!

We see here that a false teacher does not speak according to the Word of God. He speaks what is contrary to the Word of God. He does not tell the people to seek the true and living God, because he does not know who the true and living God is. Isn't this just like the false teachers today? They speak of a god who shows grace and mercy and love at the expense of his law and justice. They speak of a god who regenerates people and then keeps them ignorant of His righteousness revealed in the gospel. They speak of a god who lets people into heaven because they've been good stewards. To the law and to the testimony - they do NOT speak according to this word, which means that they do NOT have light and are yet in darkness.

Now let's turn to Jer 6:14-15 :

They have also healed the break of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they made an abomination? They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know to blush. So they shall fall among those who fall. At the time I visit them, they shall be cast down, says Jehovah.

Now to Jer 8:11-12 : For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace! And [there is] no peace. Were they ashamed when they had done hateful things? They were not even at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush. So they shall fall among those who fall. In the time of their punishment they will wither, says Jehovah. This is a major characteristic of false teachers. They speak forth PEACE to the people when there is no peace. This is the lie that Satan spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden. Satan said, "You shall not surely die." And we have a country and a world full of preachers who come in the name of Christ who are telling their lost hearers this morning that everything's okay. They assure their hearers that they are at peace with God. Yet they and their hearers are at WAR with the true and living God. There

is no peace between them and God. How do we know this? Because they preach that peace with God is conditioned on the sinner. They encourage their hearers to "make your peace with God." They say that Jesus did all he could do, and now it's up to the sinner to make peace with God. And they tell their hearers that when they do this, they are at peace with God and God is at peace with them. Yet they continue to be at war with the true and living God and don't even know it. They are comforted slightly when the pastor speaks peace to them when there really is no peace. And there's another kind of false teachers who speak peace when there is no peace. These are the ones who claim to believe the doctrines of grace but who speak peace to those who believe in a gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner. These false teachers say things like, "You might erroneously believe that Christ died for everyone without exception, but as long as you cast all your hope on Christ, I welcome you as a brother in Christ." They say things like, "I don't expect you to know all the higher doctrines right away; realizing that Christ's blood is effectual for everyone for whom He died takes a lot of time and study, and you might even strongly resist it at first, but I know as a brother in Christ, you'll come to know this precious doctrine in time." They're saying PEACE, PEACE. They're saying that there is PEACE between God and those who hold to universal atonement. They say, "You have some wrong doctrine about salvation in your head, but you really love God in your heart." Or they say, "You speak some wrong doctrine about salvation with your mouth, but you really love God in your heart. You're a believer who's just speaking as an Arminian would speak, and you'll realize your error when we confront you." Again, they're crying PEACE, PEACE, when there is no peace. Most who say they believe the doctrines of grace will echo the words of one of the most well-known compromisers, who said this: "A man may be evidently of God's chosen family, and yet though elected, may not believe in the doctrine of election. I hold that there are many savingly called, who do not believe in effectual calling, and that there are a great many who persevere to the end, who do not believe in the doctrine of perseverance. We hope that the hearts of many are a great deal better than their heads. We do not set their fallacies down to any wilful opposition to the truth as it is in Jesus, but simply to an error in their judgments, which we pray God to correct. We hope that if they think us mistaken too, they will reciprocate the same Christian courtesy; and when we meet around the cross, we hope that we shall ever feel that we are one in Christ Jesus." PEACE, PEACE, when there is no peace. The false teacher whom I just quoted who was crying peace to the God-haters was none other than Charles H. Spurgeon, who welcomed Arminians into his fellowship with open arms. And as we have seen in past messages, one who does this is just as lost as the most immoral pervert on the face of this earth. Spurgeon was a wicked, unregenerate blasphemer. He's a prime example of one who spoke peace when there was no peace.

Let's turn to Eze 13:1-7 : And the Word of Jehovah was to me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy. And say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, Hear the Word of Jehovah: So says the Lord Jehovah, Woe to the foolish prophets who walk after their own spirit and have seen nothing! O Israel, your prophets are like foxes in the deserts. You have not gone up into the breaks, nor built a wall around the house of Israel, that it might stand in the battle, in the day of Jehovah. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, Jehovah declares! And Jehovah has not sent them, but they hoped to lift [their] word. Did you not see a vain vision and speak a lying divination? Yet you say, Jehovah declares, though I have not spoken.

We see some important things about false prophets in this passage. First, they walk after their own spirit. This spirit is a false spirit, like what I explained in the sermon on the true Holy Spirit versus false spirits. When a teacher walks after a false spirit, he speaks lies. Oh, he may couch these lies in a little bit of truth to give a semblance of validity, but the falsehood will come out. And when we see even a little falsehood when it comes to the ground of salvation, we can know for certain that this is a false preacher. A preacher can talk about sovereign grace all day, but if he then comes out and says that our everlasting habitation is based on our present stewardship, we can know for certain that this is a false preacher. Second, these false teachers say that they speak "thus says the Lord." We see this in Eze 13:6-7. The false prophets were saying, "Jehovah declares." Yet they were saying things that were CONTRARY to what Jehovah declares! We hear the preachers today saying, "This is what God says" or "I only preach 'thus saith the Lord'" or "this is a word from God." Yet they speak forth lies. Remember - just because a preacher says that this is what God says DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN that this is what God says. That is why we are to be Bereans and always measure what a preacher says according to Scripture. In the case of most preachers, their "thus says God" is really "thus says the false god." And most are not intentionally trying to deceive; they truly believe that it's God who says this. Turn over to Mat 15:14. This leads us into what the New Testament has to say about false teachers:

Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. The false teachers are blind, and those whom they teach are blind. The false teachers think they're going the right way, and they lead their followers in this way, but since they're both blind, they fall into a pit. I think of John 10:5 as a contrast to this. Let's turn over there: But they will not follow a stranger, never! But they will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of the strangers. The sheep, those who have been regenerated, will NEVER follow a stranger, because they do not know the voice of strangers. Mat 15:14 shows us that it is the blind who follow the blind. Those who can see will not follow the blind. Christ's sheep will never follow a false christ. While we're in John 10:1-42, let's look at how Jesus Christ describes false teachers. Let's read John 10:1-2 :

Truly, truly, I say to you, The one not entering through the door into the sheepfold, but going up by another way, that one is a thief and a plunderer. But the one entering through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The one not entering through the door but who goes up by another way is not the shepherd. Jesus said in John 10:7 that He is the door. So anyone who tries to lead the sheep who comes in any other way than through the true Christ, he's a false leader. Again, any teacher who teaches universal atonement is NOT entering through the door, who is Christ; he's entering by another way, which is a false way.

Let's turn back to Mat 15:1-39 for a moment and read what Jesus has to say about what these blind leaders of the blind actually teach. Let's start with Mat 15:1-9 :

Then the scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. But answering He said to them, Why do you also transgress the command of God on account of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, "Honor your father and mother," and, "The one speaking evil of father or mother, by death let him die." But you say, Whoever says to the father or the mother, A gift, whatever you would gain from me; and in no way he honors his father or his mother.

And you annulled the command of God on account of your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, saying: "This people draws near to Me with [their] mouth, and with their lips honor Me; but their heart holds far off from Me. But in vain they worship Me, teaching [as] doctrines [the] precepts of men."

Why did Jesus call the Pharisees hypocrites? It was because of their DOCTRINE. They taught man-made ordinances and traditions, claiming that these ordinances and traditions were doctrines from God. This parallels with Col 2:8 :

Watch that there not be one robbing you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ.

We see in Matthew and Colossians that one of the ways we can tell a false prophet is if man-made traditions are made into commands, so if someone does not keep these traditions, the leaders say that this person is in sin, and the others who do keep these traditions look down on those who do not. We see this very plainly in the Roman Catholic false church. They have all their traditions which have no support from Scripture, and these traditions are church law. And I'm sure you can think of other non-Catholic false churches that do essentially the same thing. Another very clear description of the Roman Catholic false teachers is in Mat 23:4-9 : For they bind heavy and hard to bear burdens, and lay [them] on the shoulders of men, but they do not desire to move them with their finger. And they do all their works to be seen by men. And they make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their robes. And they love the first couch in the suppers, and the first seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the markets, and to be called by men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But do not you be called Rabbi, for One is your Leader, the Christ, and you are all brothers. And call no one your father on earth, for One is your Father, the [One] in Heaven. And another description is in 1Ti 4:1-3 : But the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, cleaving to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons, in lying speakers in hypocrisy, being seared in [their] own conscience, forbidding to marry, [saying] to abstain from foods, which God created for partaking with thanksgiving by the believers and [those] knowing the truth.

Let's turn over to Mark 13:21-23 : And then if anyone says to you, Behold, here [is] the Christ! Or, Behold, there! You shall not believe. For false christs and false prophets will be raised, and they will give miraculous signs and wonders in order to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. But you be careful. Behold, I have foretold you all things.

Jesus says that false prophets will arise and say "Here is the Christ!" and will even do signs and wonders, yet these are FALSE prophets. How could it be that one who says "Here is the Christ" is a false prophet? Again, it must be because they are showing the people a FALSE christ.

Some false teachers are called "wolves in sheep's clothing," such as Mat 7:15. This means that they are disguised as true preachers. They don't come right out and manifest all their false doctrine right away. They creep in unawares, as Jude 1:4 says. Turn over to 2Co 11:1-33. We've been in this passage before in this series. In 2Co 11:4, Paul talks about those who come proclaiming another Jesus. He then says this in 2Co 11:13-15 : For such ones [are] false apostles, deceitful workers transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And did not Satan marvelously transform himself into an angel of light? [It is] not a great thing, then, if also his ministers transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

These ministers of Satan actually transform into what looks very much like ministers of righteousness. They say for a time that Christ's righteousness is the only ground of salvation. But the transformation is only temporary. They do not STAY there. They do not ABIDE there, as 2Jn 1:9 says. They'll say that the work of Christ is the only ground of salvation, but later on they'll say that your good works will make you more fit for heaven or will recommend you unto God or will give you the right to enter heaven. They'll say that they believe the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, but later on they'll speak peace to those who come with a false gospel of salvation conditioned on the sinner. We've experienced this, haven't we? Let us always be wary.

Let's turn to some passages in First and Second Timothy that show that the issue of false teachers is one of knowledge and doctrine. Because of time constraints, I'll just read them and try to refrain from commenting on them.

1Ti 1:6-7 : from which having missed the mark, some turned aside to empty talking, (7) wishing to be teachers of law, neither understanding what they say, nor about that which they confidently affirm.

1Ti 6:3-5 :

If anyone teaches differently, and does not consent to sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching according to godliness, he has been puffed up, understanding nothing, but [is] sick concerning doubts and arguments, out of which comes envy, strife, evil-speakings, evil suspicions, meddling, of men whose mind has been corrupted and deprived of the truth, supposing gain to be godliness. Withdraw from such [persons].

2Ti 3:6-7 : For of these are those creeping into houses and leading silly women captive, [the ones] having been heaped with sins, being led away by various lusts, always learning, but never being able to come to a full knowledge of [the] truth.

Well, it looks like I won't be getting to a description of true teachers today. We'll save that for next week, the Lord willing. I want to end with two things. First, God commands us not to believe every teacher but to test and try and judge the teachers. Let's read 1Jn 4:1-3 :

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone forth into the world. By this know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in [the] flesh is from God. And every spirit which does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in [the] flesh is not from God; and this is the antichrist which you heard is coming, and now is already in the world.

We are COMMANDED to judge who is and who is not from God. And secondly, related to this, the Bible makes it clear that those who teach a gospel that is different than the gospel of the Bible are unregenerate. Let's read Gal 1:8-9 to close: But even if we, or an angel out of Heaven, should preach a gospel to you beside the gospel we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, and now I say again, If anyone preaches a gospel beside what you received, let him be accursed.

Amen.

S. True And False Teachers (2)

TRUE AND FALSE TEACHERS (2) (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 12/24/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly)

Last week, we saw God's description of false teachers. We saw that false teachers preach in the name of other gods, tell people to serve other gods, do not speak according to the Word of God, speak peace when there is no peace, walk after their own spirit, are blind leaders of the blind, and teach man-made traditions as God's commands. False teachers come in many colors. Some will preach that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, thus conditioning salvation on the sinner. Some will preach for a time that the work of Jesus Christ is the only ground of salvation but later say that our acceptance before God or our right to enter heaven is conditioned on the sinner. Some will claim to preach salvation by sovereign grace but then welcome into their fellowship those who believe in salvation conditioned on the sinner. Some will teach that man-made traditions must be followed as law. And we could go on and on.

Now we come to God's description of true teachers. What does God say in His holy Word about true teachers? The Lord willing, we will see what He says in the remaining minutes.

Let's first turn to Jer 3:15 : And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you [with] knowledge and understanding.

Here is the primary role of true teachers. It is to FEED the people with knowledge and understanding. Notice that these shepherds are according to the heart of God. This means that they are ones who know the mind of God - they know His truth. And they don't keep His truth to themselves; instead, they FEED His truth to the people. The way they FEED His truth is by PREACHING His truth so that others will HEAR the truth. Turn to Rom 10:14-15 :

How then may they call on [One] into whom they have not believed? And how may they believe [One] of whom they have not heard? And how may they hear without preaching? And how may they preach if they are not sent? Even as it has been written, "How beautiful" "the feet of those preaching the gospel of peace, of those preaching the gospel of good things."

We see that PREACHING is the way people HEAR of Christ, and HEARING must come before BELIEF. There is no BELIEF without HEARING, and there is no HEARING without PREACHING. 1Co 1:21 says that God saves through the foolishness of PREACHING.

Jer 3:15 says that true preachers preach so that the people might KNOW, and UNDERSTAND the truth. He doesn't preach mysticism and ignorance. He preaches KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING. Mysticism and ignorance are the tools of the FALSE teachers, not the TRUE teachers. He doesn't preach that there are contradictions in Scripture that just need to be swallowed by faith. Turn over to 2Co 1:17-20 :

Then purposing this, did I indeed use lightness? Or what I purposed, did I purpose according to flesh, that it may be with me yes, yes, and no, no? But God [is] faithful, that our word to you did not

become yes and no. For Jesus Christ the Son of God, the [One] proclaimed among you by us, through me and Silvanus and Timothy, did not become Yes and No, but has been Yes in Him. For as many promises as [are] of God, in Him [they are] yes, and in Him [are] Amen, for glory to God through us. The word of the true preacher is not "yes" and "no." He doesn't preach that salvation is conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone in one sermon or in one part of a sermon, and then preach that salvation is conditioned on the work of the sinner in another sermon or in another part of a sermon. He doesn't one time preach that believers will plead the merits of Christ's work alone on judgment day and then another time preach that believers will plead their works on judgment day. He doesn't say at the beginning of his sermon that God is sovereign in salvation and then say to his lost hearers at the end of his sermon that God is ready and willing to save them. He doesn't say that all who are ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel are lost and then make some exceptions for the Old Testament saints or for the Galatians or for infants or for anyone else. He doesn't say that God's promises are sure and certain and then turn around and say that one must fulfill certain conditions in order to receive God's promises. A TRUE PREACHER says that God's promises are YES and AMEN. He preaches that salvation is conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, with no contribution from the sinner's best efforts. He preaches that God is sovereign in salvation and saves whom He wills and damns who He wills. He preaches that all without exception from the beginning of the world to the end of the world, from conception to death, who are ignorant of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel, are lost. He is a "YES IN CHRIST" man. Nothing makes him swerve from his narrow-mindedness and judgmentalism. If someone comes along who is of great religious reputation but who speaks peace to God-haters, he will treat him the same way as he treats a person of no reputation who speaks peace to God haters - he will preach that both of them are lost. He is totally consistent in the gospel he preaches. He might be in error in other matters, but when it comes to the gospel and its particulars and implications, he is totally consistent. He does not preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL than the one that the Apostles preached. How do we know this? Well, remember when I talked about how we can see the things that a true Christian could NOT do by reading the things that unbelievers do that are indicative of lostness? The same applies to teachers. Gal 1:8-9 says that if anyone preaches a gospel that is different than what the apostles preached, he is lost. Thus, no true preacher preaches a gospel that is different than what the apostles preached.

Let's turn to 1Co 1:21-24 : For since in the wisdom of God the world [by] wisdom did not know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of preaching to save the ones believing. And since Jews ask for a sign, and Greeks seek wisdom, we, on the other hand, preach Christ crucified (truly an offense to Jews, and foolishness to Greeks), but to the called out ones, both to Jews and to Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God;

Now let's read 1Co 2:1-2 : And when I came to you, brothers, I did not come with excellency of word or wisdom, declaring to you the Testimony of God. For I decided not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him having been crucified.

True preachers do not come with eloquent speeches that tickle the ears or with carnal wisdom. They just declare God's Testimony. And 1Co 1:23; 1Co 2:2 show what the testimony of God that they declare is. True preachers preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED. This explains Jer 3:15. The KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING that the preacher who knows God's heart is to preach is

CHRIST CRUCIFIED. If a preacher does not preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED, then he is not a preacher sent from God. But how many preachers who come in the name of Christ say that they preach Christ crucified? All of them! Yet almost every single one of them is a false teacher. So CHRIST CRUCIFIED needs to be defined. Well, in 1Co 1:23, we see that Christ crucified is an offense to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. It confounded the carnal wisdom of the Greeks, who were the Carl Sagans and Stephen J. Goulds of the day. They saw no need for a Christ. But it also offended the Jews, who were the zealous religionists of the day. Why is this? Let's go to Rom 9:31-33 : but Israel following after a Law of righteousness did not arrive at a Law of righteousness? Why? Because [it was] not of faith, but as of works of Law. For they stumbled at the Stone-of-stumbling, as it has been written, "Behold, I place in "Zion a Stone-of-stumbling," "and a Rock-of-offense," "and everyone believing on Him will not be shamed." The Jews were offended at Christ, because they were seeking salvation based on their works. Look down at Rom 10:4 : For Christ [is] the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

Now THAT will OFFEND those who believe that it is the work of the sinner that recommends you to God. The Jews were offended at Christ crucified, because Christ crucified means that the work of the sinner is totally excluded from the ground of salvation! Christ crucified means that the work of Jesus Christ demands and ensures the salvation of all whom He represented! And this is what true preachers preach. They preach Christ crucified. They preach that Christ's death by crucifixion accomplished what Christ set out to accomplish - the salvation of all for whom Christ was crucified. Anyone who preaches that Christ died for those in hell is a false preacher. The TRUE preacher will BOLDLY and REPEATEDLY proclaim that the finished work of Christ on the cross demands and ensures the salvation of all whom Christ represented, and they will BOLDLY and REPEATEDLY proclaim that all who believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone are lost. They'll make no apologies for it, for they are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ crucified.

Let's turn to 2Co 5:18-21 : And all things [are] from God, the One having reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and having given to us the ministry of reconciliation, as, that God was in Christ reconciling [the] world to Himself, not charging their deviations to them, and having put the Word of reconciliation in us. Then on behalf of Christ, we are ambassadors, as God [is] exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God. For He made the One who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become [the] righteousness of God in Him.

We see here that true preachers are ambassadors for Christ, and their ministry is one of reconciliation based on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. This ties right in to what I just said regarding preaching Christ crucified. Christ crucified and the word of reconciliation are the same thing. We preach Christ crucified as the only ground of reconciliation before God.

Let's turn to Php 1:17 : But these [others] out of love, knowing that I am set for defense of the gospel.

True teachers DEFEND the gospel. They DEFEND the truth. Now think about the word "defend" for a minute. Does one have a DEFENSE if there is no opposing OFFENSE? Some preachers would like you to think that it's not their job to defend anything. Yet God shows through the apostle Paul that preachers are to DEFEND the GOSPEL. This means that when a false gospel comes invading, this false gospel is exposed, and the true gospel is proclaimed in such a way that its

opposition to the false gospel is CRYSTAL CLEAR. If a false gospel of universal atonement is put into a preacher's path, and the preacher merely says, "I believe that Christ died for His elect," the GOSPEL has not been FULLY DEFENDED. In fact, most who would say they disagree with universal atonement and believe in limited atonement do not defend the gospel AT ALL. They are actually defenders of a FALSE GOSPEL. Whenever one of these preachers says that a person who believes in universal atonement is saved, that preacher is actually DEFENDING A FALSE GOSPEL. He is saying that the gospel of the universal atonement advocate is the same as his gospel, and we shouldn't be judging a person lost just because he believes in universal atonement. See how this is a DEFENSE of the false gospel? And oh how many so-called "Calvinists" or "sovereign grace preachers" will defend the false gospel of their Arminian brethren even more vehemently than defending the gospel of sovereign grace! It really shows where their loyalty is, doesn't it? But TRUE preachers, TRUE teachers of God's Word, will vigorously, adamantly, boldly, zealously defend God's honor whenever it is called into question by false preachers.

Let's turn to 2Ti 2:15 :

Give diligence to present yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. A true teacher rightly divides the Bible. What does it mean to "rightly divide" in this verse? As you probably know, C.I. Scofield thought that this meant that a true teacher is able to divide the Bible into different sections, called dispensations. He taught that in each dispensation, there were different ways of salvation, with most of the dispensations being salvation by works. Not only was his exegesis of "rightly dividing" foolish, but the system he devised was Satanic. So let's see what "rightly dividing" means. These two English words actually come from one Greek word, which is or-thot-om-EH-o. Now you can see right away that this word has "ortho" in it, as in "orthodox." The Greek word OR-thos means "straight" or "correct." The last half of or-thot-om-EH-o comes from the Greek word TEM-no, which means "to cut" or "to dissect." So the Greek word that's translated "rightly dividing" is actually "cutting straight," or, "correctly dissecting." The true teacher cuts the Bible straight. The true teacher correctly dissects the Bible. He doesn't use the Bible to confirm his own preconceived notions; he uses the Bible TO GET his notions! And he studies the meaning of Bible passages, dissects them correctly, and expounds them to his hearers. This is in contrast with 2Pe 3:16. Let's turn over there: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them concerning these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unsettled pervert, as also [they do] the rest of the Scriptures, to [their] own destruction.

Notice that Peter doesn't cut these people slack just because these Scriptures are hard to understand. Instead of correctly dissecting these Scriptures, these men twist and pervert the Scriptures, and they do it TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION. The man of God will be orthodox in His interpretation of Scriptures. His interpretation will always be consistent with the Gospel. When he comes to a verse that is hard to understand, he already knows what it CAN'T mean, in light of the gospel. He then dissects it with this in mind.

Let's turn to Tit 1:9 : clinging to the faithful Word according to the teaching, that he may be able both to encourage by sound doctrine and to convict the [ones] contradicting.

True teachers are ones who clings fast to the Word. Whenever there is a dispute, he gets his answers from the Word. He is a man who walks by doctrine. When a brother in Christ comes to him, he is able to ENCOURAGE with doctrine. When he comes up against one who contradicts the truth, he is able to CONVICT with doctrine. And notice in Tit 1:11, a true teacher is to stop the mouths of those who teach what they shouldn't. Quite different than the so-called "churches" of today, isn't it? In that same chapter in Titus, we also see some qualities of character that a true teacher is to have. Let's read Tit 1:6-8 :

If anyone is blameless, husband of one wife, having faithful children, not in accusation of loose behavior, or disobedient, (for the overseer must be blameless as a steward of God), not self-pleasing, not prone to anger, not given to wine, not a quarreler, not greedy of ill gain; but hospitable, a lover of good, discreet, just, holy, temperate,

Now I'm not planning to go into detail in this sermon about these qualities - I'd like to spend some time on them in the future - but for now, I just want to emphasize that sound doctrine is not the only quality of a true pastor, teacher, elder, preacher, etc. He is also characterized by these qualities of character. Another such list is given in 1Ti 3:2-7 :

Then it behooves the overseer to be blameless, husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, well-ordered, hospitable, apt at teaching; not a drunkard, not a contentious one, not money-loving, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not avaricious; ruling his own house well, having children in subjection with all respect. But if anyone does not know how to rule [his] own house, how will he care for an assembly of God? [He should] not [be] a novice, lest being puffed up he may fall into the devil's judgment. But he must also have a good witness from those outside, that he not fall into reproach and [into] a snare of the devil.

We've encountered people who say that it's just a man's doctrine that matters when it comes to qualifying to be a pastor. But these passages clearly state that CHARACTER matters as well. We've also seen that many of those who say that character doesn't matter are the ones whose character shows that they are not qualified to be a pastor. There are so-called "pastors" who claim to preach the true gospel who are divorced and remarried. There's even one pastor I know of who would agree with us on the gospel and on judging Arminians and tolerant Calvinists lost, but who committed adultery with his secretary and then divorced his wife and married the one with whom he was committing adultery. And he considered himself regenerate during this whole ordeal. This man was and continues to be an ADULTERER, and adulterers DO NOT enter the kingdom of heaven. This shows that he DOES NOT truly believe the same gospel we believe, no matter what he says. Of course, I'm not saying that if a person's character is good, then what he believes doesn't matter. Let me make it very clear: Even if a person's character is that which is described in the two lists I read, if this person does not believe and preach the true gospel, then all his qualities of character are nothing but evil deeds, dead works, and fruit unto death.

Finally, I'd like to read a passage from 2Co 2:1-17, describing the ministry of true preachers. Let's start with 2Co 2:14-17 : But thanks [be] to God, the One always leading us in triumph in Christ, and [the One] revealing through us the odor of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a sweet smell to God because of Christ in those being saved, and in those being lost; to the one, an odor of death unto death, and to the other, an odor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as the many, peddling the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God.

We speak in Christ, in the sight of God. The true ministers of God spread an odor around. And what is that odor? It is the odor of the KNOWLEDGE of CHRIST. Once again, we see KNOWLEDGE. Remember in Jer 3:15, God says that the shepherds will feed the people with KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING. It is KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING of Christ revealed in the gospel. And this odor of knowledge and understanding has two effects. To the elect, it is an odor of life, for the gospel of Jesus Christ, which gives the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to His people, is the power of God unto salvation. To the reprobate, it is an odor of death, because it is foolish and offensive to the carnal mind that is bent on establishing a righteousness of its own, and God uses it to harden the reprobate for destruction. And notice in Jer 3:15, that BOTH RESULTS make this odor smell sweet to God. God is not disappointed that the reprobate do not come to Him. He is not mourning over sinners that He wished would be saved. He is WELL-PLEASED with His hardening of the reprobate through the gospel, and the odor of the knowledge of Christ is SWEET when it has the effect of hardening the reprobate. So even if NOT ONE PERSON comes to faith in Christ through a true preacher's preaching, that preaching was a success. We see this in some of the Old Testament prophets, who were commanded to preach in order for the people to be hardened. And lastly, in light of the truth of election and reprobation, true preachers do not hawk the word of God. That means that they do not peddle the word of God. To "hawk" means to offer for sale by outcry in the street. True preachers of God do NOT do that. They do not use the gospel as a sales pitch. They do not proclaim a so-called "gospel offer." They do not cry out in the streets and tell people that Christ is there for the taking, if they would only do their part. They do not cry out that Christ is knocking at the door of their heart and is waiting for them to let him in. That's for the Whitefields and the Moodys, not for true preachers. The true preachers preach the truth, which is the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, realizing that it is an odor of life to some and an odor of death to others. May we all be able to discern between true and false teachers. Amen.

S. True and False Christ

TRUE AND FALSE CHRIST (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 11/19/00 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's read Mark 13:21-23 : And then if anyone says to you, Behold, here [is] the Christ! Or, Behold, there! You shall not believe. For false christs and false prophets will be raised, and they will give [miraculous] signs and wonders in order to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. But you be careful. Behold, I have foretold you all things.

Today, I'm going to be speaking on the true Jesus Christ versus false christs. Jesus said that in the last days, there will be people who will say, "Look, here's Christ!" And Jesus said that you shall not believe these people. And in 2Co 11:1-33, the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul talks about another Jesus. Let's read 2Co 10:17 through 2Co 11:4 :

"But the [one] glorying, let him glory in" [the] "Lord." For not the [one] commending himself is the one approved, but [the one] whom the Lord commends. I would that you endured me a little [in] foolishness, but, indeed, endure me. For I am jealous [over] you with a jealousy of God. For I have promised you to one Man, to present [you] a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve in his craftiness, so your thoughts should be corrupted from the purity which [is due] to Christ. For if, indeed, the [one] coming proclaims another Jesus, whom we have not proclaimed, or [if] you receive another spirit which you have not received, or another gospel which you never accepted, you might well endure [these]. The word "these" in 2Co 11:4 is in brackets, meaning that it was not in the original Greek. In light of the context, the word in brackets should be "me." Notice in 2Co 11:1, Paul talks of the Corinthians bearing with him. Now let me read 2Co 11:4-6 with the word "me" in brackets, to show you how this is the only way it makes sense: For if, indeed, the [one] coming proclaims another Jesus, whom we have not proclaimed, or [if] you receive another spirit which you have not received, or another gospel which you never accepted, you might well endure [me]. For I judge [myself] to have come behind the highest apostles [in] nothing. But even if [I am] unskilled in speech, yet not in knowledge. But in every way [I] have been clearly revealed to you in all things.

See how it all flows? Paul is obviously not telling the Corinthians to bear with the one who proclaims another Jesus, because in Gal 2:5, Paul says that he did not yield to the false brothers for even an hour.

Okay, back to the subject. Paul talks about ANOTHER Jesus, whom he had NOT proclaimed. Modern-day religionists would say, "Now wait a minute, Paul. These preachers are preaching in the name of Jesus. They say that Jesus is king and that they give Jesus the preeminence. They sing, 'Nothing but the blood of Jesus.' And they sing, 'Jesus, O how sweet the name.' They pray in the name of Jesus. What other Jesus could they be talking about? If they say they believe in Jesus, we should give them the benefit of the doubt." But notice what Paul says. This is a Jesus whom he and the apostles HAD NOT PREACHED. This other Jesus had the same NAME as the true Jesus, but it was actually a DIFFERENT Jesus. In fact, this other Jesus is TOTALLY OPPOSED to the true Jesus. Get this into your minds! Paul isn't talking about those who say that

Krishna is the true Christ. He isn't talking about those who say that the Christ hasn't come yet. He's talking about those who NAME THE NAME OF JESUS! They preach JESUS! They say, "I believe in JESUS"! Yet the Holy Spirit says that they are preaching ANOTHER Jesus, whom the apostles had NOT proclaimed. Now, what is Paul saying is the way to discern this other Jesus from the true Jesus? It is from the DOCTRINE that the apostles preached! If anyone else comes along and preaches JESUS, then it is to be tested by the DOCTRINE that the apostles preached about the true Jesus. And if this Jesus doesn't conform to the apostles' DOCTRINE of who the TRUE Jesus is and what this TRUE Jesus accomplished, then it is ANOTHER Jesus, a FALSE Jesus.

Now what did Paul and the other apostles preach about the true Jesus? We have it all throughout Acts and the epistles. I'd have to read all 22 books to give you everything they preached about the true Jesus, but let's look at a sampling of the things they preached about the true Jesus from Acts and the epistles.

Acts 8:32-35 : And the content of the Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to slaughter, and as a lamb voiceless before the [one] shearing it, so He does not open His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. And who will recount His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth." And answering the eunuch said to Philip, I ask you, about whom does the prophet say this? About himself, or about some other one? And opening his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture, Philip announced the gospel to him, Jesus.

Philip said that the true Jesus is described in Isa 53:1-12. And Isa 53:1-12 says that Jesus was wounded for our transgressions. It says that Jesus was a guilt offering. It says that Jesus bore the sin of many and made intercession for transgressors. It says that with the wounds of Jesus, we are healed. It says that many are justified. Now how much DOCTRINE is in these passages? Philip preached the gospel from these passages. He preached about imputation. He preached about substitution. He preached about satisfaction. He preached about the work of Jesus that demands the salvation of all whom Jesus represented. The false Jesus is one whose wounds made healing POSSIBLE for everyone, if they would just do their part. The false Jesus died for everyone but could not keep everyone for whom he died out of hell. The false Jesus did not make full satisfaction for the sin of all whom he represented.

Rom 5:15-21 : But the free gift [is] not also like the deviation. For if by the deviation of the one the many died, much more the grace of God, and the gift in grace, which [is] of the one Man, Jesus Christ, did abound to the many. And the gift [is] not as by one having sinned; for indeed the judgment [was] of one to condemnation, but the free gift [is] of many deviations to justification. For if by the deviation of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who are receiving the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall rule in life by the One, Jesus Christ. So then, as through one deviation [it was] toward all men to condemnation, so also through one righteous act toward all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the many shall be constituted righteous. But Law came in besides, that the deviation might abound. But where sin abounded, grace much more abounded, that as sin ruled in death, so also grace might rule through righteousness to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul said that Jesus accomplished righteousness to justification of life. He said that through the obedience of Jesus, the many shall be constituted, or counted, righteous. Paul preached imputed righteousness. He preached that grace rules through righteousness to everlasting life through Jesus. He preached that this imputed righteousness means everlasting life to all to whom it is imputed. The false Jesus did not actually accomplish righteousness for anyone. The false Jesus waits to see if the sinner will allow him to fulfill that accomplishment. The false Jesus says that grace rules through man's righteousness and that everlasting life is not guaranteed for all whom Christ represented.

1Co 1:30-31 : But of Him, you are in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that even as it has been written, "He that glories, let him glory in" [the] "Lord."

Paul preached that Jesus was made to us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He preached that it is JESUS who is all these things to us, so that we have no room to boast. We did not make ourselves wise; JESUS made us wise. We did not make ourselves righteous; JESUS made us righteous. We did not sanctify ourselves; JESUS sanctified us. We did not redeem ourselves; JESUS redeemed us. The false Jesus cooperates with sinners so the sinners can make themselves wise, make themselves righteous, sanctify themselves, and redeem themselves.

2Co 5:21 : For He made the [One] who knew no sin [to be] sin for us, that we might become [the] righteousness of God in Him.

Paul preached that Jesus was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Jesus. Paul preached that our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. He didn't preach about possibilities. He preached about what Jesus ACCOMPLISHED. The false Jesus died for everyone's sin in order to make it possible for everyone to make themselves righteous.

Gal 6:14-17 : But may it never be for me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision [has] any strength nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace and mercy [be] on them and on the Israel of God. For the rest, let no one give troubles to me, for I bear in my body the brands of the Lord Jesus.

Paul preached that we are crucified to the world through the cross of Jesus and that in Jesus we are a new creation. He preached that the works of the flesh do not justify, but Christ's work alone justifies. And he also preached that only those who walk by this doctrine are in the peace of Christ. The false Jesus did part of the job but needs sinners to do the other part in order for justification to be complete.

Eph 5:22-26 :

Wives, subject yourselves to [your] own husbands, as to the Lord, because a husband is head of the wife, as also Christ [is] Head of the assembly, and He is [the] Savior of the body. But even as the assembly is subject to Christ, so also the wives to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly and gave Himself up on its

behalf, that He might sanctify it, cleansing [it] by the washing of the water in [the] Word,

Paul preached that Jesus is the head of the church. He preached that Jesus loved the CHURCH and gave Himself up for the CHURCH and sanctified and cleansed the CHURCH, and that Jesus makes the CHURCH holy and without blemish. Paul preached PARTICULAR love, PARTICULAR redemption, and PARTICULAR sanctification. The false Jesus is an adulterer. The false Jesus has two wives - both the church and the great whore. The false Jesus loves everyone without exception; he is a promiscuous whoremonger. The false Jesus gave himself up for everyone in the whole world but does nothing to actually accomplish redemption for everyone in the whole world. The false Jesus helps the church to make itself holy and without blemish.

Php 2:5-10 : For think this within you, which [mind was] also in Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the form of God, thought [it] not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking [the] form of a slave, having become in [the] likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient until death, even [the] death of a cross. Because of this also God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow," of heavenly ones, and earthly ones, and ones under [the] earth,

Paul preached that Jesus came to earth as a man and was obedient unto the death of the cross. He preached that Jesus is exalted as King. The false Jesus, by his obedience unto death, actually accomplished nothing. The false Jesus is waiting to be king in a future millennium in which he will accept the sacrifices of the Jews.

Col 2:9-14 : For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and having been filled, you are in Him, who is the Head of all rule and authority, in whom also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made by hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, being buried with Him in baptism, in whom also you were raised through the faith of the working of God, raising Him from among the dead. And you, being dead in the deviations and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all the deviations, blotting out the handwriting in the ordinances against us, which was contrary to us, even [He] has taken it out of the midst, nailing it to the cross;

Paul preached that the fulness of the godhead dwells in Jesus. He preached that Jesus was raised from the dead. He preached that the cross of Jesus blotted out the ordinances that were against us. The false Jesus either blotted out nothing or blotted out the ordinances that are against those who are now suffering the torments of hell. The false Jesus gives up the fulness of the godhead to the false holy spirit, who then runs the show.

1Th 1:10 : and to await His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from [the] dead, Jesus, the [One] delivering us from the coming wrath.

Paul preached that Jesus was raised from the dead and that He delivers us from the wrath to come. The false Jesus does not deliver all for whom he died from the wrath to come.

2Th 1:6-10 : since [it is] a just thing with God to pay back tribulation to the ones troubling you, and to [give] you, those being afflicted, relief with us at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from Heaven with angels of His power, in flaming fire giving full vengeance to those not knowing God, and to those not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will pay the penalty: everlasting

destruction from the face of the Lord, "and from the glory of His strength," when He comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all those who believe in that Day, because our testimony to you was believed.

Paul preached that Jesus will come back one day in vengeance against those who do not believe the gospel, and the manifestation of this vengeance is everlasting destruction. He preached that his second coming will also be to be glorified in His saints. The false Jesus comes in vengeance against some of those for whom He died. The false Jesus comes in vengeance against those for whom he was supposed to appease God's wrath. The false Jesus changes his husbandly love into the hatred of divorce.

1Ti 2:5 : For God [is] one, also [there is] one Mediator of God and of men, [the] Man Christ Jesus,

Paul preached that Jesus is the one mediator between God and men. The false Jesus needs an additional mediator or mediators between him and men, such as Mary or the saints. The false Jesus did not actually accomplish peace between God and man; he merely made it possible for sinners to make peace with God, and some for whom this Jesus mediated will remain at enmity with God until their dying breath and into hell.

2Ti 1:9-10 : the [One] having saved us and having called [us] with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to [His] own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before eternal times, but now revealed through the appearance of our Savior, Jesus Christ, indeed making death of no effect, bringing life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel,

Paul preached that the plan for Jesus to save His people was before eternal times. He preached that Jesus made death of no effect. The false Jesus decided to save some people after the first plan for everlasting life in the Garden of Eden failed. The false Jesus is still pleading with people that he has done all he can do, and now it is up to the sinner to do something. The false Jesus did not make death of no effect, because there will still be some for whom he died who will experience the second death.

Tit 2:13-14 : looking for the blessed hope and appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself on our behalf, "that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify a special people for Himself," zealous of good works.

Paul preached that Jesus is God. He preached that Jesus is the Savior. He preached that Jesus will appear at the end of the age. He preached that Jesus gave Himself up for us that He might redeem us and purify a particular people for his own possession. The false Jesus accomplished a potential redemption. The false Jesus did not redeem or purify a particular people who were chosen from before the foundation of the world; instead, he tried to redeem and purify everyone but failed. The false Jesus wants to have everyone for his possession but is eternally disappointed.

Phm 1:3 :

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul preached that grace and peace come from Jesus. The false Jesus is full of common grace. The false Jesus shows grace toward everyone at the expense of his father's law and justice being

satisfied. The false Jesus tried to make peace between God and every man, but some men still remain in rebellion against God and thwart his wishes.

Heb 7:25-28 : And from this He is able to save to the [end] completely the [ones] drawing near to God through Him, forever living to intercede on their behalf. For such a High Priest was fitting for us: holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners, and having become higher than the heavens; who has no need, as do the high priests, to offer sacrifices day by day, first for His own sins, then for those of the people. For He did this once for all, offering up Himself. For the Law makes men high priests who have infirmity, but the word of the oath-taking after the Law [appoints the] Son to the age, having been perfected. The author, who is Paul, I believe, preached that Jesus is able to save to perfection and ever lives to intercede for believers. He preached that Jesus was a High Priest who was perfectly sinless. He preached that Jesus did His work once for good, offering up Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of His people. The false Jesus is not able to save to perfection all whom He intended to save. The false Jesus does not always intercede for believers; instead, he lets some of them lose their salvation. The false Jesus did not do a finished work; instead, there's still more work for the sinner to do to accomplish his salvation.

Jas 2:1 : My brothers, do not with partiality have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the [Lord] of glory.

James preached that Jesus is the Lord of glory. He preached that Jesus is glorified and gets all the glory. The false Jesus is given glory for making it possible for everyone to come to him. He is not glorified in heaven because of accomplished work; instead, he is glorified in heaven by a false god who appreciates the fact that this Jesus showed his love to everyone and did the best he could to bring everyone to heaven.

1Pe 1:18-21 : knowing that not with corruptible things, silver or gold, were you redeemed from your worthless way of life handed down from [your] fathers, but with precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot, indeed having been foreknown before [the] foundation of [the] world, but revealed in [the] last times because of you, the ones believing in God through Him, He raising Him from [the] dead, and giving glory to Him so that your faith and hope may be in God.

Peter preached that the precious blood of Jesus redeems. He preached that Jesus was sinless. He preached that Jesus, the lamb of God, was in God's plan from before the foundation of the world. He preached that God the father raised Jesus from the dead and gave Him glory as Redeemer. The blood of the false Jesus is not precious. It was poured out for sinners in hell. The false Jesus was not raised from the dead because God's law and justice was satisfied. The false Jesus is not given all the glory as redeemer.

2Pe 1:16-17 : For not following fables which had been cleverly devised, but having become eyewitnesses of the majesty of Jesus Christ, we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord. For receiving honor and glory from God [the] Father such a voice being borne to Him from the magnificent glory, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have been delighted,"

Peter preached that Jesus is the one in whom God the Father delights and to whom the Father gives honor and glory. He preached that God was well-pleased with His Son because His Son accomplished everything that was needed in order for God to be both just and justifier. The false Jesus is only delighted in and given honor and glory by the false god, because the false god

accepts an incomplete redemption and a partial satisfaction. The false god is well-pleased that this false Jesus loved everyone so much that he came to save everyone, and he overlooks the fact that the false Jesus failed in his mission.

1Jn 3:16 : By this we have known the love [of God], because that [One] laid down His life for us; and on behalf of the brothers we ought to lay down [our] lives.

John preached that Jesus manifested His love toward us by laying down his life for us. The false Jesus shows his false love by doing everything he could to save everyone without exception. The false Jesus shows his false love by telling sinners, "I love all of you and have laid down my life for all of you, so now why won't you come to me? I'm ready and willing to save you, you just need to do your part."

2Jn 1:9 :

Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. The [one] abiding in the doctrine of Christ, this one has the Father and the Son.

John preached that the doctrine of Jesus is the key to judging saved and lost. Following the true Jesus means believing in His person and His work. The false Jesus is a spewer of false doctrine. The false Jesus died for everyone without exception. The false Jesus did not establish a righteousness that demands the salvation of all whom he represented. Those who believe in the false Jesus do not have God.

Jude 1:21 : keep yourselves in the love of God, eagerly awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to everlasting life.

Jude preached that the mercy of Jesus leads to everlasting life. The false Jesus is full of common mercy. This mercy of the false Jesus does not guarantee everlasting life. It is shown at the expense of God's law and justice.

Paul said in 2Co 11:4 that a false Jesus is proclaimed when this Jesus is contrary to the Jesus that the apostles preached. Do you believe in the Jesus that the apostles preached? Do you believe that God saves His people conditioned solely on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of the true Jesus? Do you believe that the work of Jesus actually accomplishes salvation - that it ensures and demands the salvation of ALL for whom Jesus lived and died? As Jesus asked the Pharisees in Mat 22:42 -- What do you think of Jesus Christ? It's a life-and-death matter. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus. To know the true Jesus is everlasting life. To believe and trust in and worship any other Jesus is everlasting death. May you know the true Jesus, the one who saves His people from their sins. Amen.

S. True and False Humility

TRUE AND FALSE HUMILITY (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 1/28/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) Let's turn to Pro 16:18-19 :

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. It [is] better [to be] of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Today, the Lord willing, I will be preaching on true and false humility. The reason I chose this as one of the topics in this series on the true versus the false is that most people have no idea what true humility is. Lost religionists of all stripes, from Arminians to Calvinists, are full of false humility. You can see the false humility just oozing from them. I hope to show you that this is actually a form of pride. As we've seen time and time again in this series, what they call good, God calls evil. God says in Isa 5:20 "Woe to those who say to evil, good; and to good, evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" We've seen that what lost people call the true God, the true Christ, the true Holy Spirit, and the true gospel, God calls a false god, a false christ, a false spirit, and a false gospel. What lost people call shepherds, God calls wolves. What lost people call a church of God, God calls a church of Satan. What lost people call love, God calls hate. They call the darkness light, and the light darkness. What they call godly, God calls satanic, wicked, evil, blasphemous, and an abomination. This is true for the subject at hand. Their view of humility is actually the OPPOSITE of humility. Let's look at the TRUE humility that believers have and contrast it with the FALSE humility that unbelievers have. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew words that are translated "to humble," "humble," and "meek" all come from the same root, a-NAH. Literally, it is "depressed" or "to depress." We think of someone who's depressed as someone who's overly sad, but that's not the way "depressed" is used. It is used in the sense of "debased" or "lowly" or "needy." It's the same in the New Testament. The word that is used for the verbs "to humble" or "to abase" is tap-i-NO-o, which means "to depress," and the word that is used for the adjective "humble" or "lowly" is tap-i-NOS, which means "depressed." The one English word to keep in mind that best describes humility is LOW. Humility is being LOW.

How is godly humility manifested? First, it is manifested in a knowledge of one's sinfulness in light of the holiness of God. When one comes to the knowledge that God is absolutely sinless and undefiled and that He demands holiness that equals His, the sinner sees himself as unable to meet up to the standard that God requires. He sees that he is totally unworthy in and of himself to receive even the least of God's favors. He sees in the light of God's justice that his sin deserves everlasting death. Let's turn to some examples of this:

Gen 32:10 :

I am not worthy of all the mercies and all the truth which You have done for Your servant, for I passed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies.

Psa 51:5 :

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

Isa 6:3-5 : And one cried to the other and said, Holy, holy, holy [is] Jehovah of Hosts; all the earth [is] full [of] His glory! And the doorposts shook from the voice of the one who cried; and the house was filled with smoke. Then I said, Woe [is] me! For I am cut off; for I [am] a man of unclean lips, and I live amongst a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts.

Rom 7:14-24 : For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, having been sold under sin. For what I work out, I do not know. For what I do not will, this I do. But what I hate, this I do. But if I do what I do not will, I agree with the Law, that [it is] good. But now I no longer work it out, but the sin dwelling in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good. For to will is present to me, but to work out the good I do not find. For what good I desire, I do not do. But the evil I do not desire, this I do. But if I do what I do not desire, [it is] no longer I working it out, but the sin dwelling in me. I find then the law, [when] I desire to do the right, that evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members having warred against the law of my mind, and taking me captive by the law of sin being in my members. O wretched man [that] I [am]! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

You might be wondering why I didn't read Rom 7:25. Well, it's to make a point. While it is true that a regenerate person shows humility by seeing his sinfulness, IT DOESN'T STOP THERE! There are many who have admitted their sin but who were unregenerate! Think of Pharaoh. Think of King Saul. Think of Nebuchadnezzar. Think of Judas. They admitted that they sinned, but they were lost. If one goes no further than saying he's a sinner and deserves God's wrath, he remains dead in his sins! And here's where we get into the first point of false humility. Suppose someone is under deep conviction of his sin and deeply troubled about the state of his soul and is telling people that he is on his way to hell because of his sin and doesn't know the way out. Or suppose someone says that he is too sinful for God to save him because he knows that God is holy, righteous, and just. What would the false religionists say? They'd say, "That man is under Holy Spirit conviction. Look at the humility of that man." But in truth, that man is not showing godly humility at all! He is showing false, satanic humility! Now that sure sounds mean to the lost religionist. Here's a guy who's struggling with his sin, he knows he's doing wrong, he knows he's not worthy, and yet we're calling all this wicked? That's exactly what we're doing. And the reason why we're doing this is because this man is ignorant of the only thing that makes the difference between heaven and hell. As long as he hasn't found the answer, he is wicked and evil, no matter how much crying and sleeplessness he goes through.

Let's read Rom 7:24-25 and then go on and read Rom 8:1-2 :

O wretched man [that] I [am]! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then I myself with the mind truly serve [the] Law of God, and [with] the flesh [the] law of sin. [There is] therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to flesh, but according to Spirit. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set me free from the law of sin and of death.

Paul knew his sinfulness, but he also knew that he was not going to be judged based on his sinfulness! He knew that he had a righteousness that answered ALL of the demands of God's law and justice, even while he remained a sinner in his character and conduct! He knew that he was

NOT condemned, because of the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone! And what did Isaiah know when he had confessed his sinfulness? Let's go back to Isa 6:1-13 and read Isa 6:6-7 :

Then one of the seraphs flew to me [with] a live coal in his hand, snatched with tongs from the altar. And he touched [it] on my mouth, and said, See, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is covered. His iniquity was covered by the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of the coming Messiah!

Now let's turn over to the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luk 18:1-43. Let's read Luk 18:10-14 :

Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee [was] standing, praying these things to himself: God, I thank You that I am not as the rest of men, rapacious, unrighteous, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice [on] the sabbath; I tithe all things, as many as I get. And standing at a distance, the tax collector would not even lift up [his] eyes to Heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner! I say to you, This one went down to his house having been justified, [rather] than that one. For everyone exalting himself will be humbled. And the [one] humbling himself will be exalted.

Jesus uses the tax collector as an example of humility. The lost religionists will use this passage, too, to promote their false view of humility. They will say that the tax collector called himself a sinner, so those who realize that they are sinners are either saved or on their way or under Holy Spirit conviction. But look at what the tax collector knew. He didn't just admit that he was a sinner - HE KNEW WHERE MERCY IS FOUND! And when he asked God to be MERCIFUL to him, what was he asking? A study of this word is very enlightening. The verb that the tax collector used was one that is only used one other place in the New Testament. It's found in Heb 2:17. Let's turn over there: For this reason He ought by all means to become like [His] brothers, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the things respecting God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of [His] people. The word translated "be merciful" in Luk 18:1-43 is the same word as what is translated "make propitiation for" in this passage. And if that isn't enough, then take a look at the other Scripture passages that use words that come from the same root as the word in Luk 18:1-43.

1Jn 2:2 : And He is [the] PROPITIATION relating to our sins."

1Jn 4:10 :

He loved us, and sent His Son [to be] a PROPITIATION relating to our sins.

Rom 3:24-25 : being justified freely by His grace through redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a PROPITIATION through faith in His blood. The self-righteous religionists will almost inevitably point to the tax collector - or the publican, as the King James Version puts it - to defend their heresy that newly regenerated persons don't know about the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. They'll ask, "How much did the publican know?" Well, the Bible tells us how much he knew. He knew that he did not have a righteousness that answered the demands of God's law and justice, and he knew about propitiation, which is God's wrath being appeased. And from Rom 10:1-4, we know that he was submitted to the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel, which is the propitiatory sacrifice and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. How much

did the publican know? He knew what ALL Christians know - that salvation is by the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone, which demands and ensures the salvation of all whom He represented.

Next, as we have already seen in some of the verses we read, true humility is evidenced by a spirit of repentance. And since I'm not planning to do a sermon on true repentance versus false repentance in this series, let me just say a word about it now. There are two main kinds of repentance that a believer engages in. The first kind is the repentance at regeneration, in which the regenerated sinner acknowledges that everything he did before salvation was dead works and fruit unto death and that he worshiped and served a false god and believed in a false gospel. This kind of repentance is never repented of again. Some think that it's the essence of humility to say that they're continuing to repent of all the dead works that they continue to produce, including continuing to repent of confessing a false gospel. This is not humility that comes from God; this is the false humility that comes from Satan. The other kind of repentance is that ongoing repentance that characterizes a believer's life, in which one not only confesses that he continually falls short of perfect righteousness, but he confesses SPECIFIC sins when they are brought to his attention. This means that a humble person is willing to take correction. Pro 9:8 says, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you." A person who claims to be humble but will not receive godly rebuke from a brother thinks too much of himself. And speaking of thinking too much of one's self, the Bible in many places shows that Christians are to not think more highly of themselves than they ought. Let's turn to some of these passages.

Gal 6:2-3 :

Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks to be something, he deceives himself, being nothing.

1Co 10:12 : So that he that thinks to stand, let him be careful that he not fall.

Rom 12:3; Rom 12:16 : For through the grace which is given to me, I say to everyone being among you, not to have high thoughts beyond what is right to think. But set your mind to be right-minded, even as God divided a measure of faith to each. ... minding the same thing toward one another, not minding high things, but yielding to the lowly. Do not become wise within yourselves; And look at how Paul urges the brothers to humility by using Christ as an example in Php 2:3-8 :

[doing] nothing according to party spirit or self-glory, but in humility, esteeming one another [as] surpassing themselves; each not looking at the things of themselves, but each also [the] things of others. For think this within you, which [mind was] also in Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the form of God, thought [it] not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking [the] form of a slave, having become in [the] likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, having become obedient until death, even [the] death of a cross.

Christ humbled Himself for us, and we ought to humble ourselves for the brothers.

I'd like to address a couple more things that false religionists see as humble. The first one is this: "I really don't understand anything about God. I really don't know anything about salvation. I'm just a poor ignorant sinner, and all I know is to rest in Jesus." "Oh, how humble he is!" say the false

religionists. Pleading ignorance is a favorite of the falsely humble. And not only this, they seek to make others ASHAMED of their knowledge. They call others "proud" and "know-it-alls" when others talk about the KNOWLEDGE that all believers have. Well, as we have seen before, the Holy Spirit does not deal in ignorance. Upon regeneration, the Holy Spirit gives a SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE to every single regenerate person without exception. Rom 10:3 shows that IGNORANCE is DEADLY when it comes to the knowledge of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel. Isa 45:20 says that the idolaters are missing KNOWLEDGE. And there are many verses that we've already gone over in previous sermons that talk about the KNOWLEDGE that all believers have. This KNOWLEDGE is knowledge of the GOSPEL. It is knowledge that includes who God is, who man is, who Jesus Christ is, and what Jesus Christ did. It is knowledge of God's promise of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ alone. The one who says that he knows nothing about salvation but just rests in Jesus rests in a FALSE Jesus. He rests in someone he doesn't know anything about. How can one REST in Jesus when one is ignorant of the PERSON and WORK of Jesus? And there's something else that sounds so humble to the ear of the lost religionist. It goes like this: A person who is already a professing Christian says, "I'm so, so sinful. I'm just too sinful to pray. God would never accept my prayers because I'm so filthy." Oh, that'll bring out the tears of the false religionists. They'll come up to him and hug him and say that they understand and that everything is okay. But what this man has shown is SATANIC PRIDE. He believes that acceptance before God is based on WHAT? His own righteousness. He believes that he can't come to God because he is UNRIGHTEOUS, so what does he believe will gain him acceptance before God? His OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS. What a proud, haughty man it is who would say that he believes in Jesus but who is too sinful to have access to God. Just think of this: Once this guy is over his depression and starts praying again, why has he begun to pray again? Because he feels that he's not so sinful anymore! He has somehow washed himself up to the point that he now can be accepted before God. What does the Bible say about this? Let's turn to Eph 3:11-12 : according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through His faith.

Upon what basis do we have confident boldness and access? Through our own works and cleanness? No - it is through His faith. Let's turn to Heb 4:14-16 :

Then having a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we do not have a high priest not being able to sympathize with our weaknesses but [One] having been tried in all respects according to [our] likeness, apart from sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and we may find grace for timely help.

Upon what basis do we confidently draw near to the throne of grace? Through our own works and cleanness? No - it is through the Great High Priest who intercedes for us. Let's turn to Heb 10:19-23 :

Therefore, brothers, having confidence for the entering of the [Holy of] Holies by the blood of Jesus, which He consecrated for us, a new and living way through the veil; that is, His flesh; and [having] a Great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience, and [our] body having been

washed in pure water; let us hold fast the confession of the hope unyielding, for He who has promised is faithful.

Upon what basis do we have confidence for entering the Holy of Holies? Through our own works and cleanness? No - it is through the blood of Jesus. Notice in Heb 10:22 that we have full assurance of faith. Upon what basis do we have this? Through our own works and cleanness? No - it is because we have been sanctified by the blood of Christ. The false religionist sees a person who doubts his salvation and says, "humble." God says, "proud." The false religionist sees a person who is fully assured of his salvation and says, "proud." God says, "humble." A truly humble person acknowledges and repents of his sin, and says that he is not sufficient in and of himself to be accepted before God, and, at the same time, he is fully confident that he is accepted before God because of the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. To close, let's turn to a passage of Scripture that clearly shows the humility and confidence of believers: 2Co 3:4-5. And we have such confidence through Christ toward God; not that we are sufficient of ourselves to reason out anything as [being] out of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

Amen.

S. What God Loves

WHAT GOD LOVES (from a manuscript of a sermon preached on 4/1/01 at Sovereign Redeemer Assembly) For the past five sermons, I've preached on What God Hates. What I'd like to do today is to just dwell on what God loves and read Scripture in which God tells us what and who He loves. This sermon is going to be a little different than the other sermons I've preached. This is going to be more like a Scripture reading session. The reason I chose to do it this way is because I wanted this to be a time of meditation on the love of God, with Scripture upon Scripture showing us this love. We, the people of God, need to take time to meditate on God's love. I don't plan to comment very much at all. Now there's going to be a ton of Scripture, so if you're going to get distracted by having to turn the pages a lot, then just sit back and listen and meditate. Don't be thinking of the other cares of the world or what we're going to have for lunch or anything like that. Let this be a time of meditation and rejoicing in God's precious love. And let us love what God loves. The first set of Scriptures we're going to be turning to has to do with God's love of righteousness and judgment. Before anyone can understand God's love, one must understand God's holiness. God is totally ethically perfect. He loves this perfection. He loves righteousness and the doing of righteousness. And from His perfect holiness comes His perfect judgment. He perfectly judges, and He is perfectly just in all His judgments. Let's hear what God says:

Psa 11:5-7 :

Jehovah tries the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one loving violence. He shall rain snares on the wicked; fire and brimstone and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup. For Jehovah is righteous; He loves righteous deeds; the upright look upon His face.

Psa 33:4-5 : For the Word of Jehovah [is] right, and all His works [are] in truth. He loves righteousness and judgment; the mercy of Jehovah fills the earth.

Psa 37:27-28 :

Turn away from evil and do good and live forever. For Jehovah loves judgment and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever; but the wicked's seed shall be cut off.

Psa 45:6-7 : Your throne, O God, [is] forever and ever; the scepter of Your kingdom [is] a scepter of uprightness. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; on account of this God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your fellows.

Heb 1:1-9 : In many ways and in various ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; in these last days [He] spoke to us in [the] Son, whom He appointed heir of all; through whom He indeed made the ages; who being the shining splendor of [His] glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, having made purification of our sins through Himself, [He] sat down on [the] right of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, He has inherited a name more excellent than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You"? And again, "I will be a

Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me." And again, when He brought the First-born into the world, He said, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." And as to the angels, He said, "Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire;" but as to the Son, "Your throne, [O] God, [is] forever and ever, A scepter of uprightness [is] the scepter of Your kingdom; You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; because of this God, Your God, has anointed You [with] the oil of gladness beside Your fellows."

See how God's love of righteousness and judgment is tied to the gospel in Isa 61:1-11 : The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah [is] on Me, because Jehovah has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the meek. He has sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and complete opening to the bound ones; to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to appoint to those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of the spirit of infirmity, so that one calls them trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, in order to beautify Himself. And they shall build old ruins; they shall raise up former desolations; and they shall restore the waste cities, ruins of generations and generations. And foreigners shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of strangers [shall be] your plowmen and your vinedressers. But you shall be called, Priests of Jehovah; it will be said of you, Ministers of our God. You shall eat the wealth of the nations, and you shall revel in their glory. Instead of your shame and disgrace, double. They rejoice in their portion; for they shall possess a second time in their land; everlasting joy shall be theirs. For I, Jehovah, love judgment, hating plunder in burnt offering. And I will give their work in truth; and I will cut an everlasting covenant for them. And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they [are] the seed [that] Jehovah has blessed. Rejoicing I will rejoice in Jehovah. My soul shall be joyful in my God. For He clothed [me] with garments of salvation; He put on me the robe of righteousness, even as a bridegroom dons as a priest [his] head-dress, and as a bride wears her ornaments. For as the earth comes out with her buds, and as a garden causes that which is sown to grow, so the Lord Jehovah will make righteousness and praise to grow before all the nations. When God saves someone, He clothes that person in the righteousness of Christ. He imputes the righteousness of Christ to that person. That person is counted as righteous, and he enters into fellowship with God. Because God is holy, righteous, and just, He loves Himself. This is especially manifested in His love for God the Son.

John 3:35 : The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.

John 5:20 : For the Father loves the Son and shows to Him all things which He does. And He will show Him greater works than these in order that you may marvel.

John 10:17 : For this reason My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. And back to the Old Testament: Isa 48:13-16 : My hand surely founded earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; I called to them, they stood up together. All of you gather and hear: Who among them has declared these [things]? Jehovah has loved him. He will do His pleasure on Babylon; yea, His arm [shall be] on the Chaldeans. I, I have spoken; yea, I have called him, I brought him, and he causes his way to prosper. Come near to Me; hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning. From its being, I was there; and now the Lord Jehovah, and His Spirit, has sent Me. And look how God's love for His Son is inextricably linked to God's love for

His people in John 17:20-26 : And I do not pray concerning these only, but also concerning those who will believe in Me through their word; that all may be one, as You [are] in Me, Father, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And I have given them the glory which You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are One: I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected in one; and that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them, even as You loved Me. Father, I desire that [those] whom You have given Me, that where I am, they may be with Me also, that they may behold My glory which You gave Me, because You loved Me before [the] foundation of [the] world. Righteous Father, indeed the world did not know You, but I knew You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I made known to them Your name, and will make [it] known, that the love [with] which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

Now John 15:9 : As the Father loved Me, I also loved you; continue in My love.

These are awesome passages. God the Father is in God the Son, and God the Son is in God the Father, and we, the people of God, are in God the Father and God the Son. The glory that God gave to Christ is the glory that Christ gives to His people. God the Father loves God the Son and all who are in the Son. We have fellowship in the Godhead through the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. We are clothed with that righteous garment so as to be accepted by Almighty God. And this is the ONLY ground of acceptance. There is no ground of acceptance with God other than by the work of Christ alone. There is no love of God given to any human being unless that person is accepted before God. God does not love at the expense of His righteousness and judgment. The next passages will go into the people God loves. The first set talks about God's love for Israel. Some say that when God says He loves Israel, that means that He loved very person without exception in the nation Israel. But we know from God's word that this cannot be true. We see time and time again in the Old Testament where He hates certain people within the nation Israel. So what does the word "Israel" mean in this context? Well, Rom 9:6-8 answers this question:

Not, however, that God's Word has failed. For not all those of Israel [are] Israel, nor because they are Abraham's seed [are] all children, but "In Isaac a Seed shall be called to you." That is: Not the children of flesh [are] children of God, but the children of the promise [are] counted for a seed.

Only the children of the promise are the Israel of God. And the children of the promise are the ones who were, are, and will be saved ACCORDING to the promise, which is God's promise to save His people conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone.

Let us rejoice as we meditate upon these Scriptures:

Deu 7:7-9

Jehovah did not set His love on you or choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you [were] the fewest of all peoples. But because Jehovah loved you, and because He kept the oath which He swore to your fathers, Jehovah has caused you to go out with a strong hand, and redeemed you from the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Because of this, know that Jehovah your God, He [is] God, the faithful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to those who love Him, and to those who keep His commands, to a thousand generations;

Deu 23:5 : But Jehovah your God would not listen to Balaam, and Jehovah your God turned the curse into a blessing to you, because Jehovah your God loved you.

Deu 33:1-3 : And this [is] the blessing [with] which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death. And he said: Jehovah came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir for them; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came from the myriads of holy ones. At his right hand a law of fire [went forth] to them. Yes, He loves the peoples; all His holy ones [are] in Your hand; and they sit down at Your feet; He lifts up [each] at Your Words.

1Ki 10:9 :

Blessed be Jehovah your God who delighted in you, putting your person on the throne of Israel, because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore He appointed you king, to do judgment and righteousness.

2Ch 2:11 : And Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, and sent to Solomon, Because Jehovah loves His people, He has given you as king over them.

2Ch 9:8 : May Jehovah your God [be] blessed, who has delighted in you, to put you on His throne to [be] king for Jehovah your God. In the love of your God toward Israel, to make it stand forever, He has put you over them as king, to do judgment and righteousness.

Isa 63:7-9 :

I will mention the mercies of Jehovah, the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah has benefited us, and the great good to the house of Israel, [by] which He benefited them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving-kindness. For He said, Surely they [are] My people, sons that do not lie, and He is their Savior. In all their affliction, He [was] not a foe; and the Angel of his Face saved them. In His love and in His pity He redeemed them. And He bore them up, and lifted them up all the days of old.

Jer 31:1-3 : At that time, says Jehovah, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people. So says Jehovah, Israel, the people, the survivors of the sword, have found grace in the wilderness, I will go to give rest to him. Jehovah has appeared to me from far away, [saying], Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love! On account of this, with loving kindness I have drawn you.

Hos 14:1-4 :

O Israel, return to Jehovah your God, for you have fallen by your sin. Take words with you and return to Jehovah. Say to Him, Lift up all iniquity and receive [us] well, that we may repay [with] the calves of our lips. Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride on horses. We shall not say any more to the work of our hands, Our gods! For in You the fatherless finds mercy. I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely; for My anger has turned away from him.

Sometimes God uses the name Jacob to talk about the people of God; Jacob the person was loved by God, and Jacob, as Israel, the entirety of the election of grace, is loved by God.

Psa 47:4 :

He chooses our inheritance for us, the majesty of Jacob whom He loved. Selah.

Isa 43:1-4 : But now so says Jehovah who formed you, O Jacob; and He who made you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I called [you] by your name; you [are] Mine. When you pass through the waters, I [will be] with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk in the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame kindle on you. For I am Jehovah your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I gave Egypt [for] your atonement; Ethiopia and Seba instead of you. Since you were precious in My eyes, you are honored, and I love you; and I give men instead of you; and peoples instead of your soul.

Isa 48:12-15 :

Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel My called: I [am] He; I am the First; surely I [am] the Last. My hand surely founded earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; I called to them, they stood up together. All of you gather and hear: Who among them has declared these [things]? Jehovah has loved him. He will do His pleasure on Babylon; yea, His arm [shall be] on the Chaldeans. I, I have spoken; yea, I have called him, I brought him, and he causes his way to prosper.

Mal 1:1-3 : The burden of the Word of Jehovah to Israel by the hand of Malachi: I have loved you, says Jehovah. But you say, In what way have You loved us? [Was] not Esau the brother to Jacob? Yet Jehovah declares, I loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau and have made his mountains a desolation, and his inheritance [to be] for the jackals of the wilderness. The fact that Jacob as a person was loved by God of God's pure, free mercy is clearly shown in Rom 9:11-16 : for [the children] not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of the [One] calling, it was said to her, "The greater shall serve the lesser;" even as it has been written, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." What then shall we say? [Is there] not unrighteousness with God? Let it not be! For He said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will pity whomever I will pity." So, then, [it is] not of the [one] willing, nor of the [one] running, but of the [One] showing mercy, of God.

Deu 4:37 speaks of God's love to the patriarchs and their seed: And because He loved your fathers, and chose their seed after them, and brought you out with His presence, with His great power, out of Egypt, In the New Testament epistles, the word "us" is used many times as the object of God's love. And in every case, "us" is talking about God's people; as evidenced by the fact that the books in which this is used are addressed to the saints. Let's turn to these passages. Notice what this love is ALWAYS connected to.

Rom 5:5-8 : And the hope does not put [us] to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through [the] Holy Spirit given to us; for we yet being without strength, in due time Christ died for ungodly ones. For with difficulty one will die for a just one, (for perhaps one even dares to die for the sake of the good one), but God commends His love to us in [this], that we being yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 8:33-39 : Who will bring any charge against God's elect? God [is] the [One] justifying! Who [is he] condemning? [It is] Christ who has died, but rather also [is] raised, who also is at [the] right [hand] of God, who also makes intercession on our behalf. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or

sword? Even as it has been written, "For Your sake we are killed all the day; we are counted as sheep of slaughter." But in all these things we more than conquer through Him loving us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Eph 2:4-5 : But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love [with] which He loved us, even we being dead in deviations, [He] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are being saved), Eph 5:1-2; Eph 5:25-26 :

Then become imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell. ... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the assembly and gave Himself up on its behalf, that He might sanctify it, cleansing [it] by the washing of the water in [the] Word,

2Th 2:16-17 : But may our Lord Himself, Jesus Christ, and our God and Father, the One having loved us and having given everlasting comfort and good hope by grace, encourage your hearts, and may He establish you in every good word and work.

1Jn 3:1; 1Jn 3:16 :

See what manner of love the Father has given us, that we may be called children of God. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ... By this we have known the love [of God], because that [One] laid down His life for us; and on behalf of the brothers we ought to lay down our lives.

1Jn 4:10-11; 1Jn 4:19 : In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son [to be] a propitiation relating to our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ... We love Him because He first loved us.

Rev 1:5-6 : even from Jesus Christ the Faithful Witness, the First-born out of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him loving us and washing us from our sins by His blood, and made us kings and priests to God, even His Father. To Him [is] the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

Now over to Gal 2:20 for what Paul says about God's love for him personally:

I have been crucified with Christ, and I live; [yet] no longer I, but Christ lives in me. And the [life] I now live in the flesh, I live by faith toward the Son of God, the [One] loving me and giving Himself over on my behalf. Do you see what this love is always connected to? It is always connected to the work of Christ. There is no love apart from the work of Christ. So when we see Scriptures where the word "world" or "man" are used as objects of God's love, we know that this is not talking about everyone without exception. In fact, in these very passages - the so-called "controversial passages" - love is connected to the work of Christ. Let's turn to John 3:16 : For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God loves the world. He describes the world as those to whom He gave His Son and those who believe in him and those who will not perish but have everlasting life. Now over to Tit 3:4-7 : But

when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works in righteousness which we had done, but according to His mercy, He saved us through [the] washing of regeneration and renewal of [the] Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we should become heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life.

How did God manifest His love toward man? By saving man, by justifying man, by making man inherit eternal life. So we always read God's love in the light of Christ's work. The same goes for Mark 10:21 : And looking at him, Jesus loved him, and said to him, One [thing] is lacking to you. Go, sell what things you have, and give to the poor. And you will have treasure in Heaven. And come, follow Me, taking up the cross.

God said that Jesus loved this man. We've already seen that those whom God loves are the same ones as those for whom Christ died. Christ died for that rich young man. John 11:1 says that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." And in several passages in John, John refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Thus, we know without any doubt that Jesus Christ died for Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and John.

There are more ways that those whom God loves are described. They are described as His own: John 13:1 : And before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should move from this world to the Father, loving [His] own in the world, He loved them to the end.

They are described as those who love Christ and keep His Word: John 14:21-23 :

He that has My commandments and keeps them, it is that one who loves Me; and the [one] that loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I shall love him and will reveal Myself to him. Judas said to Him, not the Iscariot, Lord, what has happened that You are about to reveal Yourself to us and not at all to the world? Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word, and My Father shall love him. And We will come to him and will make a dwelling place with him.

John 16:27 : for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.

They are described as the righteous and those who pursue righteousness: Pro 15:9 : The way of the wicked [is] hateful to Jehovah, but He loves him who pursues righteousness.

Psa 146:8 :

Jehovah opens [the eyes of] the blind; Jehovah raises those bowed down; Jehovah loves the righteous;

They are described as cheerful givers: 2Co 9:7 :

Each one as he purposes in his heart, not out of grief or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. And finally, God says that those whom He loves, He corrects and rebukes: Pro 3:11-12 : My son, do not reject the chastening of Jehovah, and do not loathe His correction; for whom Jehovah loves He corrects, even as a father [corrects] the son [with whom] he is pleased.

Heb 12:6-11 : For whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and whips every son whom He receives." If you endure discipline, God is dealing with you as with sons; for who is [the] son whom a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, indeed we have had fathers of our flesh [as] correctors, and we respected [them]. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and we shall live? For they truly disciplined [us] for a few days according to the thing seeming good to them; but He for [our] profit, [in order for us] to partake of His holiness. And all discipline for the present indeed does not seem to be joyous, but grievous; but afterward it gives back peaceable fruit of righteousness to the ones having been exercised by it.

Rev 3:19 :

I, as many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten. Be zealous, then, and repent. The love of God is precious, isn't it? Were it not for God's love, we would be headed for eternal destruction, even as the rest. But thank God that He foreknew us in Christ, that He sent Christ to live and die and rise again on our behalf, that He communes with us, and that He will take us to glory. God loves all who are in Christ. May we rest in this truth. Amen.

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