

# Sins Blotted Out and Glory Seen

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ and having a purged conscience, which leads to perfect and entire peace, and ultimately to union with Christ and the full blessedness of the heavenly character.*

**Scripture:** Acts 22:19

**Topics:** "Grace", "Union with Christ"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes that the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ brings complete peace and a purged conscience, allowing believers to acknowledge their sins without fear of condemnation. He illustrates how figures like the Apostle Paul and Peter were fully aware of their past failures yet stood confidently before God, knowing their sins were blotted out through Christ's sacrifice. Darby explains that true understanding of grace comes from experiencing forgiveness, which fosters a genuine relationship with God and a sense of glory in union with Christ. He highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit in this process, as it connects believers to Christ and empowers them to live in accordance with God's will. Ultimately, Darby reassures that believers share in Christ's glory and are accepted as children of God, fostering a deep sense of belonging and purpose.

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## Transcript

The knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ gives perfect and entire peace.

There is often great difficulty in the minds of men in seeing how a person can have "no more conscience of sins," when at the same time he is conscious of failure and of sin. But it is when the soul is fully purged, then it is there will be most consciousness of sin, and past and present failure; but no sense of imputation before God, or sense of Christ's work.

We see in this chapter (Acts 22) how perfectly conscious the apostle was of his sins, and yet how completely purged was his conscience; and that it was which enabled him to be most conscious of his former sins. We see the same purged conscience in Peter (Acts 2:14). He charges the Jews with what he had done in a worse way himself. The soul cannot bear to rest distinctly on that which it knows will condemn itself, and therefore there must be always more or less guile in the heart where there is not certainty as to forgiveness. When our transgressions are seen by us to be completely "blotted out," we have no interest in extenuating our sinfulness. If I am bankrupt I shall be ashamed to look at my books, because they will show me that I am a ruined man; unwilling to own all my indebtedness, if one came to

see my affairs or claim payment; but if one in exceeding kindness had paid my debts for me, I could go and look through all my books, and if I found that I had owed a thousand instead of one hundred pounds, it would only enhance my sense of the greatness and value of the love that had paid all for me, and thus increase my gratitude and joy. This would produce guilelessness of heart. If he came to pay them I should tell him all.

In this chapter the apostle refers to all the things that he had done (see verses 19, 20). He puts the Lord in mind of the greatness of his sins as his suitableness for giving testimony to the Lord's grace. Nobody can tell of grace like the man who has experienced grace. An angel has not known the value of grace for his own forgiveness, and therefore could not testify of it like a poor sinner who has been saved by grace.

When Peter stood up and accused the Jews of the very crimes of which he himself had been guilty, of denying the Holy One and the Just, do you think that Peter was not conscious of the sin which he had done? That was not it, but with a purged conscience he stood before God in the knowledge of his acceptance, because Jesus the risen Lord, had brought him into the presence of God, and made him know the greatness of the sins that had been blotted out, and the greatness of the love that had blotted them out. Jesus had died for it meanwhile, and He had received the Holy Ghost.

Observe (in chap. 9:10,) the familiarity with which the Lord talks to his disciple, opening His mind to him as to a friend, mentioning to him the circumstances that affect His own mind. Then Ananias answers in the same blessed confidence, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man," etc. Of course Ananias had to obey the Lord, but it shows the unbounded confidence with which he could open all his heart, because of the intimacy of Jesus with him.

The Lord has been pleased to give us glory with Himself, and He enters with the fullest interest into every subject that concerns us as with us. The Lord revealed especially to Paul, that truth that He views His people as Himself, saying, "Why persecutest thou me?"

In regard to the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the first thing we see manifested is the love of God - it was not only the Son of Man lifted up, but the Son of God given. In the person of the Lord Jesus there was the exhibition and expression to the world of that which was suited to man's heart and feeling. Every expression of all that was grace in God we see in the Lord Jesus. It is quite true that, as regarded the natural man "we saw no beauty in Him that we should desire Him," but wherever His person was understood it was, "we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The Lord Jesus clothed all the glory of God in a condition that was suited to sinners. It was not only that they "wonder at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth," but there was that confidence produced in Him which, when the heart was broken with grief, it could open what it was that broke it more easily to Him than to any friend or relation; but Christ being so full of grace and righteousness, only made Him to be more alone in this world of sin. If His heart was satisfied as with marrow and fatness in communion with the Father, it made Him but the more understand what it was to pass alone through this world.

There was in Jesus all the expression of Divine fulness and of human graciousness, but this only proved that man was far from God. It was neither the mind of Jesus nor the counsel of God that he should abide alone. If the Lord Jesus had taken the "all things" that were His on the earth, He must have taken them "alone." He might have had twelve legions of angels, and have returned to the Father, but He must have then returned "alone." This could not be - the counsels of God would not then have been fulfilled; and He

drank the cup. He takes the circumstances of glory after He had finished the work of redemption alone on Calvary.

In the first place, there is the power of death, and atonement for that which hindered our entrance into glory; and then we get a new life, that we may be able to enjoy that glory. The promise made to Abraham was confirmed to Isaac after he had been received in a figure from the dead, and so with us. The power of atonement has blotted out our sin, and the life we have consequent on the resurrection of Jesus is beyond the power of Satan, for it is life in the risen Christ.

The first grand testimony to the world by the apostles was, "God has made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This gave distinct confidence to the disciples that God had made Him, whom man had spit upon and rejected, Lord of all.

Peter's ministry invites the people to return "Repent ye therefore, and be converted;" and thus Jesus would return; but Stephen's charge was, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." He was looking up into Heaven, and seeing the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Soon after they had rejected a humbled Christ, on the intercession of Christ on the cross, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, and proposed to them a glorified Christ, calling them to repentance by Him. Thus they finally rejected Stephen's charge, bringing it all to an issue where all things that had a beginning, began. He was (ἰμὶν ἰμὶν ἰμὶν ἰμὶν ἰμὶν) God the creator, but a distinct person "with God." Before the Cross, in the person of Jesus, there was something on earth on which the glory of God could rest; but now, Jesus being no longer on earth, but in heaven, Stephen turns his eye up to where Jesus was.

Paul could give no testimony to what Jesus was during His life on earth, but his ministry begins with the glory of Jesus, as the Lord in heaven. He appears to him in the glory of His Sonship, and Lord is the title by which Saul addresses Him - "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" is the expression of Christ and the church, being one. The interests of the Lord were thus shown to be centred in His poor, rejected, and persecuted people. In this we see what the place of the Church is on earth, to have the same heavenly interests with Christ on high which makes us willing to suffer with Him here, that we may also be glorified together with Him.

That which is the daily comfort of the feeblest saint is that he has a glory above the brightest glory of all dispensations. That Christ and the believer are one is the very highest glory, and yet this brings him into fellowship and intercourse with Christ about common things. The knowledge of the Lordship of Jesus keeps the mind in quietness, and enables the believer to leave all to the Lord, that in the certainty that in the world to come all the promises of God will be "to the glory of God by us."

While we have full interest in the glory of Christ, He has an interest in the smallest thing that concerns us, and our portion is to suffer with Him, as having a common interest with the Lord - "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" - suffering here because the world is against the Lordship of Jesus.

We are not only accepted because of what Christ has done, but accepted as children, having the very same interests with Christ, being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. We have personal interest with Christ about Himself. (If my finger is hurt I am hurt, I do not say that my finger is hurt as if it were some one else.) The very glory that is given us is that we are loved as Christ is loved; but the glory is not the greatest thing, but the blessedness of union with Christ. The Holy Ghost is the witness of this. Through the Holy Ghost, Christ is formed in us, and we are made one with Him in presence of the Father. Union with Christ

Jesus separates me from the world by giving me identity of life and feeling with Christ. We being "in Christ," and "Christ in us," if we come to look at suffering and trial, He is in us, and suffers and sympathises with us in it, "and when Christ who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory."

The glory that is given to Him is given us by Christ as the token that the Father loves us as He loves His Son. It is consequent on that on which it is founded, which makes Him love us as He loves Himself; and union with Christ gives the full blessedness of the heavenly character to the believer. May we walk in the full blessing of the confidence that "all things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Our union with the Lord gives life and communion to our souls. The unity of the Church must be solely of the Holy Ghost - "by one Spirit ye are all baptized into one body," etc. As the sanctifying power, He gives its character to the sanctification of the Church, leading it "to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."

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