



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Curse

David Clayton



WHAT IS A CURSE?

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Gal 3:13)

In this verse, the Bible refers to our condition as being “under a curse.” Why does Paul refer to our condition as a curse? This is an important question and it has everything to do with how we understand the plan of redemption.

First of all what is a curse? Let us look at how the dictionary defines a curse; the Dictionary definition is the popular understanding most of us grew up with, and maybe many of us still hold this as our understanding of what a curse is.

Curse: *a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on someone or something – Oxford Dictionary*

If we come to the Bible with this idea that a curse is the result of calling upon a supernatural power to do evil, then we are going to be confused when the

Bible says that, “the curse of the law” fell upon all of us. The law is God’s law, so who could have cursed us for breaking the law? The obvious answer is that it must have been God. This suggests that God is this supernatural power who inflicts harm, or punishment upon us. It suggests that God made a solemn declaration, God made a solemn utterance to invoke his supernatural power to do us harm or punishment. In reality this is how most people understand the issues involved in the plan of salvation; God sentenced us to punishment and then his son came to take that punishment upon himself in order to set us free. From this perspective we learn to appreciate Jesus, but we also learn to be fearful and apprehensive of God because he is the one who initially put the curse upon us! It makes us love and respect Jesus but we end up being uncertain about the Father.

This perspective is also suggested several places in the Bible and especially in the Old Testament. In the book of numbers we read about how Balak, the king of Moab sent for the prophet Balaam to curse Israel:

He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may

smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. (Num 22:5-6)

Here, Balak asked Balaam to use his power to curse the children of Israel. He felt that if Balaam cursed these people he would be able to overcome them and to drive them out of his country. Balak had the same concept of a curse that most people hold to, today. The popular concept is that a witch or a wizard casts a spell and brings evil upon another person. Always, the idea is that some person has access to some supernatural power which they invoke, which they call upon in order to bring evil upon somebody. The biblical concept however, is different. When Balaam was hired by Balak to curse Israel, this is what Balaam said:

And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? (Num 23:7-8)

Here we see that the power of a curse does not rest in the one who speaks the

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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curse, in this particular case, the power rested in God, not in Balaam. We can gain more insight into this if we look at what Jesus said to the Jews in Matthew chapter 23. These words express the most striking curse that ever came upon a nation. Jesus said:

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. (Matt 23:33-38)

Jesus did not claim to be cursing these

people, but these words sound like a curse and they express the doom which accompanies a curse. The last sentence expresses the truth of what is really happening. Jesus says, "your house is left unto you desolate," and the word, "desolate," means, "empty," "forsaken." Now let us remember that there are two moral realities in the universe, there is good and there is evil. As we have seen, good and evil are determined by the presence or the absence of God. Where God is present then good exists, where God is absent, then the result is evil. This is how we define good and evil in the universe. Where God is all and in all, it is good, it is blessed, where God is feared and avoided it is cursed. From this perspective we can better understand what Jesus meant when he said, "your house is left unto you desolate." Obviously he was saying that their nation was left desolate of the spirit of God, God's spirit was about to leave that place! This is why Jesus said that all the righteous blood shed upon the earth was going to come upon them, this is why they would not be able to escape the damnation of hell! It sounded like a curse but it was not Jesus who was cursing those people, they had cursed themselves by turning turned away from God.

This is what a curse is and that is why Balaam could say, "how can I curse whom God hath not cursed?" So now we understand the nature of a curse, it's a condition where people have rejected God, so God turns away and leaves them alone. The certain consequence will be that evil circumstances will come upon such people. This is why when Balaam was unable to curse Israel, he suggested that Balak should send some of the attractive women from Moab to lead the Israelite men into fornication. This strategy was very successful and hundreds of Israelite men got trapped into immoral behavior by these Moabite woman. The consequence was that evil circumstances came upon the Israelites as the spirit

of God was grieved away. Balaam himself was unable to curse Israel, but he worked out a way by which Israel was able to curse themselves!

CONSEQUENCES

The best example which we can find to illustrate this reality of what a curse is, can be found in the experience of Noah. In Genesis 9:20-22, we read:

And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. (Gen 9:20-22)

It is not very clear what exactly Ham did to his father; it says he "saw his nakedness," but from the reaction of Noah it seems that he did something far more evil than simply looking at his naked father. The following verse supports this idea:

And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. (Gen 9:24-25)

When Noah awoke and realized what Ham had done to him, he pronounced a terrible curse upon Canaan. At first we conclude that "Canaan," must have been another name for Ham, but when we look at the biblical record we realize that this is not so. We go back to verse 22 and we see that Canaan was in fact the son of Ham!

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father . . . (Gen 9:22)

So the question is, why did Noah curse Canaan who had done nothing wrong? Ham was the one who did evil and yet, the curse was pronounced upon his son, Canaan! This would be one of the most unfair and unreasonable things we find in the Bible unless we understand the true principle behind a curse. As we have seen, a curse is not something that one person brings upon another, a curse is the evil circumstances which a person brings upon himself, by turning away

from God.

God foresaw that Ham's evil character would influence and affect his son. Ham would suffer evil consequences because of the way his father would raise him and because of the evil behavior which he would learn from his father. Noah pronounced the curse, but Noah was simply the voice that God used to express the evil which Ham would bring upon his family and especially upon his son, Canaan. The son of Ham was simply going to suffer the consequences of his father's evil nature. This is how a curse works. This is why in the second commandment we are told that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate God. It is simply the law of consequence at work!

Of course, God stated that he would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and this is how God often takes responsibility for evil circumstances. The fact is that God is sovereign, he is Almighty and if he chooses he could reverse the effects of these consequences, but this is not the way that God operates, he allows people to experience the consequences of the choices they make because he has given us all free will. So many times because he permits things to happen God claims responsibility for it because he has the power to stop it. But it is important for us to understand that God himself never causes evil and that he is not the person who curses anyone. At times he will speak the words of a curse or send somebody to speak those words, but he is never a cause of the curse; it is always people who bring it upon themselves.

So then we may conclude a few things concerning a curse:

1. A curse is a sentence of disaster.
2. A curse is the consequence of what a person brings upon himself.
3. A curse affects future generations.
4. It is pronounced based on God's foreknowledge.

HUMANITY CURSED

So we can conclude that when Adam

turned away from God in the Garden of Eden a curse came upon him and upon the whole human race. What he did and what he became affected every single human being because we are all descended from Adam! God did not curse the human race, but he expressed the curse which Adam brought upon us, when he said,

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen 3:19)

But rather than cursing man, it was God who gave man a lifeline. In actual fact man should have died that day, when he chose to separate himself from God. What he had chosen was to step away from life, and death was the sure consequence. What Adam gave to us was a life without God with the certainty that the only possible destiny of such



a life is death. But through the intervention of Christ, man's death sentence was suspended, God extended the life of humanity, give us a probationary period in order that he could provide a way and give us an opportunity of breaking the curse!

THE NATURE OF THE CURSE

Let us be sure that we understand the nature of the curse: what Adam gave us as his inheritance was a life without God. There are some who believe that there is some kind of seed which Adam passed on to his children, and which has been successively passed on from generation to generation. Something infused into the human bloodline and that this is the human problem. But that is not true, the real disaster which Adam brought upon us was that he deprived

us of something, not that he put something within us! Not that something was put in us but that something was taken from us. What was taken from us is the one thing that can make anybody good, it was the life of God, it was the spirit of God. Adam deprived his children of this, and this is the curse under which every human being has been born.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. (Rev 22:3-4)

This verse in Revelation gives us a clear indication of what the curse is. In the new earth there will be no more curse and why will that be? It will be because the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, so the curse is where God's throne is missing, or in other words, where God is not reigning. Christians are no longer under the curse, for us the curse is broken because the throne of God and Jesus is in us, but the world still remains under the curse and as we have seen, that curse is a sentence of disaster.

In Hebrews 2:14-15 we gain some more insight into the damaging effects of the curse:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb 2:14-15)!

Under the curse we were subject to Satan's principles of government, Satan was the one who ruled us and because of this, all our lives we were in fear of death. We were in bondage, but Jesus took our flesh and blood to save us from this bondage and deliver us from the power of Satan, so we are no longer afraid of death because Christ has changed it into nothing more than a long sleep.

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From Death to Life

Daniel Clayton



In recent years, I have experienced the trauma of losing several loved ones to the long sleep of death. No matter how prepared you are for death, or how sure you are of seeing the dead again one day, it is a painful, traumatic and long lasting feeling of loss when they go. To lose a voice, a smile, a presence you have known all your life, and to know you will never have that person with you in this life again hurts more than words can express.

But as we have all come to understand as we have grown and experienced this world, 'the only certainty in life is death.' At some point, we are all going to die, and the cycle will continue until this age ends. Men are born, they live, and they must die.

This is the awful situation God warned Adam about and which He was trying to save man from when He told him in Genesis 2:17:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:17)

God was telling Adam that if he chose his own path (inadvertently separating himself from God), this action would introduce a terrible, permanent consequence upon the race of men called death.

Of course, the first couple had no idea what they were unleashing when they disobeyed God, severing humanity from

the divine source. They were deceived by Satan, without truly knowing the depths of what was to follow. But what they really did was kill us all. Hence, we are told by Paul in Romans 5:12:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12)

The whole race was killed by Adam. One man cursed us all, and we were doomed to perish forever.

So this is the problem that man is born with. He is born with the legacy of death. It is his only sure reward and grim, certain destiny. A good analogy which can be drawn is a mother who has AIDs. The moment she conceives and gets pregnant, she immediately condemns the child. It is a guarantee that it will be born with the same deadly disease, and hence it takes its first breath with a sentence of death already upon its head. There is no escape, except one!

God found a way to place everything that could save humanity into one man. In Jesus was life:

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4)

In Jesus was the power of resurrection:

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: (John 11:25)

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:21)

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. (John 8:51)

The one answer, the *only* answer to death can be found in one person in the universe. One man faced death and hell head on, and defeated them. One man took the curse of Adam's race upon Himself, the curse of separation from God, and in this hopeless condition He overcame the principle of sin. He earned the right legitimately and forever to reverse death and its consequences.

As a result, He reclaimed the right to the life and light lost by Adam. He created in Himself an existence and legacy which He could pass on to His children as a matter of consequence, just as Adam passed on death to his. The ingenious master plan of the Father and His Son made a way for the terrible, impossible situation of man to be reversed forever.

Hence we are told in 1 Corinthians 15:22:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:22:)

In Jesus is the *only* way to salvation, the *only* hope and the *only* source of life. Men try to find an escape from death in many ways. Since the dawn of time they have searched for the 'elixir of youth' or the 'apple of immortality.' Today they are trying in every way to use Science and Technology to increase longevity and quality of a life that is already lost and dead.

But these pursuits are all in vain. Trying to find life outside of Jesus Christ is akin to seeking for light in darkness. It does not exist and is impossible to find. Jesus is not only a source of life, He says I am *the* life. He not only has the power to resurrect, He *is* the resurrection. In other words, there is NO OTHER source and no other way. It cannot

be found in Buddha, Mohammed, in AI or technology. He who seeks life must come to Jesus Christ.

For those loved ones we have lost, if they went to sleep believing in Him, there is nothing to fear. As we are told in Revelation 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. (Revelation 14:13)

Their salvation is already safe and secure, they have passed from death to life already, and all that awaits them is awakening to a new and glorious everlasting existence.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

Thank God for Jesus Christ! In Him we have eternal life and victory. And those of us who may sleep for a while are assured of a glorious and true resurrection. Death has no power over those who are His, though they may rest for a little while.

The grief we feel at the loss of loved ones is natural, it is understandable and expected. But we must understand that it is only temporary and in the truest sense, it is not really death, but sleep. We are guaranteed to see them again! As sure as our Lord lives, they will live!

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21:4)



The Curse

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1. So those under the curse are under the principles of Satan's government which is self-rule.
2. Those under the curse are separated from God.

HOW TO BREAK A CURSE

And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. (Gen 27:40)

This verse is from the story of Jacob and Esau. Jacob came to his father Isaac and by deception robbed his brother Esau of his birthright. When Isaac blessed Jacob he thought he was blessing Esau, and so he spoke all kinds of good things over Jacob. Actually it was God speaking through Isaac, even though Isaac was doing it unwittingly. God was prophesying through Isaac because he knew that in the future Jacob and his descendants would become God's special ambassador's. God's word through Isaac was,

And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? (Gen 27:37)

Isaac told Jacob that his brothers would be his servants (in this case, referring to Esau), of course believing that he was speaking to Esau. Isaac had intended to bestow all these blessings upon his son Esau but God overruled and Jacob received the blessing instead. Even though it was through the trickery of Rebecca, still, God's purposes were fulfilled. God simply foresaw the future and predicted what would happen in the form of a blessing. But Isaac said something else which is important to the topic that we are studying. Isaac said to Esau:

And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it

shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. (Gen 27:40)

What Isaac was saying to Esau was that a time would come when he would be able to gain dominion over his brother Jacob and at that time the sentence that he must serve his brother, would be broken. But how was that sentence, or that curse to be broken? While he was still under the power of the curse he would have to find a way to overcome that power and to escape its control, that was the only way that he could change that sentence and break that curse. He had to defy the conditions of the curse.

CHOICE AND FREE-WILL

A question that often arises is the question of why God allowed innocent, sinless man to be tempted. Man was good, man was happy, man was in charge of planet Earth so why did God put him in danger by allowing Satan to be able to tempt him? Why allow evil to come upon a person who has never been exposed to evil?

Well first of all, man was created good without any choice or decision on his part. He was created by God and he was created as a subject of God, loving and serving God but this was not by his choice, it was the way he was created. God was the one who made the choice, but at this time there were two opposing powers in the universe, there were two systems of government that were at rivalry; one was the government of God, the other was the government of Satan which was seeking to usurp God's place and God's authority. There were two philosophies and the question was, which one was better? At that time the answer was not clear, nothing had been proven, the question was still before the whole universe. Into this situation there came these two brand-new people on planet Earth, Adam and Eve. They also needed to make a choice. Since God is just and fair he also had to allow Satan to have access to these people so they also could have the opportunity to choose. So Satan was given the right

to present his alternative. This is the reason why God allowed temptation to come upon our fore parents even though they lived in a sinless paradise. But of course God warned Adam and Eve of the danger and tried to make them understand how terrible it would be if they submitted to the lies of the enemy.

Satan worked by deception, using a beautiful snake as a medium to cast doubt on God. But in spite of this, they should have trusted God. Satan presented the idea that they would live a better life, a more fulfilled life, they would be like God if they simply chose self-government rather than God's government and sadly, they believed him. Was this something that could have been avoided?

There is one quality which we all possess and it is the thing which makes sense of God's entire creation, it is the gift of free-will. This is one of the foundation cornerstones of life in the universe; God made all his intelligent creatures with free-will, this is the only rational way in which God could have any kind of relationship with intelligent beings. If we did not have free-will, then everything which is taking place in the universe, the conflict with Satan, sin, salvation etc. would simply be a part of one big puppet show with God manipulating the strings and ultimately making all the decisions. All of us would be nothing more than pre-programmed robots operating mindlessly as God moves us around while we live under the illusion that our lives have some kind of meaning. This would make God nothing more than a very strange dictator with a perverse sense of justice. But the truth is we all have the power of choice, the power to make rational and intelligent decisions. So we can decide to trust God, we can desire to have a relationship with him, decisions made entirely on our own with God's only input being to show us the evidence and plead with us to make the right decisions. This quality of free-will is the reason why even in paradise, God had to allow Satan to present his principles to man so that the

principle of fair-play, free-will and the power of choice would be the determining factors in what type of government would ultimately prevail in the universe.

So then we may say that free-will set man free from God, it gave us the ability to tell God, "we don't want you." Of course, then we became slaves – slaves to ourselves, slaves to Satan, but it was our choice, that is the power of free-will. The tragedy is that when the one man chose to step away from God it affected all of his family, all his descendants ended up there on the evil side. Free-will set man free from God and free-will kept him bound to Satan.

It seems that the solution to the problem is very simple; man made a choice to step away from God, now all man needs to do is to change his mind, exercise his free-will again and return to God and the good side of the universe. But



it was not that simple, once he stepped over on Satan's side man was stuck there without no way to return. Remember the point made earlier: We can choose our kingdom, but we can't choose the rules which govern that kingdom. God will not forcefully invade the kingdom of Satan to pull man out of it, when mankind ended up there by the free choice of our fore parent Adam. Freedom of choice must be respected. The real problem is that it is impossible for man to choose God, without the influence of God's spirit, and God's spirit does not work in those who belong in the kingdom of Satan.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Rom 8:7)

The mind of fallen man is naturally at enmity with God! We are separated from God and we are afraid of Him,

this is the way it is with those who are subjects of the kingdom of Satan. This is why when mankind rejected God and chose the way of Satan, it was not possible for Adam to escape the terrible dilemma he had put himself and his family in. Man could turn from God of his own free choice and though he still had free choice, the change in his mind and nature, the departure of the spirit of God made it impossible for him to make the choice to go back to God. The reality is that one man fell and all men ended up in the same condition.

DEPENDENT ON ONE

But how wonderful it is that God devised a plan to save humanity – a plan based on the same principle. One man brought us all into disaster so by one man, God worked out a way to save the race! In both cases one man acted on behalf of the entire race, one created disaster, the other provided a solution. Instead of saving humans one by one, trying to get us each to escape Adam's dilemma, God provided a second Adam. None of us could have made it individually, we could not have escaped the terrible conditions brought upon us by Adam. It took somebody with special qualifications, a human being with extraordinary qualities to break the curse. It took the only begotten son of God, the only being in the universe who could come under the curse and break it. The result is:

- The first Adam rejected God - the last Adam chose God.
- All men received the life of the first Adam - all believers receive the life of the last Adam.
- All men are born separated from God – All believers are joined to God.

Somebody defeated the enemy and restored the relationship with God. When we believe in that person, we receive of his life, become a part of his existence and in him, we are delivered from the curse.



Three phases of the Kingdom

The Bible speaks a great deal about the Kingdom of God, it is mentioned often both in the old and the new testament. Consequently it is a subject of great interest to most Christians regardless of which denomination or group they belong to. My own understanding of the subject of the kingdom was only superficial for many years and like many Christians I saw the kingdom as referring only to that time and experience when sin is completely destroyed and Christ rules supremely on the earth. However, with the passing of time as I took greater interest in the subject, I began to study with greater care and gained a much more complete understanding of this important truth.

My earliest concept of the kingdom was based on the verse found in Daniel 2:44 which says,

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Dan 2:44)

It was not clear to me at the beginning that this verse, like many of the prophecies of Daniel and the Old Testament in general, was giving an overview or a panorama, leaving out many details. The verse really was giving a synopsis of several events all of which involved different stages of development in the establishing of God's kingdom. This is true of many of the teachings of the Bible, this is why in studying any subject in the Bible we need to examine all the evidence that is available and try to harmonize them. It is foolish to simply take one or two verses and then to conclude that we have an accurate understanding of that particular truth. In actual fact, there are several phases in the establishing of the kingdom of God and at each point, it may legitimately be said that the kingdom of God came, even though the full establishing

of the kingdom was not yet a reality.

1. AD31 – THE KINGDOM WITHIN

The first coming of the kingdom was in AD 31. John the Baptist and Jesus, as well as the disciples of Jesus preached with great conviction that when Jesus began his ministry, the kingdom of heaven was “at hand,” or was about to be established.

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. (Mark 1:14-15)

All of Israel was shaken by this powerful message. The hopes and expectations of the Jews were ignited as they began to hope and to dream that all the predictions made by the prophets of old were about to be fulfilled. In their understanding their nation would be exalted by God above all nations, a great king would rule in Israel who would subdue all the other nations and lift Israel up to the pinnacle of worldly glory where everyone else would serve them.

But of course, they were wrong. Jesus was focused on a very, very important phase of the kingdom, but it was only the first phase, not what the Jews were expecting at all though it was of the greatest importance. Jesus tried to help them to understand and on one occasion when he was questioned by the Pharisees he explained to them very clearly:

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:20-21)

When Jesus emphasized the coming of the kingdom, he was referring to the setting up of the kingdom within his people, in their hearts; it was the experience

where he, the king, would rule, not over the entire planet, but in the hearts of his people. Where the king was, there the kingdom would be and this would be true in the experience of every single born again Christian. He was not referring to the setting up of the physical kingdom somewhere on earth where it would dominate other kingdoms. That would come in the future, but it was not yet time for it. Yet, this setting up of the kingdom in his people was of the utmost importance and without it the setting up of the physical kingdom would never take place.

When Jesus returned to heaven and was glorified, these words of Christ came to pass. Jesus, in the identity of the holy spirit, came back to live in his people and signified it by the tremendous outpouring of his power and glory on the day of Pentecost. This was the first step in the establishing of the kingdom of God and not only did the kingdom of God take a step forward, but correspondingly the kingdom of Satan experienced a death blow. The book of Revelation describes the events which took place at that time when Jesus returned to heaven and was enthroned as king in his kingdom.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Rev 12:7-10)

The kingdom of God did come at that time as the Scripture clearly shows.

Satan no longer was permitted to enter heaven, there, his influence was completely overthrown and he was kicked out permanently. The same thing happened in the hearts of God's people who lived on earth, the spiritual kingdom extended to them and Satan was also kicked out of their lives. Christ's kingdom ruled in them, just as it did in heaven. This was part one in the establishing of the kingdom of God.

However, as wonderful as this experience was, it is clear that the reign of Christ's kingdom is still limited. On this earth, the influence and power of Satan are still dominant and the nations of this world are still under the governance and control of the kingdom of Satan. Christ does not yet rule over the kingdoms of this world. There is a story in the Bible which illustrates this and it is the story of David being anointed king while Saul was still ruling on the throne. When God sent Samuel to anoint David as king he then became the legitimate king of Israel, however, Saul still sat on the throne and the majority of the people still regarded him as their monarch. Nevertheless, God's power was with David, not with Saul, and at this time David was the one who fought the battles of the Lord, not Saul. It is not a perfect illustration, but it does help us to understand how Jesus can be king, even though his rulership is not acknowledged by all.

THE BATTLE CONTINUES

It is important that we should understand that though Christ has been given all authority and power to rule in his kingdom, his enemies are not yet overthrown. Imposters still sit on the thrones of the kingdoms of this world and so it is clear that the work of Christ is not finished. Many people believe and teach that the work of Christ was finished at Calvary and that basically, there is nothing else for him to do. They reject the idea that Christ is still working to develop the kingdom in his people to a higher level as part of the process of further setting up his kingdom over the whole planet. But the Bible clearly teaches that Christ is still engaged in a

battle with the forces of darkness and that his work will not be over until they are completely defeated.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. (1Cor 15:24-25)

2. CHRIST ENTHRONED AS KING

When Christ finally brings his church to a state of maturity where the people in his kingdom reflect his image, and his kingdom appears with the true beauty of Christ, it is then that Christ will become king over all the earth and will signify it by the overthrow of the kingdoms of this world.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Eph 4:11-13)

But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4:29)

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev 11:15)

This is the second phase in the process of establishing the kingdom. In the first phase the king came to live in his people; this is the event that Jesus and the apostles were speaking of when they declared, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But now, in the second phase, the kingdoms of this world are physically overthrown by Christ, they are dismantled by the seven last plagues and finally completely destroyed by the glory of his second coming.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall

be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. (2Thess 1:7-10)

Here, Christ is not only anointed as king, but he sits on the throne as king. Now he has no rival, for the kingdoms of this world which exalted themselves against him are overthrown and the devil himself is bound for one thousand years. Christ's people are united with him and now the king and the subjects are not only united in spirit, but are physically united forever. They live and reign with Christ during those thousand years.

3. CHRIST RULES AS KING

The final phase in the establishing of the kingdom takes place at the end of the thousand years. This is actually the phase which people think of when the kingdom of God is mentioned, but as we have seen, there are actually two phases which occur first. This is the phase where there are no enemies remaining, the earth has been recreated anew, all things which brought pain and unhappiness are gone permanently and all that remains is eternal happiness in a perfect paradise. Daniel 2:44 has reached its complete fulfillment, "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed . . ." This is the complete fulfillment of what was prophesied by many of the prophets of both the old and the new testament.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be

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Importance of knowing the truth

1. There is only one God, the Father. He is the ONLY supreme authority, the source of all existence.

2. Satan's warfare is ultimately against this one God. His enmity against him began with a desire to replace God as the supreme object of worship and admiration.

3. He set out to achieve his goal by attacking God on two levels:

(a) First he attacked God's character, suggesting that God was a self-centered person who sought his own benefit and did not really care about the well-being of those he had created.

(b) Secondly he attacked God's system of government: God's government is based on the principle of His uniting with with his subjects where he dwells in each person individually, directing each one personally from within, so each person is a temple (dwelling place) for God. Satan claims that such a system is nothing but slavery and is a system which does not allow for growth and development in created beings. His alternative is that if each person is properly educated in morality (knowledge of good and evil), and makes his own decisions instead of simply submitting to God's decisions, then each person will become "like God," a self-governing and morally independent being.

4. God needed somebody to defend his character and his government. The only way this could be done is if there was somebody exactly like God in character, who was able to be put in a situation where his character could be tested and proven. This person had to be exactly like God, but in order for him to reveal the true character of God in a believable display, he had to be put in a situation where he could be genuinely tested. This means that he had to be without the powers of God, while at the same

time possessing the character of God. It goes without saying that God, with all his powers cannot be put in a situation where he can genuinely be tested.

5. The only person in the universe who met these qualifications was God's ONLY BEGOTTEN SON. He was, by inheritance, exactly like the Father in character, yet it was possible for him to have his powers taken from him since they were originally given to him by God. So he, could be put in the place where it could truly be seen what God is like without all his power and glory. This would reveal God's true character to the entire universe and prove that Satan's first accusation was a lie.

6. To answer Satan's second accusation, God also needed to put on a demonstration which could be seen. In this demonstration he would need to show that his system of government (He living inside his people), produces the happiest, the best, the most loving, the most stable people in the universe. What kind of demonstration was required?

In order to prove that his system was the best, God needed two kingdoms: One operating on God's system of government, the other operating on Satan's system of government. In God's kingdom, the great (and only) governing principle was that God and Jesus would live inside his people. Right after Jesus was resurrected and returned to heaven, God established this kingdom within his people as He and Jesus came to live personally in each Christian in the form of the holy spirit.

At the same time Satan was cast out of heaven and he came down to earth with great wrath, determined to perfect his system of government and establish it as supreme on planet earth. He focused his purpose on perfecting the "beast" kingdom and using it to try to completely destroy the kingdom of God on earth. This confrontation of the two kingdoms has continued for 2000 years, but up to

now, God's demonstration of his characteristics in his kingdom has not been perfected. It takes a while to create a perfect kingdom because people are involved. God does not force the will of even Christians and so it takes a while for the kingdom of God to develop into the perfect manifestation of God's government. Additionally, a few people are not enough to give a clear demonstration of the beauty of God's government, it needs a community. The goal is not to reveal the goodness of individuals, but to reveal the goodness of God's method of government, to show that when he lives in his people God is able to produce a community which is full of love, peace, contentment and happiness, regardless of how terrible things may be around them. So a community is necessary and a mature, perfected community.

This is why the final moments in the eradication of sin has taken 2000 years, God needed TIME to perfect his kingdom. The Bible shows us that this demonstration will finally be accomplished at the very end when the last Christians on earth become the 144,000. A people who are without fault because they have grown up to the "measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

7. This is the real reason why the truth about God is so vital. Every vital detail of this great conflict between God and Satan, is completely destroyed by the doctrine of the three-in-one god. The simple facts of the truth are these:

(a) The target of Satan's attack is the One God, the supreme being in the universe.

(b) God's defender was his son. The only person with the necessary qualifications to defend God.

(c) The holy spirit in believers is the literal presence of God and His Son. This is the only way in which God's government can be vindicated.

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Salt: Tiny Amount, Big Impact

Lenworth Frankson



Salt, also known as sodium chloride, is about 40% sodium and 60% chloride. It flavors food and is used as a binder and stabilizer. It is also a food preservative, as bacteria can't thrive in the presence of a high amount of salt. The human body requires a small but essential amount of sodium.

SODIUM AND HEALTH

Sodium helps to regulate fluids in your body. It also plays a role in muscle and nerve function. Without enough sodium, you might experience headaches, dizziness, or even muscle cramps.

Although Sodium is necessary, too much can be bad. As sodium accumulates, the body holds onto water to dilute the sodium. This increases both the amount of fluid surrounding cells and the volume of blood in the bloodstream. Increased blood volume means more work for the heart and more pressure on blood vessels. Over time, the extra work and pressure can stiffen blood vessels, leading to high blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke. It can also lead to heart failure. Too much salt can harm your bones, damage the heart, the aorta, and kidneys without increasing blood pressure. In most people, the kidneys have trouble keeping up with excess sodium in the blood.

EATING TOO MUCH SALT

It is estimated that we need about 500 mg of sodium daily for our vital functions but in addition to the possible harmful effects already mentioned, too much sodium in the diet can also cause calcium losses, some of which may be pulled from bone. The typical American diet consumes at least 1.5 teaspoons of salt per day, or about 3400 mg of sodium, which contains far more than our bodies need. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends less than 2000 mg/day of sodium (equivalent to less than 5 gm/day, just under a teaspoon, for adults.

Other immediate symptoms of excessive salt include: Increased thirst, swollen feet or hands, headache, and bloating. In the long term, high salt diets may increase the risk of stomach cancer, premature death, and heart disease. Some studies suggest that eating a large amount of salt could even lead to short-term weight gain due to fluid retention. The basic problem is that the kidneys may not be able to filter excess sodium from your bloodstream. Sodium builds up in your system, and your body holds onto extra water in an attempt to dilute the sodium, which can cause water retention and bloating. Many studies have looked at the connection between salt intake and health, and generally show that cutting back on salt can lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke.

SIDE EFFECTS OF TOO LITTLE SALT

While too much salt can be harmful, too little can be equally harmful. Some evidence suggests that a low salt diet can cause low blood pressure, dehydration, low sodium levels, and elevated blood fat levels. It is possible for those with normal blood pressure to become hypotensive, which is when your blood pressure is lower than normal. Hypotension can be dangerous. Some of the

signs and symptoms include dizziness, nausea, fainting, blurred vision, depression, and dehydration. The risk of hypotension is especially high for those who have experienced heart failure, as many treatment plans significantly reduce blood pressure. If you fall into this category, it is important that you regularly check your blood pressure levels

DEHYDRATION

Because sodium plays a prominent role in managing fluid balance, a low salt diet could cause dehydration, which is when there isn't enough fluid in your body. Signs of dehydration may be manifested as skin changes, mouth dryness, and thirst. If left untreated, dehydration can lead to hospitalization and even death. Older adults and people with malnutrition are at a higher risk of dehydration and should pay close attention to their daily fluid intake and any symptoms of dehydration

LOW BLOOD SODIUM LEVELS

When a low salt diet causes sodium levels in your blood to be lower than normal it is referred to as hyponatremia. People with hyponatremia may experience serious neurological problems like impaired mental status, seizures, water on the brain, coma, and death. Some people with the condition experience gastrointestinal (GI tract) symptoms like appetite loss, vomiting, and nausea. Older adults are at a particularly high risk of hyponatremia, which can lead to falls and other medical complications. As such, it's important they seek medical attention if they experience any of the above mentioned symptoms.

FOOD SOURCES

Sodium is not generally a nutrient that you need to look for; it finds you. Almost any unprocessed food like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, meats, and dairy foods is low in sodium. Most of the salt in our diets comes from commercially prepared foods, not from salt

added to cooking at home or even from salt added at the table before eating.

According to The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the top 10 sources of sodium in our diets include: breads/rolls; pizza; sandwiches; cold cuts/cured meats; soups; burritos, tacos; savory snacks (chips, popcorn, pretzels, crackers); chicken; cheese; eggs, omelets.

About 70% of the sodium Americans eat comes from processed, prepared foods such as crackers, cheese, and canned foods, and restaurant meals. For many other countries the same is true.

Even processed foods that don't taste salty, like breakfast cereal, can have surprisingly high sodium levels. Additionally, foods consumed numerous times a day, such as bread, can add up to higher sodium intake even though an individual serving is not high in sodium.

REDUCE SODIUM INTAKE

Choosing foods with lower sodium doesn't mean losing flavor. Human taste buds are not that sensitive enough to notice a minor reduction in salt of about 30%, and for many types of foods, salt reductions of up to 30% won't taste noticeably different. This means that home cooks, professional chefs, and the food industry can make significant sodium reductions with minimal impact on flavor.

SMALLER PORTIONS

There's no need to completely eliminate favorite high-sodium foods or traditional cultural cuisines such as soy sauce (China), salted pickles and fish (Japan and Jamaica), or salty cheese and olives (Greece, Italy). Instead, it's best to enjoy such foods in smaller amounts.

NO-SODIUM ALTERNATIVES

Salt substitutes, including herbs and spices, and citrus like lemon can provide more flavor with less sodium. For example, citrus and sodium activate the same taste sensors so that less sodium can be used when they are combined. Explore your supermarket for low-sodium versions of traditional high-salt

products, or experiment with new alternatives.

A SODIUM-CONSCIOUS LIFE

Cook more at home: This gives you control over the amount of salt you add.

Read food labels: Pay attention to the sodium content per serving.

Fresh over processed: Fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are naturally low in sodium.

Herbs and spices: Experiment with flavorful alternatives to salt.

Gradually reduce salt in cooking: Your taste buds will adjust over time.

Remember, a little salt goes a long way. By being mindful of your intake and making smart choices, you can enjoy this flavorful mineral without harming your health.



Kingdom's three phases

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glorious. (Isa 11:9-10)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Rev 21:1-4)

The suffering of planet earth has been great, we have waited for an end to it and it seems like it has been going on forever. For us human beings, six thousand years seems a very long time, almost an eternity. But it is encouraging to know that God has been following a plan, even if we have been unaware of it, the purposes of God are being fulfilled, step by step. The first phase of the setting up of the kingdom was completed two thousand years ago when the king came to live inside his people. We are now living in the final moments of the dominion of the kingdoms of this world. It is clear that we are on the very verge of seeing the kingdom of Christ destroy the kingdoms of this world. We have waited long, but our wait is almost over and it gives us renewed courage to hold on when we realize that everything is happening just as our God planned it. We are not in limbo, surely, invincibly, the kingdom of God is fulfilling its purpose and it will conquer all, exactly as God planned.

Let us look up, lift up our heads! God is in heaven and all is well.



OPTIMISM

Talk happiness. The world is sad enough
Without your woes. No path is wholly rough;
Look for the places that are smooth and clear
And speak of those to the weary ear
Of Earth, so hurt by one continuous strain
Of human discontent and grief and pain.

Talk faith. The world is better off without
Your uttered ignorance and morbid doubt.
If you have faith in God, or man, or self,
Say so. If not, push back upon the shelf
Of silence all your thoughts, till faith shall come;
No one will grieve because your lips are dumb.

Talk health. The dreary, never-changing tale
Of mortal maladies is worn and stale.
You cannot charm, or interest, or please
By harping on that minor chord, disease.
Say you are well, or all is well with you,
And God shall hear your words and make them true.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Knowing the Truth

Continued from page 9

8. Vital truths necessary underlying this understanding:

- (a) The one God is the Father, Jesus is his literal begotten Son, the holy spirit is his personal presence in a non-bodily form.
- (b) The kingdom of God is established first within his people (since Pentecost), before it is established outwardly in the physical planet when the sin issue is completely resolved.
- (c) Man's salvation is not the greatest issue in the universe, it is secondary.
- (d) Christ living within his people is the ONLY hope of God's kingdom being justified.
- (e) The issue is the life of Christ, not simply conformity to ten rules.
- (f) The book of Revelation is the description of the last great confronta-

tion between both kingdoms, with God's government being vindicated through the revelation of Christ in his people.

SYNOPSIS

1. Satan attacked God in two areas (a) his character (b) his government
2. Jesus vindicated God's character 2000 years ago
3. Jesus will vindicate God's government through his body/church/kingdom/temple in the final moments of time.
4. This final revelation of God's government is described in the book of Revelation.
5. A person cannot be involved in God's work for these last days unless he understands the truths relating to This great issue before the entire universe.
6. The great controversy cannot be comprehended unless we understand these foundational truths:

a. The one God of the universe is the Father, Jesus is his true, literally begotten Son and the holy spirit is the literal presence of them both in a non-bodily form.

b. The issue before the universe is not how well we keep the ten commandments, but how fully our lives are joined to Christ's life.

c. The government (kingdom) of God, has been already established within the people of God, this is because the king has come to dwell within each Christian.

d. The last phase of the great controversy is the Revelation of Jesus Christ in and through his people, as the Church is confronted with the greatest manifestation of Satanic government in the kingdom of the beast.



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