“DELIRED ... FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS”

Clay Bond

Clay Bond is a native of Hondo, Texas. He is married to the former Carlie Brown, and they are the parents of three daughters and one son. Bond is a 2003 graduate of the Southwest School of Bible Studies in Austin, Texas. He speaks in Gospel meetings and lectureships as well as participating in evangelistic campaigns in his home state and abroad. Bond has been preaching the Gospel for the Johnson City, Texas Church of Christ for the past eight years.

INTRODUCTION

David said: “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High” (Ps. 92:1). We are called upon to be thankful in everything, “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thess. 5:18). Every person in this world, even the atheist, benefits from God’s goodness, “for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mt. 5:45). As we think about the blessings that shower down from heaven, two things should stand out in our minds. First, God’s blessings descend (Jas. 1:17). Second, our gratitude should ascend (Eph. 5:20). We have so much for which to be thankful, but the paramount focus for our thanksgiving is our salvation in Christ Jesus.

We do not deserve salvation, and we certainly cannot earn it. Salvation is a gift from God that is to be received with thanksgiving, as Paul so eloquently expresses: “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” (2 Cor. 9:15). So, when it comes to being thankful, we need to be thankful for all that we have received from the hand of God, but again, above all else we are to be thankful for our salvation, our deliverance from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13).

It has been said that salvation is the grandest theme known to mankind; therefore, “I will rejoice in thy salvation” (Ps. 9:14). The good news of the Gospel is that there is forgiveness with God. With this truth in mind, “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” (Ps. 70:4).
Turning our attention to Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:12-14, we will notice three important truths. First, we will notice that we have been delivered from darkness. Secondly, that we have been rescued by a gracious God. Third, we will examine that glorious Kingdom into which we have been translated.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:12-14).

DELIVERED FROM DARKNESS

As we study Scripture there are a number of significant words and phrases that speak of our salvation. For example, in Colossians 1:12-14 we see words like “meet,” “inheritance,” “light,” “translated,” “kingdom,” “redemption,” and “forgiveness.” All of those words help us to better understand and appreciate our salvation. At the heart of those terms is the word “delivered” (v. 13). According to Vines Expository Dictionary, this word means “to rescue from, to preserve from,” and so, “to deliver.” Salvation is a matter of deliverance, i.e., we have been rescued. If someone stated that they had been “rescued,” what does that tell us about their previous state? Obviously, it was not a good place, but a place from which escape would be desired. Spiritually speaking, before obeying the Gospel, each of us was trapped, held captive in the domain of darkness. It is this very darkness from which we have been rescued and delivered.

Darkness represents life before becoming a Christian (Eph. 5:8). Paul gives us vivid detail what a Christless life looks like, saying:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. 2:1-3).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind ... (1 Cor. 6:9).
For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another (Tit. 3:3).

When we consider our lives prior to our becoming Christians, we do not see a pretty picture! Those who live in darkness live prodigal lives characterized by waste. The prodigal, the one outside Christ, is wasting what can never be regained (time) in a state of utter darkness. This is the truth of Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son, who went off into the far country (Lk. 15:11-32), wasting his life away. A life outside Christ is a wasteful, unproductive, and self-centered life. Its pleasures are passing, its disappointments bitter, and its end is death, both physical and spiritual. “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death” (Rom. 6:21). This dark life is void of even the smallest benefit. You see, the worst thing about darkness is that those who live in darkness are lost.

Darkness stands for that system or order of ungodliness that is existent in society. “Light” and “darkness” are ethical terms—“light” standing for all that is good and right and “darkness” standing for that which is destructive and evil. Darkness is the society of the unspiritual and the godless. To live in darkness is to court the world’s favor, follow its customs, adopt its deals, covet its prizes, and seek its fellowship. Jesus said that the works of this world were evil (Jn. 7:7). What then could be said of those who seek fellowship with such?

Darkness can represent several things. Showing that it can represent ignorance, Jesus said: “[H]e that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth” (Jn. 12:35). Understanding is an important part of deliverance. However, understanding is the very thing lacking in those who walk in darkness. Such people have no understanding, no clue that they are lost. They are thoroughly confused by sin (Jer. 3:25). Darkness can also represent things and people Scripturally deemed immoral (Jn. 3:19), unfaithful (Eph. 5:11), separate from God (Mt. 25:30), and loveless (1 Jn. 2:9).

Darkness Hates Light. When Christ came into this world, He proclaimed that “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn. 3:19). Light and dark are enemies in the natural realm and in the spiritual realm. Each represents a drastically different lifestyle. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus illustrated this truth by picturing life as a journey offering two paths. One path has a wide gate that leads down a wide road. The other path has a narrow gate that leads down a
narrow road. A vast majority of the people choose the broad path that
leads to destruction. Why? Because they are “lovers of pleasures more
than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:4).

It is darkness’s natural hatred of light that drives so many to oppose
the Truth. One who is in love with darkness, and in love with the
pleasures of sin (Heb. 11:25), will have a deep aversion to light and
truth. One of the saddest truths that God’s Word teaches is that the
majority of the world is going to be lost because they live in the
darkness of sin. The ugly truth about darkness is that if we live in
darkness, we will die in darkness, if we live in sin, we die in sin (Jn.
8:24). The ultimate end of continuing in the power of darkness is that
we cannot go where Jesus is (Jn. 8:22). This is why the Gospel of Jesus
Christ is such good news. We are called by the Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14),
called out of darkness into the light (1 Pet. 2:9). Make no mistake about
it, the world that the Gospel calls us out of is a world that “lieth in
wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19), it is an “evil world” (Gal. 1:4), a world that
is “crooked and perverse” (Phil. 2:15).

Darkness is Satan’s domain—kingdom. We all serve somebody.
Jesus said: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the
one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the
other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt. 6:24). Each of us is
ruled by either light or darkness. The dark kingdom’s king is Satan. He
is described as the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4) and “the prince of
the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). Satan uses darkness to deceive and
ensnare us (Rev. 12:9). We should never underestimate our archenemy
and his devises. He is known as the “tempter” (Mt. 4:3). He is
described as a murderer and a liar (Jn. 8:44). Furthermore, he is the one
who deceives the whole world (Rev. 12:9), and he is the accuser of the
brethren (Rev. 12:10). Satan will do everything within his power to
keep men from coming to the light. He is busy promoting evil and
ungodliness and, as long as we allow him to prevail, he rules in our
lives, he keeps us under his yoke. Throughout time the devil has been
very successful in infecting the minds of lost people (2 Cor. 4:4). Those
who have never obeyed the Gospel belong to Satan. They are “taken
captive by him at his will” (2 Tim. 2:26).

I find it interesting that Paul uses the phrase “taken captive.” We
must ask: “When does this happen?” The Scriptures teach that God
created man upright, but man, by his own choice, has sought out many
inventions (Ecc. 7:29). Therefore, we understand that we are not born
in a state of captivity to Satan. We become his captives as we go astray from God’s revealed will (Isa. 53:6). James 1:13-15 shows the step-by-step process of how one goes astray. The “digressive” order of the process is: 1) lust, 2) enticement, 3) temptation, 4) sin, and 5) death. Again, we ask: “At what point in one’s life do these things occur?” Shedding light on the subject, Jackson comments: “[M]oral responsibility for sin comes in the “youth” of one’s life, and not at the point of one’s conception, or birth (see Gen. 8:21; Isa. 7:16, etc.).”³ “No we are not born in sin; we do not actually sin until we arrive at a stage of spiritual responsibility.”⁴ When one comes to the point in life commonly referred to as “the age of accountability,” and then commits sin, he thereby becomes the servant of sin (Jn. 8:34). In yielding to sin, we yield to Satan and become his captive. Whether we intended to or not, we have become a citizen of Satan’s dark kingdom (1 Jn. 3:8). As long as we are part of his domain, we belong to him.

To fully appreciate our deliverance through Christ, we must understand that from which we have been delivered. Even a cursory study of darkness shows us the ugliness and despair of existing in such a state. Our ultimate goal in life is to recover ourselves out of the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:7), and to be translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

**DELIVERED BY DIETY**

How appropriate it was for Paul to express his gratitude to the Father in Colossians 1:12. Every Christian should be thankful that Christ has made possible his salvation and that Christ has established His kingdom. Understanding the Godhead is vitally important to being able to fully appreciate this “great salvation” (Heb. 2:3). The Godhead is made up of three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19). The Godhead is composed of three distinct, separate Persons, with all three having one divine essence or nature (1 Jn. 5:7), and all three working together to bring about our salvation. The Scriptures describe the promises of God as “exceeding great and precious” (2 Pet. 1:4). His promises are “great and precious” because they benefit the eternal soul of man, and because it is impossible for God to lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). God’s “great and precious” promises to us include redemption (Eph. 1:7), eternal life (1 Jn. 5:11), the peace that passes understanding (Phil. 4:7), justification (Rom. 5:9), and deliverance (Col. 1:13). Through these promises we become partakers
of the Divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) by means of conversion and sanctification. It is important to understand the role that each member of the Godhead plays in bringing about our salvation. Jackson explained it well when he wrote: “The Father is biblically portrayed as initiating the plan of salvation, while Christ is represented as implementing it by his sacrificial death” ... we would also add that the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of the eternal plan to deliver mankind. Our primary focus here is the roles of the Father and the Son in our deliverance.

According to Ephesians 1:4-6 our eternal redemption was in the mind of the Father “before the foundation of the world” (v. 4). Our deliverance was “not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9). Our salvation is intriguing because we know that God planned and prepared for it from the beginning of time—“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18). Our deliverance is according to God’s own purpose and grace.

About 2 Timothy 1:9, Jackson says:

“Purpose” (prothesis) is “that which is planned in advance, plan, purpose, resolve, will” (Danker, 869). No man can be saved according to “his own plan”; rather, he must yield to God’s plan—and God’s plan requires obedience (Jn. 3:36; Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:8-9; Jas. 2:26). Further, the apostle affirms that the Lord’s “purpose” (plan) is an expression of his “grace” (charis); this term is woefully misunderstood in theological circles. It is not a term designed to negate an obedient response to the will of God.

Jackson goes on to say:

There is a great New Testament stress upon the fact that salvation is the result of God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-9), but there are several important aspects to this matter that must be viewed in concert. (a) Heaven’s grace is made available to “all men” (Tit. 2:11), contrary to the claims of Calvinism, which alleges that it is bestowed only upon certain “elect” ones. (b) Divine grace is accessed by means of a system of intellectual instruction (Tit. 2:12; cf. Jn. 6:45); it is not arbitrarily bestowed. (c) Grace is not extended unconditionally (cf. Gen. 6:8; Heb. 11:7)—again, contradicting Calvinism. The Ephesians Christians had been saved “by grace” (Eph.2:8), but their salvation occurred at the point in time when they were “cleansed by the washing of water” (Eph. 5:26), a reference to baptism. (d) Grace excludes merit and
salvation can never be earned (Rom. 6:23; cf. Mt. 18:24-27), but grace must be “accessed” (Rom. 5:1-2; 6:3-4, 17). (e) By grace we can be at peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2) and, achieving that, we become heirs of “the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7). (f) It is imperative that the child of God “continue in the grace” he has received (Acts 13:43), and “grow” therein (2 Pet. 3:18). If he does not, he will “fall away” from divine grace (Gal. 5:4; cf. Heb. 12:5), and the grace previously received will have been “in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10).7

Our Heavenly Father is very aware of who we are. He knows what is in man (Ps. 103:14; Jn. 2:25; Jer. 17:10). He knew that we would fall short of His glory (Rom. 6:23). He knew that we would be incapable of saving ourselves. He pities us like a father does his son (Ps. 103:13). He has been very gracious in the way that He has dealt with us as sinners, withholding from us the due rewards of our iniquity. Remember, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Each of us deserves to die, but if we will avail ourselves of His grace, God does not give us what we deserve. Instead, He offers what we need, salvation. We need to be rescued from darkness.

The damage that sin has done in our lives can be resolved only by God’s grace. “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). The words of Paul serve to remind us that our deliverance is a result of God’s grace. “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Eph. 2:4-5). How glorious is the Gospel message that there is forgiveness with God. “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Ps. 130:3-4). Yes, when we meet His terms of pardon (Heb. 8:12-13), He stands ready to forgive (Ps. 86:5) and deliver us from darkness and despair.

As said earlier, the Father is Biblically portrayed as initiating the plan of salvation, while Christ is represented as implementing it by His sacrificial death. The Godhead planned our salvation and provided the only sacrifice that could satisfy God’s righteousness.

Genesis 3 is the inspired record of sin’s entrance into this world (and Satan’s role in bringing it to pass). Sin brought with it death (Rom. 5:12). Death is the ultimate consequence of sin. “The sting of death is sin” (1 Cor. 15:56). Satan’s goal was to bring sin into the world. He
knew full well that death would follow for man. He tempted Adam and Eve to violate God’s Law. Satan knew that if they would succumb to his temptation, God’s creation would be forever changed and that death would pass upon all men. This would happen not by hereditary depravity, but by each man’s choice in keeping with his free moral agency—the free moral agency with which he was created.

What is the nature of this death Satan has brought about? Is it spiritual death or physical death? Does Genesis 2:17 and Romans 5:12 refer to the breach of fellowship between the Creator and His creation, or the physical decay which was brought about by man’s fall? Or, are both indicated? About Romans 5:12, Wacaster says:

It would seem in view of the context here, spiritual death is under consideration. We do not deny that physical death is included among the consequence of Adam’s sin. But the context points most definitely to spiritual rather than physical death. This conclusion is strengthened by the following cause. “Death passed unto all men, for that all sinned” (Rom. 5:12). Spiritual death passes unto all men for the simple reason that all men have sinned, this truth having been established in Romans 3:23. It was through Adam that death entered, or was introduced to the world. He then clarified precisely how it is that men thus die: “for that all sinned.” The inescapable conclusion is Adam only introduced sin into the world and his descendants merely participated in the same. They were not guilty of his sin, they only had the opportunity to sin themselves because sin had now been introduced to them. Each man had to make the choice as to whether he would or would not sin. But Paul has already proven that all men sin (Rom. 3:23).

Sin is not something that should be taken lightly. Through the sin of Adam, Satan was victorious in bringing sin and, consequently, death into the world. Death, as a result of Adam’s sin was twofold. He died spiritually because his spirit was separated from his Creator. He died physically because he would no longer have access to the tree of life. Satan’s goal was (and is) not only to see God’s creation caught in a downward spiral of physical death and decay, but to see the beautiful fellowship of creature and Creator destroyed for eternity.

As heartbreaking and devastating as physical death can be, we must remember that it is only physical, but the souls of the departed live on for eternity. No, the true tragedy of sin is not physical death. It is the spiritual death—separation from God. All men have sinned
(Rom. 3:23), and therefore all men are subject to the guilt and punish-
ment for sin (Rom. 5:12). Since death entered this world, Satan had its
power in his hands (Heb. 2:14). In Hebrews 2:14, the Greek word
kratos, that is here translated “power,” means dominion or strength.9
Not power over death, but sovereignty or dominion of death.10 Relative
to Satan’s power of death, Jackson observes:

First, it must be stated emphatically that Satan does not possess
the power to directly take human life. If such were the case, all
Christian people would be dead, for he is our “enemy” (Mt.
13:28). The book of Job demonstrates this truth as well. Satan
could only afflict the patriarch as Jehovah allowed, and the Lord
refused to grant permission for Job’s life to be terminated (Job
2:6) God is greater than his adversary (cf. 1 Jn. 4:4). The
reference to Satan’s “power of death” is doubtless an allusion to
the Tempter’s role in the fall of humanity at the beginning of
time. Death reigns as a result of sin (Rom. 5:12). Since the devil
introduced sin, he is characterized as the “murder” of the human
family (Jn. 8:44). Death, therefore, is an appointment for us all
(Heb. 9:27—with the exception of those who are alive at the
time of Christ’s return—1 Cor. 15:51). Inasmuch as Satan
ultimately shares a heavy responsibility for the sin—death
equation, in a manner of speaking, he thus is said to have “the
power of death.” Not in a direct sense, but only in an historical,
associated sense.11

Satan’s death grip on mankind had to be broken. Just as David took
Goliath’s own sword and cut off the giant’s head with it, David’s
greater son took Satan’s weapon of death and destroyed him with it.12
Inspiration reveals for us how Christ accomplished this, declaring:
“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” (Heb. 2:14).

Genesis 3:15 makes it clear that God had prepared a solution for
Satan’s diabolical work in the garden. God had a plan in place that
would ultimately defeat the devil and restore Jehovah’s fellowship with
His creation. God told Satan: “I will put enmity between thee and the
woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and
thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). God revealed that a Savior was
coming to defeat Satan. That Savior would provide salvation and
establish His everlasting Kingdom. The Seed of woman crushed the
power of Satan so that what man had lost in Adam, could be more than gained in Christ (Rom. 5:19).

Genesis 3:15 is the first Messanic promise foretelling the coming of the Christ. Down through the ages God kept this promise in the forefront of men’s minds. He emphasized His “seed promise” over and over again. In doing so, He added prophetic details which aided His people in identifying the Christ when He came (cf. Gen. 22:18; 2 Sam. 7:12-14; Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22; Mic. 5:2).

Coming to the New Testament, we find Mary, the young virgin, who conceived of the Holy Spirit and gave birth to Jesus. Jesus is identified as the Christ, Emmanuel, God with us. God made a promise, and even while His people strayed and lost sight of it, He never altered from His eternal purpose. When the time was right, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Johnny Ramsey used to say that just as woman introduced sin into the world, she also introduced the Savior as the remedy for our sin (1 Tim. 1:15).

The Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are full of the hope of a Deliverer, One Who would once and for all end the bondage of His people. Quoting and applying Isaiah 59:20-21, Paul relates: “[T]here shall come out of Zion the Deliverer” (Rom. 11:26, ASV). In bringing deliverance, Jesus emptied Himself of His equality with the Father and “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6-7). Speaking of Jesus, John says: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14). No one can successfully deny that with the incarnation of Christ the Father’s eternal plan to render Satan powerless was about to reach its fruition. To deliver His people, it was necessary for Jesus to become flesh and blood. He had to taste of death for every person (Heb. 2:9). This was necessary for him to destroy the work the devil had begun in the garden. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8).

Jesus quickly and easily established His superiority over Satan. He cast out unclean spirits (Mk. 5:1-19). His very name caused devils to tremble (Jas. 2:19). His miracles served to identify Him (Jn. 14:11). Still, Jesus knew that His ultimate victory over Satan, sin and its consequences could be achieved only through His own death. Concerning the time and purpose of His death, Jesus let it be known:

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father,
glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (Jn. 12:27-32).

Jesus would have to taste death in order to cast out the prince of this world and undo his deadly work:

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 (Heb. 2:14).

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me (Heb. 10:5).

He took the weapon of death out of Satan’s hands and defeated our great enemy at the cross. Our Lord attested Himself the “Victor” when He proclaimed: “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18). Jesus bound the strong man (Mk. 3:27) and, “having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). By dying on the cross Jesus opened up a new and living way by which we may be rescued from the second death. At the cross, Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

While some may glory in their own might and riches, Paul could only find himself glorying only “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14). The cross of Christ has drawing power because it has saving power (1 Cor. 1:18-21). Jesus said: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (Jn.12:32). The cross of Christ has the power to deliver us, to rescue us from darkness and translate us into the kingdom of Christ (Col.1:13). The word “translate” is from the Greek word methistemi. According to Vines, this word means “to change, remove.” In Colossians 1:13, this word is in the aorist tense (i.e., Greek past tense), which points to an immediate change. We are translated from one kingdom into another. We are translated from Satan’s dark kingdom into Christ’s glorious kingdom by the operation
of God (Col. 2:12). We are taken out of darkness and placed into Christ’s light.

**CHRIST’S GLORIOUS KINGDOM**

Christ’s glorious kingdom is a kingdom of light. Early in history, as God began to reveal the coming of the Christ, He began to show that the Christ would establish His kingdom (Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 49:10). The earliest Messianic prophecies of Genesis set forth the background to the rest of the Bible. Little by little, God revealed His redemptive plan that would bring about our deliverance. God chose out a family through whom the Christ would come (Gen. 22:17-18), and He preserved the seed of Abraham to accomplish His eternal purpose (Gal. 3:16). The “seed promise” was further limited to the lineage of the house of David. God told David: “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom” (2 Sam. 7:12). Not only is the Christ’s coming prophesied, it is written that He will establish a kingdom. When the kingdom was about to divide (1 Kgs. 11), God through His prophet Ahijah reminded the people that David would always have a lamp, a light before God.

The disruption of the kingdom came about because of the idolatrous leanings of Solomon. The king certainly tolerated and perhaps subsidized the worship of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Milcom and other deities. He had rejected the Davidic path of absolute commitment to God. Nevertheless, the divine judgement against the house of David was tempered in two ways. (1) the entire kingdom would not be taken from the Davidites; and (2) the judgement would be deferred until after the death of Solomon. God’s graciousness to Solomon was based on his faithfulness to David. Solomon may have broken his covenant with God, but God would not break His covenant with David (11:33-36).

During the kingdom period, the prophets were God’s spokesmen. They were God’s spiritual leaders (2 Kgs. 17:13). The kings, for the most part, were a hindrance to the spiritual well-being of God’s people. God’s warnings to His people about having a king, in 1 Samuel 8, are seen to be absolute truth.

In 2 Kings 8:16, we read about Judah’s fifth king, Jehoram, who was a wicked king. Some believe he was Judah’s worst king, and being married to Athaliah, king Ahab’s daughter, certainly did not help. He caused Judah to err greatly. Still, God did not destroy Judah for David...
His servant’s sake. God promised “to give [David] alway a light, and to his children” (2 Kgs. 8:19). This was fulfilled when Christ, the son of David (Mt. 1:1), established His church (Mt. 16:18). Christ’s church is the kingdom of light, it is that city set on a hill whose light shines out like a beacon (Mt. 5:14). The church of our Lord is an example of God’s wisdom in how He saves ruined humanity and reconciles us back to Himself (Eph. 2:16). The church was planned by Deity (Eph. 3:10-11), prophesied by the Old Testament prophets (Dan. 2:44), predicted by Jesus Christ (Mk. 9:1), and established by God with power on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. On that day, the kingdom of light, into which all nations flow (Isa. 2:2), became a reality. Every person of every nation can access this kingdom and its spiritual blessings and, like Paul, we should give thanks (Col. 1:12). There is no element of God’s eternal plan to save man that may be deemed unimportant or insignificant. The church—planned, prophesied and established with power—is God’s eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11). We must be in God’s kingdom of light, His church, to be rescued from darkness.

THE SPIRITUAL PROCESS INVOLVED IN DELIVERANCE

Our ultimate goal in life must be to recover ourselves out of the snare of the devil (1 Tim. 3:7) by being translated into the kingdom of light. For this to be accomplished, one must hear the Gospel, for it is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16). It is by the Gospel that we are made aware of our state of darkness and separation. The Gospel not only exposes the problem, it offers the solution by calling us to the Savior (2 Thess. 2:14) and to the light of His kingdom (1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Thess. 2:12).

We have noted that we are delivered from darkness (delivered by deity) and translated into the kingdom of light. We have seen the roles of each Person in the Godhead in our salvation. What many fail to realize and acknowledge is that part of God’s eternal plan is that we must come to Him for salvation. Passages that emphasize man’s responsibility to come to God for salvation include:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mt. 11:28-30).
And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mk. 16:15-16).

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? (Acts 2:37).

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41).

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do (Acts 9:6).

But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him (Acts 10:35).

Sirs, what must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30).

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you (Rom. 6:17).

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

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 (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:9).

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

There are those in the religious world who teach that God requires nothing of us in regard to our salvation. Some say anything beyond mental assent is “works salvation.” Others teach that mental assent must be expressed verbally, but again, that anything beyond verbal
confession is “works salvation.” Many will claim that salvation is by “grace only,” and that not even mental assent is required by God! When the above verses are considered, obviously, many greatly err not knowing the Scriptures (Mt. 22:29). The truth is, each of the elements discussed is required (God’s grace, our faith and confession of Christ), but those are not the only things God requires of us for our salvation. The Scriptures detail other necessary requirements commanded by God in order for us to be saved—and, if we will be saved we must know and obey His will (Heb. 5:9). While so many claim that any act of obedience to God’s commands is a vain attempt to earn salvation, the irony is that both faith and confession are works commanded by God!

Someone has said: “Thoughts and ideas have consequences.” How true that is. The errant misguided idea that we are saved by “faith only” stands in opposition to Scripture and has serious consequence. To teach justification at the point of faith, one must also conclude that at the point of faith we contact the blood of Jesus. Why? Because it is His blood that justifies and redeems us (Rom. 5:9; Col. 1:14). The Scriptures teach that sin is washed away at the point when one is baptized (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5). This is so, not because the water cleanses our flesh (1 Pet. 3:21), but because at baptism we are linked to Christ’s sacrificial death and united with His resurrection (Rom. 6:3-6). The teaching that one is saved by “faith only” also necessitates the conclusion that as soon as one believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he is translated into His kingdom. The Scriptures teach that the kingdom and the church are one and the same. Furthermore, Scriptures teach that the Lord adds believers to His church (His kingdom) when they are baptized (Acts 2:42-47). The Scriptures also plainly teach that we are “baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13), not that we “believe into” one body.

Just as with all of God’s commands, faith is important and essential. However, by itself, faith is powerless to save (Jas. 2:24). The faith that saves obeys God’s commandments, all the while ignoring man’s attempts to explain away the necessity of obedience (Gal. 5:6; Heb. 5:9).

We can see that many of those things being taught about salvation and about how God translates us into the kingdom are false. Even so, to be saved, we must dig deep and seek the truth of the matter. We must be confident that if we turn to God’s Word, we will find the answers to our questions about God’s plan to save us—and what He requires of us
in order to be saved. We must tune out all of the religious chatter and be like Ezra who prepared his heart to seek God’s law and do it (Ezra 7:10). Let us reason from the Scriptures and learn how it is that God changes us from darkness to light, and translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

Every Jew was born into Judaism, then he was taught God’s law. At birth they were part of the nation of Israel. Chosen by God, not for salvation, but to be the nation through which His Seed would come. Throughout Old Testament history it is frequently observed that only a small remnant of God’s chosen nation faithfully served Him (1 Kgs. 19:18). Unlike the way Old Testament Jews were born into the nation of Israel, to be part of Christ’s kingdom, one must first be taught (Jn. 6:44-45), then he can experience the spiritual birth. The Hebrew nation was an earthly kingdom entered by physical birth. The Lord’s church is a spiritual kingdom (Jn. 18:36); therefore, it must be entered by a spiritual birth (Jn. 3:5).

This spiritual birth cannot be experienced without faith on the part of the individual, all in keeping with the operation of God (Col. 2:12). In order for that faith to be produced, one must hear the Gospel and choose to believe it (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6; Mk. 16:15-16). Once one has heard and believed that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6), he must not only diligently search to know God’s commands, he must obey them.

One will soon discover that a willingness to repent of his sins is a prerequisite to being born again (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30). God wants us to possess “godly sorrow” (2 Cor. 7:10) for the way we lived our sinful lives. This is so because “godly sorrow” will motivate us to make up our minds to change our lives and live in compliance with His Word. The Psalmist manifested his attitude toward his sin when he declared: “I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin” (Psalm 38:18).

Those diligently seeking to know and obey God’s commandments will also find that they must confess with their mouths that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:10, cf. Acts 8:37). Moreover, when a diligent seeker comes to passages where people asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37), he will see that they were commanded to be baptized (Acts 2:38, 41).

No one can successfully reason from the Scriptures—arguing that since he has already heard and believed the Gospel, that he has already repented of his former way of living and confessed Christ as the Son of
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God—that he is exempt from any additional commands. Instead of so arguing, the diligent seeker will see from the Scriptures that God desires to save him and add him to the church. Seeing this, he will not only obey the command to be baptized, he will continue to faithfully observe to do all the Lord commands (Mt. 28:20), trusting that what God has promised He is able also to perform (Rom. 4:21).

While many teach that obedience to God’s commandments is not essential to salvation, the Scriptures teach otherwise. The Scriptures teach: 1) that baptism does save (1 Pet. 3:21), 2) that baptism puts us into Christ (Gal. 3:27), 3) that at baptism one does contact the blood of Jesus (Rev.1:5), 4) that at baptism we re-enact the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), 5) and, that at baptism we are translated into the kingdom of light (Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13). When a person is baptized into Christ he becomes a new person (2 Cor. 5:17), and he becomes a citizen of God’s kingdom (Phil. 3:20, ASV). The Gospel has the power to change us from being sinners, walking in utter darkness, to being a saint abiding in light (Eph. 5:8). We observe His commandments because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15). It is not our place to question His commands or to demand salvation on our own terms. As those who have been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, we are no more in darkness, but we walk as the children of light (Eph. 5:8; 1 Jn. 1:7).

CONCLUSION

The salvation in Jesus Christ is the grandest theme known to mankind. It does not matter who you are, or where you live. It does not matter what your skin color is or the tribe from which you descended, God does not look upon the face of man (Acts 10:35). Each of us needs salvation and each is called by Jesus Christ Who invited: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt. 11:28-30).

The Lord God planned in eternity how He would atone for our sins. He planned how He would deliver us from the darkness that was yet to come. He planned how He would translate us into His kingdom of light. All that remains is for us to heed His call and abide in His light, keeping ourselves “in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Ju. 21).
ENDNOTES

1 All Scripture references are taken from the *King James Version* unless otherwise noted.


7 Ibid., 209.


9 Vine, 479.


13 Vine, 640.
