

Articles and Sermons :: The GOSPEL of God's Great Love -RWurtz

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love -RWurtz - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:12

*I thought to share some writings I have put together that go along with some question that come up in forums from time to time. What did man fall **from** and what will man be restored back to? What is God's purpose in the Gospel?*

When man fell in the Garden, man lost his/her glorified body. This was the first ICHABOD experience. The glory departed and since that time all have come short of the glory of God. The body fell into corruption and mortality. it was no longer the place of God's rest that it once was (Isaiah 66:1, 2). This will be a some what long series of answers, but perhaps you may find some help. Shall we make a start? -Robert Wurtz II

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The Gospel of God's Great love

- Part 1 (In The Beginning)
- Robert Wurtz II

Ever since God decided to create beings that had free moral agency there has been a struggle between the free moral agents will and God's will. God existed eternally in loving fellowship within the Godhead and was complete in Himself (see John 17:24). But God wanted to bring many sons unto glory as additional objects of His love, with which He could fellowship in a loving relationship (Hebrews 2:10, Job 1:6).

God the Father did not need to create any creatures, He already enjoyed an eternal loving fellowship with the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is and has always been love and God has always had within the three persons of the Trinity objects of His love. But God wanted to add to this loving relationship, so He began creating beings that had a nature like Himself. He wanted to bring many 'sons' unto glory.

God did not create preprogrammed 'robots' that would love Him mindlessly. He created beings that understood what God's will was and yet they possessed the ability to choose their own will. These creations were also known as "the sons of God." These creatures we know as angels and along with the whole of his creative works were created for God's own pleasure.

measure (Rev. 4:11).

A dear brother once said that, "God has chosen to reveal to us information about the angels on a need to know basis." Angels are not the primary subject of scripture, but there are some relevant events in their history that impacts ours. Understand that the angels were created long ago in the eternal past. They have a completely different 'story' than we as human beings have. The Bible is primarily the story of man and God's dealings with him. Only as necessary does God reveal to us information about the angels. Here are some things that we do know:

- * We know first that God created an innumerable number of angels (Hebrews 12:22).
- * We know that they are greater in power, might and intellect than human beings (II Peter 2:11).
- * Some of their names are words beyond our comprehension (Judges 13:18).
- * Lucifer was perhaps the greatest of all the angels- being referred to as the Anointed Cherub that Covers (Ezekiel 28).
- * God ordained that Lucifer would dwell in the Mountain of God with Him. He walked up and down in the stones of fire that are before the throne. He was exceedingly awesome as God's creation.
- * But at some point in Lucifer's existence his heart began to be lifted up in pride because of his beauty. In Ezekiel 28:15 we read, Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. The iniquity that formed in Lucifer's heart would eventually lead to a terrible and radical change in his nature.

Re: The GOSPEL of God's Great Love -RWurtz - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:14

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 2 (Satan Pioneers Sin and Iniquity)

There has always been a strait and narrow way and that path was one of complete submission to God's will. Any other actions than those approved of God would only corrupt God's perfect and fine tuned order. Wisdom is found in knowing that God is all wise and it is impossible to improve upon His ways and requirements. Any deviation from God's will can only damage what God has so wisely created and established.

Satan (Lucifer) is the pioneer of the way of the transgressors of God's will (John 8:44, Proverbs 2:22, 13:15). He has hewn down God's ordinances and removed the road blocks of His commandments (Ezekiel 28:18). He is the father of iniquity (lawlessness). Though there had only ever been one road, the straight and narrow road of obedience and submission to God, Satan blazed a broad path into the unknown bringing unimaginable pain and suffering into God's order.

Heaven was once a place of complete rest, but Satan defiled His sanctuaries and as a result was cast out of Heaven. Satan pioneered what we now call, "the broad road to destruction." He wanted to exalt Himself and be like God. God ended Satan's 'broad road' with a construction project of his own. God closed the road and ended it with a place called Hell (Matthew 25:41).

This 'pride induced' detour of rebellion twisted him into a contagious spirit of corruption that would lead multitudes of humans and a third of the angels to his own final tormented ruin (Rev. 12:4). The most frightful thing imaginable is to suffer infinite wrath as God's enemy and be eternally dead to His goodness and grace. Who can deliver from His wrath? (Deut. 32:39)

We are given helpful insight into what Satan (Lucifer) had been thinking when he rose up to lead disciples after himself in Isaiah 14:13, 14, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." I will is used here 5 times.

It is a short step from "I will" to I AM. Satan wanted to be the god and lord of his own life. He wanted to sit upon the throne of his own heart. He lusted to be like the Most High God- not just in his own life, but in the lives of others. There arose within the bosom of Satan an absolute corruption in his nature as he ceased for all eternity to be humble and tremble at God's word (Isaiah 66:1, 2). He could never again be a place of God's rest. This root corruption is spiritual rebellion.

From this point on, Satan would submit to God's will- but no longer willingly. This is an important point. Satan no longer lived and loved to do God's will. He broke off from God's will and took up his own. Understand that as an angel Satan is and has always been under God Almighty's sovereign authority, but since his fall he has not submitted willingly. He has made himself the enemy of God by corrupting his own nature. He is and forever will be the father of all those that are disobedient (Ephesians 2:3, Col. 3:6).

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:15

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 3 (Sin Entered the World)

God created man upright and perfect. He had created man in His own image. This means that man was originally created with the nature of God. Man was created with the Law of God written upon his heart as an internal guide to right and wrong. The conscience seeks to enforce that law by inward dealings and reminders of God's commandments. Man knew right from wrong and had a mechanism in place to serve as a *WARNING* when God's will was in danger of not being followed.

God allowed Satan to take on the form of a Serpent and gave him access into the Garden of Eden. The serpent was the wisest of all the other creations God had made on the earth and since God had only created Adam and Eve he transformed himself into a trusted serpent. God orchestrated this trial for man, but not before he had equipped Adam for the battle. Adam had been armed with the sword of God's express commandment and the awesome sting of the conscience. No doubt as the Serpent began his lies it was SHOUTING at him God's promised consequence for disobedience (Genesis 2:17).

The Ultimate Death

God told Adam that in the day you eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil- literally DYING thou SHALT DIE. This is one of the first cases in scripture where we see the doubling of words for emphasis sake. We would later learn of the Holy of holies (the ultimate holy place), the King of kings (the ultimate king) and the Song of songs (the ultimate song). Dying thou shalt Die is the ultimate death. Death in scripture does not mean annihilation- it means separation. Adam had walked with God in beautiful fellowship, that sweet communion in the cool of the day. Satan came to try to murder that relationship and destroy man's innocence.

Imagine what it would be like to have never disobeyed God and your conscience was as white as snow. God's glory no doubt resided in Adam and Eve and the radiance of that Glory was surely as evident as the Glory that filled the Temple or that shone from Moses' face. Imagine a garment of God's Glory- the evidence of innocence.

A death implies that life (communion) once existed. Things have to be together before they can separate. Adam enjoyed that Eternal Life of the knowledge and communion of God (John 17:3). Adam and Eve were both naked of physical clothing, the adorning that their posterity would bear and were unashamed walking and living in the Glory of God. No doubt, as Moses' face radiated the glory of God, their bodies showed forth the radiance of being Face to Face with God. No need to fear- their conscience was clear.

Moses had a wonderful experience, but even he could not look upon God and live because of his inherent sinfulness. Adam and Eve knew God in the closest of terms. Their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit. Indeed God's hind quarters was the closest Moses would get this side of eternity to seeing God (Exodus 33), yet his face still shined as he came down from the mountain with that precious radiance of God's glory. We can only imagine a garment of glory- a glorified body as Paul tells us about (Philippians 3:21).

Adam exchanged his glorified body for a Sin defiled, vile body and passed that vileness through the whole of the human race. The sweet communion was gone. They were banished from Paradise. This is what we know as "Paradise Lost." Their eyes were open and they knew they were naked. They hid themselves from God as the Glory had departed. Surely this was the ultimate ICHABOD and from that time until this all men have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:33

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Part 4 (Trusting in Lies)

With lies and deceit Satan deceived Eve and Adam and with full knowledge Adam surrendered his weapon (as it were). He laid aside the sword of God's Holy Word and stepped straight in to the snare of the enemy. It was as if he held out his hands and allowed Satan to take him and the whole human race away captive.

Reborn unto Satan and Sin

An exchange took place. The Lord departed from Adam and the vile spirit of disobedience and rebellion took his place (Ephesians 2). Where once God worked in Adam both to will and do his good pleasure, now Adam and all of his progeny would do the lusts of their new father the Devil. Adam traded his soul for a chance at being 'as' God (Genesis 3:5). He asserted his own will and disregarded God's.

Satan lied to Eve and told her they would be 'as' gods; but it was not what they expected. With his much fair speech he caused Eve and then Adam to yield, but they did not seem to believe that what they had done was for their own souls. Adam was blinded to the way in which he would alter the course of his descendants. In one moment of sin he changed the trajectory of human history towards damnation. He took into himself, as the figure head of the whole human race, the dynamic of Sin. From this point on man would sin naturally.

God did not want Adam and Eve living forever in corruptible and vile bodies, dominated by the spirit of disobedience, so He banished them from the Garden of Eden before they could eat of the Tree of Life and live forever as sinners. When Sin entered man- man had to exit the Garden. But God did not forsake man, but continued to strive with him to bring them back into a place of repentance.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:36

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Part 5 (From Friends to Enemies)

Ever since Adam surrendered to the lies of Satan, men and women have been taken captive by him at his will (II Timothy 2:26). Adam trusted in the lies, that is, he shifted his trust as a person would shift their weight from God and his truth to Satan and his lies.

Why would Adam believe these lies? There is much speculation here. In any case Satan appealed to Adam's reasoning and caused him to believe that God was somehow holding back something good from him. Yet we know that God does not withhold any good thing from those that walk uprightly. Satan tempted Adam to circumvent the process of learning and experience that God had designed. Yet Adam was not blind to these lies and could have resisted the Devil.

God had set limitations to what Satan could say and do to Adam before allowing the trial to begin (See Job 1). He has never allowed man to be tested above that which they were able to bear, but with the temptation has made a way to escape (I Cor. 10:13). For Eve it was sin by deception, but for Adam it was sin "eyes wide open." Satan was powerless against humanity so long as Adam remained submitted to God. The lies took the 'edge' off of Adam's trust in God had said. Yet, if Adam would wield the sword of God's word rightly by believing God to be TRUE he would have prevailed.

Everyone has a 'god'

Adam placed his faith and trust in the lies of Satan. This is an important point. What or who you place your trust in determines the direction of your life and soul. Human beings live in a world that they cannot control and must look beyond themselves for a higher source for provision of their needs. This is why the pagans of Canaan served the Baal's and in our times multiplied millions of 'gods' have been invented. Men and women have worshipped the Sun and the host of heaven all seeking to bring some certainty and stability to their lives. They placed their faith and hope in these false gods. Francis Shaffer once pointed out that the great civilizations of the past always tried to invent greater and greater gods with

th which to rest the weight of life's necessities, issues and morals.

We are helpless apart from God and have to place our trust in something or someone other than ourselves. This is historical fact as well as common sense. When Satan succeeded in separating God from man- man no longer had a foundation for his existence and was vulnerable to all manner of fearful events and circumstances. If man cannot or will not call upon God- what do they turn to? When you find out 'what' or 'who' a person is ultimately trusting and believing in you will find their 'god'. So we may want to ask, "What are you believing and trusting in?"

The Shifting Sands of Satan's Empty Promises

Satan is a murderous father of lies and there is NO truth in him (John 8:44). He comes to steal, kill and destroy and he does it with lies. Lies create something false for someone to trust in. Lies are a terrible sin and betrayal. When people lie they destroy the safety of trust; that is, those they love cannot safely trust in them. Lies give the liar a sense of power and control because they were able to fabricate something and then get the victim to believe it.

I suppose this is one of the possible reasons why all liars are going to have their place in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). Satan gained the allegiance of Adam and Eve with lies. Satan's lies were promises that he had no intention on making good on. And just as Abraham believed God and it was imputed to him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God- Adam believed Satan and it was counted to him for Sin and he became the enemy of God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:40

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 6 (Sin Crouching at the Door)

God originally created man as a free moral agent and would fellowship with him in sweet communion so long as he/she obeyed. Man had Eternal Life (John 17:3). The Holy Spirit worked in Adam to bring him as a son into an ever renewing glory.

Free moral agency simply means that man had the ability to choose between submission to God and rebellion against God. The question to Adam and Eve was the same as it was to the angels- will I or will I not submit to the authority of God? There came a point in the eternal past when Satan decided he would no longer willingly submit.

Jehovah God is ALL POWERFUL and the wellspring of all authority in heaven and in earth (Romans 13:1). Satan sought to usurp that authority by lies and deception and prevailed with certain of the angels and with Adam and Eve (II Tim. 2:26, Genesis 3). The word usurp is the Greek *authenteo* and it means "one who does a thing with his own hand." It can mean to play the master, supplant or to domineer.

Typically, authority is usurped by intimidation and without right, but Satan did it by deception. He could never force Adam and Eve to sin. God always makes a way to escape during temptation. But because Adam believed the lie, man passed from life to death and from the power of God to the power of Satan. The former things passed away and all became ruined.

The image of God in man was marred and the spirit of disobedience reigned in place of God's Holy Spirit. This is the "dying thou shalt die" that God warned them about. Satan from that day to this has worked in man both to will and do his evil lusts (John 8:44). All of humanity is born 'in Adam' and are subject to this condition. Man with this sinful carnal nature cannot please God. His mind is carnal and at enmity with God.

God repeatedly convinced man of their sin from that time unto this. The carnal mind did not like to factor God in to its thoughts. It is important to stop here and make an important observation; men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3). Simply put, men and women, by and large, do not want God around. They get very uncomfortable when God is near. So they press Him as far from their minds as possible and avoid every reminder of Him. They don't want to hear about God and don't want to talk about Him. In fact, crafty schemes such as Darwinism have been invented to assist man in this process.

But still God strives with man to repent. Adam bore Cain and Abel as immediately that murderous nature of Satan manifested in Cain (I John 3:12). Man began to multiply upon the earth and some began to call upon the Lord. By the time we reach Genesis 6 man had thoroughly corrupted His way in spite of the fact that God had been striving with Him all along.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:41

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Part 7 (Kicking Against the Pricks)

In Genesis 6:3 we read, And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. The Bible uses some insightful pictures to express how God strives with man. One of them is that of a farmer plowing a field with oxen and how the plowman directs the ox to make sure the rows are being cut in a straight line.

Plows had attached to them on either side what is known as an ox goad. These were very sharp pieces of iron or wood that were attached to a device that the plowman could control. When he wanted to go 'left' he would press that goad into the right side of the ox causing pain in the side. This was much more than a 'thorn in the side' as it was very difficult for an ox to resist this measure without hurting itself. To give you an idea an ox-goad was used by a man named Shamgar in Judges 3:31 to slay 600 men. So this was very painful and difficult to resist.

When Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus that was persecuting and killing Christians He made an interesting statement, "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me- it is hard for you to kick against the pricks (goads)." This was a proverb of sorts to denote rebelling against God's Holy Spirit. God was working desperately to get Saul on the right track, but like a stubborn ox he was hurting himself all the more to maintain his own course.

But God said he would not always deal with man in this way. He seeks to get them to repent by various measures including physical pain. All in an attempt to bring man to repentance. Why? Because He loves man. He knows the finality of rebellion and desires to bring man back into loving fellowship. This would end at 120 years for man. God demonstrated through the preaching of Noah that man will rebel and procrastinate until their hearts are utterly hardened beyond hope. Apparently the cutoff for rebellion is 120 years. Beyond that rebellious man is only heaping judgment upon his/her head.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:48

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 8 (The Place of God's REST)

What is the purpose of the Gospel? Why did Christ come and die on the cross? Why did God send ministers to proclaim reconciliation to God? God has always desired to restore what He had with Adam and Eve in the Garden before they fell into sin. God is holy and cannot remain in the presence of sin without bringing judgment. The wages of sin is death; that is, the penalty for sinning is death. This happens on a spiritual level when God separates from man and on a physical level when man's soul and spirit separates from his/her physical body. The closer God's unique presence is to man the swifter His judgment upon sin. When people sin with impunity it is evidence that God is not near.

When God began to draw near to man he had to deal with the terrible defilement that sinning caused. Sin is an offense towards God and has to be dealt with. Sins, individual transgressions have to be dealt with also before God can draw near on an ongoing basis. Man also needs to have his conscience cleansed of the accusation that makes man want to flee from God so that he can come boldly before God's Throne in prayer and fellowship. Many things need to be dealt with to make God's return possible, but first we need to look at God's ultimate plan.

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word (Isaiah 66:1, 2)

God intended to make His dwelling place among men. Not to a building or a structure or a 'spot' on a map, but to this 'man' will I look. God intended to walk with man in sweet fellowship and communion. He desired to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth. He desired a place of rest. But since the fall man has not been kind to welcome God or present himself as a holy dwelling place for Him.

From Genesis 3 to Genesis 6 man was on the fast track to absolute destruction. The people did not like to retain God in their knowledge (Romans 1:28). They did not seek after God- in fact they fled from Him and resisted Him on every hand. In Genesis 6:3 God said that His Spirit would not always strive with man, but that his days would be 120 years. Some m

en began to call on the name of the Lord, but by the days of Noah there were only 8 people that would heed the call of God to repentance. The world was destroyed by water and Noah's family then began to swiftly replenish the earth. But over time man drifted almost completely away from God again until there were only tiny pockets of people that feared the Lord.

This is a tragic fact, yet the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him (II Chron. 16:9). God found such a man in Abram and called him out of Ur of the Chaldees into the land that He swore unto him.

God Returning Among Men

God appeared to Abraham and started a process by which He would slowly bring man back into fellowship with Him on a large scale. God had to deal with man's sin problem on the one hand and a rebellious nature on the other. Men typically seek a 'personal peace' and want to be left alone to do their own will unthwarted. But from time to time throughout the Old Testament God would find a person whose heart is perfect towards Him and would seek to reveal Himself.

Abraham was such a man. Abraham built altars and became a praying man. He sought the face of God in the mountain and from place to place. It was his desire to please God and do what was right. Abraham's nephew Lot, on the other hand, pitched his tent towards Sodom and filled his heart and mind with the vexing torments of other people's sins. God could never be at rest in such a person's life. So Lot never knew the closeness of fellowship with God that Abraham knew. He wanted a little bit of compromise in his life and God could not walk with him as a friend as He did with Abraham.

Lot could have chosen the path Abraham took. He could have shared in his altar experiences. But Lot wanted just enough Egypt to safely keep God on retainer, but never to have a close relationship with Him as did Abraham. Lawyers in our times are prepaid to be on retainer so they will come running when they are needed. This is how many people treat God. Lot was no different. He wanted to keep God at a safe distance so he could live in compromise.

Over time Abraham would have a promised son named Isaac and Isaac would have Jacob (Israel). Lot's life ended in disaster beyond words. The consequence of his compromise would be felt for generations. Each of these men had to come to their own personal decision to serve God. The God of their father's had to become their God.

Jacob (Israel) had 12 sons that became the 12 Tribes of Israel. Most of these sons bore many children and did not walk in the way of their father Jacob, but Joseph feared the LORD and God showed Himself strong through him. The 12 Tribes of Israel were slaves in Egypt 400 years and multiplied into the hundreds of thousands. They remembered the God of their fathers and cried out to Him. God raised up a deliverer in Moses. With a mighty outstretched arm God delivered all of the children of Israel from Pharaoh and Egypt. At first they seemed to be happy to go, but soon they began to grumble and complain.

God cannot rest in an environment of unthankfulness and He will bring swift judgment. If He stays he has to judge the sin. If He does not deal with the sin then His unique presence has to leave. God drew very near to Israel when Moses went up on the mountain. He came down and his face was glowing with the radiance of God's glory. This was their opportunity. Did the people line up to see Moses' face? Did they long to look upon him with awe and wonder savoring every glimpse of God's majesty? Did they ask Moses' what it was like to be with God or perhaps they could get permission from God to come up? No on all counts. In fact, they tried to cover his face to shield themselves from any remembrance of God. They would accept the book, but they did not want God near.

When Moses came to the Mountain and God was seeking to draw near to his people once again- the people found out that they did not really want their God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:49

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 9 (This IS Eternal Life)

I have tried to establish a backdrop for the question, "How do I become a Christian?" From a biblical perspective, the question really is, "How do I become a place of God's rest?" The religious people in the New Testament did not get this. It is a critical point. To miss this is to miss the very purpose of the question itself.

What is Eternal Life? Is it to be saved from the wrath of God? Is it a promise of blessings in this life and the next? Is it str

eets of gold and mansions bright? Jesus answers the question in John 17, As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Men don't mind religion so much, because religion is worship in the absence of God. This is the crux of the message Steven preached in Acts 7. God desired to draw near to his people, but they would not. He desired to rule and reign preparing them for even greater glory in Acts 2. But they could not handle even a slight nearness to God. It is a sad commentary, but common among men, that they used the hypocrisy of Samuel's sons as an excuse to usher in a king in Israel.

This would mark God's ongoing departure from Israel. He laments this fact in conversation with the prophet in I Samuel 8. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

God was trying to draw near and the people were pushing Him away. Yet they still wanted to retain their identity as His people. They wanted to be known as the people of the book, but God wanted them to be the people of the God of the book. There is a great difference. They were OK so long as God stayed in the Tabernacle or the Temple, but when Christ came walking the earth as the living Temple of God they rose up to destroy that Temple. And this is the tragedy of the human condition, men and women do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They resist God on every hand even under the pretense of serving Him.

Steven quoted directly from Isaiah 66:1,2 and put his finger on the point of controversy God had with those religious people. God was not interested in dwelling in a Temple. What fellowship has God with the gold and wood that those places were built from? Had not His hand made all of those things? Was not heaven His throne and the earth His footstool? He created the raw materials that they made the Temple with. Has not my hands made all these things?, He asked. God did not fellowship with the materials when they were in the ground and He did not fellowship with them once man fashioned them into a dwelling place for Him.

To this man will I look, God said. This is what Acts 2 is all about. God was taking up residence in those that were willing to turn to Christ in sincere repentance and faith; and to cease striving with the Holy Ghost so He could come in to them and rest. They needed the well spring of Sin dealt with in them individually so God could dwell there. They needed to cease grieving the Holy Spirit by stopping entertaining things that offend Him. We have an entire Old Testament to demonstrate to us how easy it is to grieve the Holy Spirit when we entertain sin and compromise.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:50

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 10 (The Destiny of the Damned)

The saddest thing I think about God's solemn warnings and the host of examples given to us in scripture of the destiny of the lost is that folk have endless means of distracting their minds from pondering these facts. They refuse to allow the reality of God's warning to weigh in on their decision making process. They do this by distracting themselves of death and judgment.

TOPHET (The First Picture of Hell)

It might help to pause a moment and interject an important truth about why people yield to sin- seemingly blind and deaf to the breadth and length and depth and height of the future far reaching consequences of their actions. There was a fire pit outside Jerusalem known historically as the Valley of Hinnom (later renamed Gehenna). It was the mass grave for ancient Israel's enemies that burned continually. It was the trash dump outside Jerusalem in the time of Jesus where worms would eat through the carcasses and garbage as it burned day and night.

In ancient Israel it was the place where idol worshippers would bring their firstborn sons to sacrifice to the god Molech. In some cases it was a fire pit that the mothers and fathers would throw their infant offspring in to. In other times there was a brazen image that was hollowed out and a fire lit inside. As its outstretched arms began to glow red these devilish parents would place their babies to roast the skin off their bodies and burn to death. Even as deranged and lust filled for

status and success (for this is why they sacrificed to Molech) as these idolaters were, they would still be troubled by the horrific screams of the babies.

To deal with this some inventor of evil suggested a strategy to beat drums and play music to drown out the screams. Hence the place was first called Tophet- which means "the beating of drums." And this is the first picture we have of the place we know as HELL- Drums drowning out the screams that would prick the conscience and sway a person's judgment. Drown is any VOICE of reason that would take hold of the mind and draw it back to its senses.

Satan: The Ultimate Percussionist

Did Adam ever think that his actions would set his children on a course for Hell? The lies of Satan, that formidable percussionist drowned the sound of their consciences in a cadence of lies. Had he been able to see for even the slightest moment the finality of his actions—surely he would have chosen otherwise. Satan has a myriad of means with which to drown out the conscience of men- to distract them from the screams of both their own future burning souls and their children. The ROAR that offsets the voice of conscience and the prodding of the Holy Spirit is growing louder as new means (devices) of distracting men's minds are created.

The Wisdom of Preparing Hell

One great picture of this future quarantine is in our Lord's use of the Greek name Gehenna. This was a perpetually burning burial pit for the decaying bloated corpses of the enemies of Israel. Gehenna was known in the Hebrew tongue as the, "Valley of Hinnom" (Matt. 5:28, 29). This was formerly Tophet. In the pits at Gehenna the fire purified and destroyed the disease that could potentially be spread by diseased dead bodies.

Sin is like a plague and God will not only punish Satan and all of his sinful angels and sinful human followers, but He will protect once and for all the faithful angels and the redeemed saints from anything sinful that could defile them (Revelation 21:27). Nothing that could harm or defile will be allowed in heaven. This is one of the great expressions of God's love towards us.

The means by which Sin could spread is temptation and temptation implies a 'tempter'. All tempters will be shut up and sealed off in Hell forever and ever. Who can question the wisdom of such a procedure? No one will remain that could possibly lead the creation in some rebellion or deceive them into disobeying God. Gone forever will be Sin and the terrible suffering and sorrow that it brings. Sin is like a flesh eating disease that eats away and destroys God's perfect creation and creative order. Sin corrupts. Sin destroys and destroys mercilessly.

Sin must be contained, destroyed and then remediated like mold or poison; Sin is the ultimate 'hazardous substance'. God will deal sharply and wisely to eliminate sinners and sin and the suffering they cause. He will reestablish heaven as a place of His rest purged of anything that could defile and destroy. This is why, "that though there are a million roads into Hell there is not one road out." (Ravenhill)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:51

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 11 (You must Be Born Again)

God created man as a tripartite being. This simply means that man is a spirit that lives in the body making him/her a living soul. The body has its contact in the physical world, but the spirit gives us contact with the spiritual world. When a person is born they are spiritually dead. This means that we are born separated from God's Holy Spirit. This is man's primary problem. This is why man cannot rightly reflect God's nature. Man can be taught to keep God's law with consequences of disobedience in view, but that is not the same as doing them by nature. Again, this problem can be traced to the Garden of Eden when Sin entered the world. This is a spiritual problem.

The lampstand of the human spirit

There is a wonderful illustration of this from the book of Proverbs where we read, "The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, Searching all his innermost parts." (Proverbs 20:27) You will notice that the passage did not say that the spirit of man

n is the 'light' of the Lord. This is because the spirit of man is the lamp stand itself; it is not the fire. It is the place from which man is connected with the spiritual world; but the spirit that 'burns' upon that lamp stand is the essential nature of the person. So the question becomes what is the spirit or the 'fire' that is burning on that lamp stand? The spirit was designed to be the lamp stand of light from within that lightened the whole inner man with the light of God's presence.

But that 'Fire' went out when Adam and Eve fell in the Garden and a new flame (spirit) was received into man. Ephesians 2 calls this spirit- "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." (Eph 2:2) This spirit makes one a child of wrath because it fills the body, heart and mind with darkness. That is, God is not present to empower the person to will and to do His good pleasure.

Some people when afforded the opportunity to experience the true light of God's Spirit refuse it and love the darkness (John 3). Why? Because they love their evil deeds and the light of God's presence always challenges the evil. The Light of God exposes and reproves sin. But the unsaved have a spirit of darkness- the exact opposite of what God intended. This is why the whole world lies in darkness because the light that is in them is darkness, and it is a great darkness. (Matt. 6:23) God wants to establish His Fire upon the Lamp stand of our spirit and make it once again the candle of the Lord that God intended it to be. This is how God makes us lights in the world.

Rebirth- a Changing of the Flame

By way of simple illustration one is Born Again when God extinguishes the old flame of darkness and lights the lamp with His Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament there was a Fire that was only to be used for God's service. Any other fire was 'strange' or 'common' fire. God kindled that fire and it had to be maintained by the priests so that it NEVER went out. When the Fire of God came down to consume the sacrifice the Shekinah Glory of God filled the Temple. Where there is no Fire there is no Glory. Where there is no glory there is no change into the likeness of Christ.

Israel did not want to see the Glory of God. They did not want God to draw near. In simple terms they did not want the Fire of God. Nadab and Abihu offered 'common' fire before the Lord and were judged immediately. They are typical of folk that want to serve God in their own strength and energy. They offer the Lord their own fire and not the Fire of God. This is why all of man's righteousness is as filthy rags to God. They were not produced by the Holy Spirit. This is very important. God will only accept genuine works and these are those produced as 'fruit' of the Holy Spirit.

The children of Israel wanted an earth bound religion that looked like the real thing but God's manifest presence was not there. They wanted the gatherings and the singing and the speaking- but they wanted to offer it all with what the bible calls Strange Fire. This is man's own human energies. This is the fire that spreads darkness- because Jesus said it was a light that be darkness. The true Fire of God will cleanse our lives. It will not leave us the same. It will burn up the chaff of compromise. It will leave us utterly burning for Him. This is not a cheap imitation of the nature of God, this is the nature of God working in us by the Holy Spirit.

Until man becomes dead to Sin and alive unto God it is impossible to yield the fruit of the Spirit. You cannot train a person to yield a particular fruit any more than you can train a tree to yield a particular fruit. It brings forth after its own kind. If you want to change the fruit you have to first change the root. For man this means he/she has to die to the Old Man and be reborn in the New Man. The spirit that now works in the children of disobedience must be supplanted by the Holy Spirit that works in man both to will and to do God's good pleasure. Men are born of their father the Devil, performing his lusts, but at rebirth men and women do by nature those things that are contained in the Law of God. A man with a nature to serve God does not need constrained by the Old Covenant law system because they naturally please God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 8:52

The Gospel of God's Great Love

Part 12 (The WEIGHT of an Individual's Crimes Against God)

Man before becoming born again is at enmity with God. This does not mean that God desires to be the enemy of man, it is a consequence of Adam's sin in the Garden and man's ongoing sinfulness. God is holy and righteous and must judge sin. This is a terrible truth.

God gave man a conscience as we mentioned in a previous section. God expects man to walk in the truth that he/she knows. The conscience makes man aware of God's will (as best as the person knows it) and 'pricks' the heart as a reminder

er not to do otherwise. there are basic things that man knows is right and wrong. This is the law of God written on the heart from birth.

Every Sin is Counted and Recorded

Sin is defined by James as knowing to do good and doing it not. Sin is transgression of the known will of God. From childhood people disregard their conscience and walk in their own ways. They do wrong and they know better. God holds man accountable for these actions. We gain insight into this from Solomon that writes:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Eccl. 12)

Notice the words 'every'. This means that nothing will escape the eye of God and all is being recorded for final judgment. God deals with man lovingly, but at last when man has rejected God he/she will meet not a loving Savior, but a Just Judge at the Great White Throne Judgment. This will be the most terrible day of all the ages. Can you imagine the record? Can you imagine God beginning to mete out the just repayment of each and every sin? the writer to the Hebrews warns us again:

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; (Hebrews 2:1-3)

Notice the word 'every' again. Sin is a crime against God. He is the primary offended party in any Sin (Psalm 51). Every transgression and disobedience will be weighed in a balance and repaid to the sinner. This is a terrible truth. What compounds the sins is the circumstances surrounding them. the more of God's will that a person knows the more accountable they are. To whom much is given shall much be required. So the punishment will be determined also by the 'light' that a person has. How terrible will it be for those that have trodden under foot the Son of God? How awesome will the judgments be for those that knew better and resisted the Holy Spirit's prickings (conviction) day after day? How dreadful will it be when God exposes the countless times that he dealt with a sinner and they neglected so great salvation.

Hebrews 2 is telling us that there will be no escape. There will be no escape or mercy for those that through great knowledge and privilege have shunned the Gospel, aggravating their crimes, heaping unto themselves sin in spite of God, his word, his ministers, and His personal reminders and dealings.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 9:18

SECTION II For By Grace Are You Saved Through Faith
The Gospel of God's Great Love
Part 1 (Only God Can Provide Our Covering)

God looks upon the hearts of men. We know this from Isaiah 66:2, For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

God gives the qualities He looks for in verse 2, as a broken and contrite spirit and trembles at God's word. This is not a broken (poor) spirit or contrite spirit or trembles at God's word. This is a math problem; poor spirit + contrite spirit + trembles at God's word = God's attention. God's word is God's will. This means that both the disposition of the person and their willingness to obey God mark a person as someone that God will look to for fellowship. It is not enough to tremble, the devils believe and tremble (James 2:19). There must be a disposition of humility that cries out to God for help and a 'follow through' with obedience when instruction from God comes.

Adam and Eve immediately tried to take the consequences of sinning into their own hands. They did not cry out. They did not bother waiting on God for direction or instruction. This is the terrible reality of sin. They were like a ship tossed in treacherous uncharted waters under the cover of night without a light or a compass. When they saw their nakedness they were surely afraid; but fear surely had near paralyzed them when they heard God coming. Zophar in the book of Job stated, "For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear." Men have always understood that sin causes timidity, especially before God.

What did they do? They took their condition into their own hands. Man sinned, but God would have to fix the problem. Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness. This is as far from sufficient as the east is from the west. Can a fig leave do what only the blood of Christ could do? I can imagine no greater contrast than this, but this is man's settled state; this is man's solution to man's problem. Man would not cry out to God for help; so God came looking for

man.

From Glory To Garments

Man is the only creation of God that needs clothing. God wanted to be man's clothing, and He was in the beginning. The loss of God's Glory would come with a seemingly simple sin; but the recovery of that Glory would only come with an unthinkably difficult act of obedience. Fig leaves and filthy rags are all man could muster to cover his/her nakedness. If man was going to be recovered, God would have to make provision.

Nakedness is the outward evidence that man is sinful. The scripture speaks of the 'shame' of man's nakedness. God is good and there is a reason for His departure. Adam realized he was naked and hid himself from God clothed in fig leaves. He had lost that precious face to face relationship and his conscience smote him unto down cast eyes. God brought Adam and Eve skins to clothe themselves with. Adam was a wise man. He knew that no creature could lose its covering and live.

"It is very likely that the skins out of which their clothing was made were taken off animals whose blood had been poured out as a sin-offering to God; for as we find Cain and Abel offering sacrifices to God, we may fairly presume that God had given them instructions on this head; nor is it likely that the notion of a sacrifice could have ever occurred to the mind of man without an express revelation from God. Hence we may safely infer, 1. That as Adam and Eve needed this clothing as soon as they fell, and death had not as yet made any ravages in the animal world, it is most likely that the skins were taken off victims offered under the direction of God himself, and in faith of Him who, in the fullness of time, was to make an atonement by his death." (Adam Clarke)

Adam and Eve are learning a terrible lesson and a swift one indeed, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 9:44

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love

SECTION II

Part 2 Without Faith it is Impossible to Please God

Ron Bailey has defined faith as, "Right response to revelation." The definition of sin would then be, "Wrong response to revelation." The first act of faith we find recorded after the fall of man is the story of Abel and his offering to God. Hebrews 11 tells us, By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

How was this an act of faith? We know that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Adam was faithful to pass along God's instruction to Eve concerning the Tree of Knowledge, it is reasonable to believe he also taught his sons about the offering for covering God provided in making them skins. Yet, as we will find in Abel and Cain there was a willingness in the one to be 'taught', but the other was not willing. This is important, because these are the beginnings of a long standing biblical concept of being a 'disciple'. A disciple is one that is being taught, but this means the person has to be teachable and walk in what they have learned.

Jeremiah 6:16 reads, Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

This is the attitude of one that is willing to be subject to the Teacher on the one hand and one that is not on the other. Will we or will we not walk in what God reveals? Ask God's way and then walk in it. This is more than head knowledge, it is desire for revelation that we might respond- and this response is 'faith'.

God 'looked' towards Abel's offering, but to Cain He did 'not look' (Genesis 4:5). Recall Isaiah 66:2- "To this man will I look... that TREMBLES at my word." This is the attitude of a disciple. This is what makes a person ready to be restored back into fellowship with God because they make themselves a place of God's rest. This is what Steven pointed out at the end of Acts 7. The Children of Israel received the Law at the hands of angels and did not keep it. They would not walk in the teaching and besides that they were resisting the Holy Ghost.

Was Cain mistreated by God? Will not the Judge of All the Earth do right? If we respond rightly to what God has revealed as His will it is 'faith', but if not it is 'sin'. We have to have a heart to obey God. In Genesis 4:7 God asks Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." To 'do well' is to rightly respond to what was heard (faith cometh by hearing); anything else is sin- the opposite of faith. This is the first real picture of the basis on which God would 'accept' or 'look to' man and in turn

rn make him/her a place of His rest (Isaiah 66:2).

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/6/28 13:43

Excellent article series so far, I have archived all the articles to date in the article section and here: <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=category&cid=113>

And have edited the first post and put all the links to the articles. I think this is worthy to be archived in such a way for easier reading and printing and reference. Thank you brother for sharing with us these divine thoughts.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/28 16:14

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love

Section II

Part 3 The BEGINNING and the ENDING of Wisdom

It would be helpful to pause a moment and establish a foundational truth. Often ministers teach and preach and wonder why the teachings seem to have little or no effect on the hearers. Returning to this one foundational truth may well revolutionize ministry in our times.

Zac Poonen has rightly pointed out that every teaching has its beginnings. A person must learn the sequence of numbers (count) before they can learn to add and subtract. One must learn their ABC's before they can learn to read. Understanding God is no different. The fear of the Lord is the "ABC's and 123's" of life. It is the beginning of knowledge and understanding. Nothing makes sense to a hearer without this 'first' thing. This is kindergarten truth.

Though the subject of the fear of the LORD comes as the 7th verse in Proverbs, it is the very first teaching after the introduction. It is "Proverb number one" both in sequence and importance. It is the 'alpha' of understanding, the first truth that must be firmly established in our hearts.

When God gave Moses and the people the 10 COMMANDMENTS in Exodus 20, He came down in an awesome demonstration of His power and glory. We read in verse 18, 19; And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. The people needed a 'demonstration' of the AWESOMENESS of the God they were serving. This divine manifestation of God is known theologically as a 'theophany'.

It is easy to press God from the mind when He is not near. It is a light thing to entertain weak and bizarre notions of who God is when He's not around. But when God truly shows up in His regal majesty, people and devil's TREMBLE (Psalms 99:1, James 2:19).

There are several instances in scripture when people's lives were changed by a revelation of the MAJESTY of God. Arguably the oldest book known to man is the Book of Job. It would only make sense, as Job is a book about the fear of God. Job started out fearing that his children or family had 'cursed God' in their hearts. His wife did this openly. Job, like most of us, are in 'fear' for the souls and well being of our family. He tells us in Chapter 3, For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

The fear of the Lord is mentioned specifically three times in Job and is touched on in several other places. Could it be that God was trying to teach man something about Himself? Understand that man needs to know who his Creator is; we need to know about this God. Abraham called him, The JUDGE of all the Earth." This means that God is the one that will someday make the final decision as to where each and every human being from Adam until Armageddon spends eternity. This ought to seize and retain our attention and be ever before our eyes.

Job came by experience into a divine revelation of God. After thirty plus chapters of conversation God breaks the silence. Did God speak to him from a butterfly or bird some place? Imagine Job parting company with his former worst fears as the only one worthy to be feared darts upon the scene in the form of a whirlwind (tornado). In the part of the country I am from there are more tornadoes than anywhere in the world. You can trust this experience, only news of a potential therm

onuclear blast sends fear into a person or community like an approaching tornado.

God begins to hand Job as it were an 'exam' to test His omnipotence. After about the second chapter and multiple mind bending questions God hands him two more chapters. At last Job scored a flat 'zero' on the test. He did not know a single answer to one of God's questions; but it was the greatest educational experience of His life. He learned to sing his ABC's and count to 123... on that day. And for those that will engage Job in his experience and dare to put himself/herself in Job's shoes reading that 38th to 41st chapter we might be well on our way to fulfilling the first semester of Kindergarten and exclaim with him;

I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of thine ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Solomon taught us that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. Job echoes this point. Should we end there? You will find it interesting that Solomon returns to this point as the final words as it were from his death bed..., "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether it be good or evil." The fear of the Lord is the alpha and omega of knowledge it is the beginning and ending of wisdom.

Re: The GOSPEL of God's Great Love -RWurtz - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/6/29 9:08

Quote:

-----A dear brother once said that, "God has chosen to reveal to us information about the angels on a need to know basis."

Great truth. Cannot but think to broaden that beyond angels to any number of matters ...

Looking forward to reading through all of this.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/29 14:06

Quote:

----- A dear brother once said that, "God has chosen to reveal to us information about the angels on a need to know basis."

Great truth. Cannot but think to broaden that beyond angels to any number of matters ...

Just an FYI that statement was a nugget I picked up in conversation Bro. Ron Bailey. ;-)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/6/30 21:39

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love

Section II

Part 4 When JEHOVAH draws NEAR

There is a concept we must grasp if we are to ever appreciate fully the love of God; this concept, as the old timers called it, is the WISDOM of God's requirements. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. There is wisdom in the instruction of God's word that is essential to our existence. Love requires an order and a certain method of behavior. Man falls grossly short of walking according to his/her design as human beings but this pattern will not be possible in eternity. As Solomon tells us, good understanding giveth favor; But the way of the transgressor is hard. (Proverbs 13:15) God is closing the 'way of transgressors' in Revelation 21:27.

God had been striving with man since Genesis 3 to get man to walk in the right way. It is odd that many centuries have passed since God's word has been revealed and yet many still refuse to walk in what is right. To kick against God's word is to do so at your own peril; not just in the world to come, but in this life also. What a person sows- they will reap. This is

the unalterable law of life. It is as sure as the law of gravity.

This is very important to consider because someday God is going to put an end to all rebellion in His Creation. Hell, the district of the damned, will serve as the cosmic quarantine for the rebellious and disobedient; those who's names are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Every knee is going to bow and every tongue confess; willingly or forcedly. We read in Luke 19:27 the finality of those that refuse the LORDSHIP of Jesus Christ, But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. Satan had rebelled against God and introduced his destructive rebellion to humanity. Satan was no longer fit for heaven and was cast out. Why? Because Satan corrupted his sanctuaries and was an offense unto God and His faithful creations. If we are to be fit for Heaven we are going to have to learn obedience.

When God is near disobedience is judged SWIFTLY

God is not just holy, He is HOLY, HOLY, HOLY. Imagine how words are doubled in Hebrew for emphasis sake and then try to fathom what is being communicated when we hear that God is thrice Holy? Moses had his own 'first' real lesson about God on the backside of the wilderness where he heard, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." When God is near, judgment can be swift. Absolute obedience is a must.

Have you ever wondered why it seems that sinners seem to sin with impunity? Have you wondered why Nadab and Abihu were judged for offering strange fire, but yet other people sinned and were not judged? What about Uzzah and later Uzziah? What about Ananias and Sapphira? What about Herod in Acts 12:21? Notice the 'nearness' of God during these judgments. Was He not visiting the people or preparing to visit the people?

Uzzah is the prime example of why man must prepare himself/herself for God drawing near. People get strangely careless about the things of God. Perhaps as Uzzah, we have lost sight of the awesomeness of God and are in danger of missing a vital truth about our relationship to Him. Eternity will not be a place where folk take a flip attitude towards obeying God and keeping His order.

Man had been used to living their lives apart from God. They needed to learn the concept of holy as opposed to profane. One of the best definitions I have heard of holy is- 'separate' and 'other'. There is an 'otherness' about God that separates Him from common things. In fact, this is the definition of 'profane' to take something that is holy and treat it as common. Man did not recognize that many aspects of his existence were to be treated as 'sacred' and they were grossly degenerated. God would start the process of restoring a sense of 'sacredness' and 'otherness' to their profaned lives.

In Deuteronomy 33 we read,... from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. God gave the law because He loved the people. God would begin revealing to man a 'blueprint' for living that would prove in its final product to be impossible to improve upon. God is the designer. He has set forth an order to the creation. Any alteration from that order can only bring confusion, pain and suffering. It would seem that He will and must deal SWIFTLY when His unique presence is near.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/7/3 7:24

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love

Section II

Part 5 TODAY if you Will Hear His Voice

If you feel the tug of God's Holy Spirit upon your heart today there is yet hope. If your heart is yet tender enough to weep for your sins there is yet hope. But time has a way of hardening a rebellious sinner's heart until they are literally 'past feeling' (Ephesians 4:19). This is the terrible state of our times, multitudes are apathetic towards eternity and indifferent towards their own everlasting soul.

Like the Sun hardens the parched earth so also the Light of Christ hardens the rebellious heart. If we had a real sight of the infinite danger a sinner is in that is resisting the Holy Ghost no doubt we would tremble for them.

Man is a strange character. Many seem not to care whether they die in robes or rags so long as they can be their own Master. Satan dupes the damned into believing that rebellion against God is freedom, when in fact it is slavery to Sin. With this in mind Christians often think that if somehow God could bring about the right circumstances or bring a certain blessing a sinner will turn from his/her rebellion. Almost the same idea of propitiation, but directed towards man. If God could just find the 'right price' SURELY the man or woman will repent.

This is an awful consideration. How many have been restored to their families from prison cells promising God they would serve him and almost as soon as the bars close behind them and they smell their freedom- their mind turns away from God? What about sickness and disease? How often has God in His goodness raised a sinner from the throes of death and yet they did not repent? Perhaps William Henley captured the attitude of many in his poem INVICTUS that was penned from a hospital bed. Imagine the 1800's before anesthesia with their crude manner of surgery. Having had tuberculosis of the bone he had his foot amputated. From his hospital bed he penned the words:

INVICTUS (Latin for UNCONQUERED)

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of Circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of Chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

For the Sake of My BROTHERS!

It is sobering to think that hardness of heart cannot be pierced by miracles of healings or even resurrection so long as the person is bent on rebellion. How terrible were the words of our Lord as he told of the Rich Man in hell. After realizing that there was no hope for him, not even a drop of water upon his parched tongue, he begged father Abraham to send Lazarus back from the DEAD to warn his brothers.

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:30)

Today if you will hear his voice harden not your heart. God's Spirit will not always strive with man. What promise do you have of tomorrow? Dwight L. Moody was preaching in Cleveland in the 1870's and told of a man that stood in one of his meetings during the altar call. Having prayed for him for some time then went down to inquire whether the man was ready to surrender to Christ. The man looked around and told Mr. Moody that since his friend was NOT there he stood up, but that he was afraid his friend would make fun of him and mock him for surrendering to Christ. He said that he cannot turn to Christ now because of his friends.

Moody continued to deal with this man until one day he became agitated and told Moody to worry about his own soul. Some time later the man took terribly sick and Moody was called to come and pray. He made a promise to God that if God would raise him up he would serve God. God spared the man. Moody went to visit and the man said he could NOT serve Christ in spite of the promise but that he would move to Michigan and start a new life where there were none around to mock him for serving Christ. Moody told him that if he could not serve Christ in Cleveland he would not serve Him in Michigan.

chigan. The man angrily sent Moody away.

Some weeks later Moody received a message to come quickly. The man had fallen ill again with the same sickness. When he arrived at the house he asked the wife if the man had called him. She answered, "No, I called you." The man did not want to see Moody though he was dying. He went into the room and the man turned his face to the wall. He began to exclaim that there was NO HOPE for him that he had rejected Christ several times and did not make good on the promise to serve Christ when he was sick before. The man's memory was filled with tormenting thoughts of all the times he had rejected Christ because of his friends.

Moody tried to speak mercy to the man, but he would not. Moody tried to pray but the prayers went no farther than his head. All the while the man is telling Moody, "There is no hope for me, I have rejected Christ. Pray for my family, but not me!" One last time Moody took hold of this man's cold hand to bid him farewell as he knew that unless he repented he would likely never see the man again this or the other side of eternity. His final words as Moody left the room were, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended and I'm still not saved."

The next morning Moody paid a visit to the home and was met by the wife. He had passed during the night. "What did he say? Did he ever turn to Christ." The sorely distressed wife answered, "His lip was quivering at last and he bid me closer to hear him. His last words were faint, but yet the same, 'The harvest is passed, the summer is ended and I'm still... not... saved...'"

(Moody Sermons in Cleveland 1878)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/7/5 13:35

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love

Section II

Part 6 The BLESSING of Repentance

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. (Acts 3:25, 26)

At a time when the Jews were looking for a messiah to come that would solve their political problems and establish the Kingdom to Israel, the Holy Spirit reveals the nature of the 'blessing' that God intended to send to the children of Abraham. So misguided were the Jews individually, and even the disciples, that after Jesus appeared to them for the last time they could not resist the question; Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? This is a political question. This is a great revelation of how 'out of sync' even the disciples could be with what God was doing in the earth.

When we ask the wrong questions it is likely we will also pray the wrong prayers. Why? The temptation of an evil and adulterous generation is to focus on the fleeting and temporal. People desire to be left alone to think what they want to think, feel what they want to feel and do what they want to do. And they do not care who gets hurt in the process. This is what Francis Schaffer calls "The idol of personal peace." But Jesus came to disrupt everyone's personal peace and get us thinking about eternity and being reconciled to our Creator.

Knowledge when it comes before the mind causes a person to 'feel'. If the knowledge that is presented does not jibe with one's personal peace they block it out or try to reject it. This is a curious thing. Unbelievers will sit on the edge of their seats waiting to hear some worthless information, but get out of sorts when they need to learn something that will actually 'benefit' them. They lust for forbidden knowledge, but reject the knowledge of God.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame. (Hosea 4:6,7)

Scripture uses the picture of being 'asleep' as a metaphor for people that are careless about their souls. (Romans 13:11, I Thess. 5:6, Luke 22:46) Sleep is a powerful thing and it is a powerful picture. When folk are asleep they do not like to be disturbed. The old timers used the concept of 'awakening sinners'. This can be dangerous, but it has to be done. The light of truth shines into the darkness where careless sinners sleep; where they don't want to be bothered.

The Greatest Blessing

The highest blessing that can be conferred upon people is to be turned from sin. Sin is the source of all woes, and if people are turned from that, they will be happy. Christ blesses no one in sin, or while loving sin, but by turning them from sin. (Barnes) God desired to reconcile man unto Himself, the ultimate blessing. And who can imagine one greater? It is the sad state of affairs in the human race, that though God was mindful of sinful man, sinful man did not like to retain God in his/her mind (Psalm 8:4, Romans 1:28). Man does not need more 'blessings' as he/she understands them, man stands in need of Christ.

If we mix metaphors for a moment, we see that careless sinners want to be left alone, but often they still want to be blessed. The blessings they seek are those that will help them be comfortable; like blankets and pillows to help them just 'sleep on'. Again we read, Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. The word here 'iniquities' is translated in all other places in the KJV as 'wickedness'. That is how God views the life of those that live according to their own way. To just 'sleep on' when God is trying to awaken is 'wickedness'.

People ask for blessings and rarely realize what they are asking. To ask God for a blessing is to ask Him for Himself. Before He can bless us with Himself He has to bless us with REPENTANCE. Yet people typically do not want God or even 'more' of God. They think that already have enough or even too much and they are not even started yet. Why? Their 'god' is their sleep- their 'personal peace'; it is the altar they give their bodies as a living sacrifice for. They present themselves to themselves as a living offering.

Christ came to turn us from Sin and keep us turned. An evil and adulterous generation focuses on the trivial temporal needs of the times and asks for a 'blessing' along those lines. God had an all together different plan. This is the blessing that God promised Abraham's Seed; Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. This is 'prosperity'.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/8/26 6:40

The GOSPEL of God's Great Love

Section II

Part 7 God's Determinations

God is determined that He will bring many sons unto glory and will not stop short of accomplishing that purpose. This is an awesome task. "Let us make man in our image and likeness," is a purpose God has not turned from; for there is no shadow of turning in God. Yet God is equally determined that salvation will be by Grace. Grace simply means God's loving kindness. God is love, is working to bring about a people that love and He will accomplish it by His loving kindness.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (Romans 4:16).

Abraham's story is our picture of God's grace and Abraham's faith. God called upon Abraham before Abraham called on the LORD. Because of His loving kindness alone (grace alone) Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees. Not because he was 'lovable' but because *God so loved*.

God's love is demonstrated by the fact that He loves even His enemies. This is why He calls them and this is why He strives with them. God's mercy stays His hand of judgment, but God's grace calls man to a higher plain that He could never attain in Himself. This is what God did with Abraham. God was calling Him out of the temporal and into the eternal.

What a wonderful picture! That God called Abraham out into a place to sojourn. He called him out of his earthly home and into a foretaste of his eternal home. This is a radical paradigm change. As if his thinking lifted off the earth and into the heavens Abraham began to see that God's loving kindness made him a stranger and pilgrim in the earth. How pitiable an existence he once lived? So He began to walk with God looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. This is the destiny of those that walk in the steps of Abraham. This is not our home. We do not trust this place and we do not love this place. We are looking for a city.