



# The Doctrines of the Redemption

David DePra

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**By David A. DePra**

## **Preface**

**It is important the each believer be grounded in sound Biblical doctrine. Central to sound Biblical doctrine are the doctrines of the Redemption. They are intended by God to bring us into a greater understanding and appreciation of Jesus Christ – Who dwells within each believer.**

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## **Chapter 1**

### **The Good News**

What is the gospel? -- What is the true good news of God? The good news is the revelation OF and a proclamation ABOUT a PERSON – Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The good news is that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to do for human beings what human beings could not do for themselves. And what was that? God sent Christ to deliver us all from sin through His death on the Cross, and He sent Christ to usher in a new creation through His resurrection. He sent Christ to die and be raised so that we could be restored back to God.

Before diving into the foundational nuts and bolts of the Redemption, it seems good to very briefly state the good news of Jesus Christ – for when everything is said and done – the gospel is a revelation of HIM, not only TO His people, but IN His people.

### **The Motive and Intent of God**

***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.  
(John 3:16-17)***

Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He left that position in heaven and became a man. Such was the sacrifice He made to even come to this earth – Jesus was the Word of God –

the only begotten Son of God – and God gave Him to us. This gift began when Jesus left the Father, and while remaining God, became a flesh and blood human being.

***Christ Jesus, who existing in nature and character as God, did not consider equality with God a prize to be grasped at and retained for Himself. But He emptied Himself, and took upon himself the state of a servant, and He as God came to be in the likeness of men. (Phil 2:6-10)***

***And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)***

So Jesus voluntarily left His place in heaven, and became a human being. This was accomplished when He was conceived by the Spirit of God through the virgin Mary through a divine miracle. The virgin birth was essential because it means that Jesus did not begin to exist when He was conceived in Mary. No. Rather, He preexisted as God and was supernaturally transferred into Mary's womb – now as a tiny life. This is the Immaculate Conception. This miracle conception made it possible for Him to be born as a human being, yet fully as the eternal Son of God. And since Jesus was born of a virgin, and not the product of human reproduction, it means He was not born of the fallen human race. He was born without a sin nature.

When Jesus was born of the virgin Mary into this world, that BEGAN His journey. He lived a

perfectly sinless life for over 33 years. The Bible calls Him, "The Lamb of God without blemish."

***For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. (Heb 4:15)***

***For God has made Jesus to be like sin for us, even though Christ knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2 Cor. 5:21)***

"For God so loved the world" – not the, "world of the elect," as the Calvinists falsely claim. Indeed, if that were true, then the gospel would not be good news at all for the non-elect – whom Calvinists say Christ did not die for, and who God never intended to save. No. God sent Jesus to die for ALL. But only those who believe are saved.

## **Death and Resurrection**

At the end of His sinless life, and at the end of the three and one-half years of ministry, Jesus offered Himself up to the Cross for us all.

***And being seen and known as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

Jesus Christ did NOT die for an elect few. Jesus died for every human being that ever has, or ever will, live – and His Redemption paid for every sin that has ever been committed by every human being. Therefore, God offers Christ to ALL – no matter the sin, and no matter how old they are. "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be

saved." The good news is that Jesus died for ALL – and God invites all to come to Christ. But only those who do come and believe are saved.

Not only did Jesus win for us the forgiveness of God for all sin, but He also made possible for us to be DELIVERED from all bondage to sin. This is possible because Jesus did die FOR us – but He did die FOR US so that we could die and be raised to newness of life IN HIM.

***I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)***

***Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but***

***alive unto God through Jesus Christ our  
Lord. (Rom 6:3-11)***

So through His death, Jesus delivers us from all sin. But there is even more. Jesus delivers us from all the damage sin has done. Are you a person who has been hurt by your own sin or the sins of others – damaged? Jesus died to restore you. Some of those things take time. But there is redemption for everything in His Blood.

**Christ in You**

When a person sees the Truth of the gospel and puts their faith in Jesus Christ, God gives them the gift of eternal life – yes, but more than that - - God gives them Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ comes to dwell in those who receive Him – He becomes one with our human spirit. This is how we are, "planted into His death and resurrection," – Christ dwells at one with us in spirit. But because of that, everything He has done on the Cross, and everything He is through His resurrection, is likewise given to us in Christ. Thus, Jesus Christ in us IS our salvation – He is our life. Christianity is, "Christ in us, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)

The good news of the gospel states that you and I do not need to do anything to be saved except, "Repent and believe on Christ." That means that we must realize we are lost sinners, and desire to forsake our lives and any sin into the hands of God through Christ. Basically, it means that we cry out to God in need for salvation. It means that we come to the Cross and commit our entire trust for salvation to Jesus Christ and what He has done. We cannot earn salvation, and there is

nothing we can do to KEEP saved. In fact, according to the Bible, good works are the outcome of salvation, and not the means of earning it.

***For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10)***

There are a couple of other places in the Bible where the gospel is clearly stated, either in part, or in whole:

***This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tim 1:15)***

***Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand....for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: (1 Cor. 15:1-4)***

This is the simple gospel. For those who embrace it, what follows is everything that is found in Jesus Christ.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Justification by Faith**

The best place to start in discussing the doctrines of the Redemption is with, "justification by faith." Paul's discussion in Romans 3 on JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH is primary Christian doctrine. It reveals the legal basis for the justification of the sinner.

First, there's this term, "justification." What does that mean? It means, "to be declared right before God." Now, that of course is nothing more than saying that God declares you RIGHTEOUS. But what does, "righteous," or, "righteousness," mean? Well, "righteousness," in essence, means to not only be right BEFORE God -- in His eyes -- but righteousness really means to be right FOR God. It is one thing to be right BEFORE God, but it is another thing to be right FOR Him -- because if you're right FOR HIM, how many understand that you can live with Him and fellowship with him? So when God talks about righteousness, He is talking about being of a nature that is able to fellowship and live with Him. You're right FOR Him -- and justification is a declaration unto that end: You are justified, or made, or declared right FOR GOD -- and of course it is on the basis of Jesus Christ.

Now, therein of course, is where we have our doctrine of, "justification by faith." And what is the doctrine of justification by faith? Well, the doctrine of justification by faith states that if we put our faith in Jesus Christ, God IMPUTES to Christ all of OUR sin, and God imputes to us all of HIS righteousness. And there's an exchange there. And so is the imputation to the believer of

the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And Paul talks a lot about that and explains a lot of that in Romans. And as far as it goes, it is the truth. Justification by faith is a very true LEGAL explanation of how God is able to declare a sinner righteous because of Jesus Christ.

Now, you will notice that I use the term LEGAL. Paul works at explaining the redemption from a legal standpoint, because he needs to establish what God is doing as being moral, and legal. It helps us to understand what got accomplished through his Son through His death and resurrection.

So -- as I noted -- the doctrine of justification by faith -- wherein God IMPUTES to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is true from a LEGAL standpoint. But it does not go far enough. God does not merely IMPUTE to us LEGALLY the righteousness of His Son -- what God really does is IMPART to us Jesus Christ HIMSELF -- to live IN US, and to BE our life. How many see that THAT is true justification by faith? That's true righteousness.

I Corinthians 1:30 states that God has made Christ to be unto us righteousness. How many see that that's more than just having the righteousness of Jesus LEGALLY IMPUTED to you? No, Christ IS our righteousness. If Christ is in you, then you are righteous with HIS righteousness. Yes -- but more than that -- He IN YOU IS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Now, I don't know about you, but that is an incredible blessing to realize that. To realize that

this isn't simply a matter, so to speak, of God stamping you on the forehead with a big rubber stamp, "righteous" -- because of the death of Jesus. It isn't simply a matter of that. It is a matter of Christ in you who is the righteousness of God. And because He is, that's an eternal perfect righteousness -- with which you are one, because when you were saved, you were joined to the Lord and made one spirit with him. (I Cor. 6:17)

And so justification by faith is the IMPARTATION of Jesus Christ HIMSELF. We are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him, and He is our living, ever present, eternal, unchangeable righteousness -- completely independent of anything about US or anything that we do.

### **Righteousness Apart From Works**

Now, Paul is going to say that here, starting in verse 21 -- and remember, in Romans, Paul does initially -- at least until he gets over the chapter 6, 7, and 8 -- work at the redemption in legal terms. But the truth, in principle, is here, as far as, "Christ in us," starting in verse 21. He says there, "But NOW the righteousness of God, completely apart from law-keeping" -- keeping with the picture, there, in the Greek, is a picture of a CHASM apart -- and so what he is saying here is that, "the righteousness of God, completely apart from -- completely dependent of any law keeping -- is manifested, and it's witnessed" -- in type and shadow, as I said, in the old covenant -- "by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Jesus Christ" -- because that's how we

abide in Christ as our righteousness – “unto all, upon all them that believe. For there is no difference -- ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

And so again we need to nail this and get it firmly established in our thinking and understanding: That if Jesus Christ dwells in you and I, and we are joined and made one spirit with Him -- if we are saved -- and if we are saved He DOES he does dwell in us -- if that's the case, HE IS the righteousness of God in us. He is our righteousness -- and Christ as our righteousness is absolutely independent of any law keeping or lack thereof on our part. In other words, if we keep all the laws in the world, it does not add to Christ as our righteousness. If we break every law under the sun, it does not subtract from the fact that Jesus Christ is our righteousness. We do not pop in and out of Christ if we are saved. We do not, through the works of the law, either enhance or subtract from Christ as our righteousness. He is not dependent upon us to be our righteousness; He is that regardless -- because He's in us by grace.

We have got to understand this -- that it all comes back to Jesus Christ IN US. Now, what we need to do, it states in verse 22: We need to abide in Him by faith as the only righteousness of God that there is -- the only righteousness of God we will ever have. We need to believe and trust and depend on him as that. Now, if we don't, He is still our righteousness – it's just that it is not going to do us any good. Like Paul says in

Galatians 5, I believe: "Christ is of no effect to you who would be under the law." And the Galatians were saved. He didn't say Christ walked away from them, or even that they walked away from Christ. No. They were standing aloof from Him. Christ was in them, but their faith was not in Him as their righteousness. It was in their works.

### **The Law Exposes**

And so this is a foundational Truth about the righteousness of God that is in Jesus Christ. If Christ is in you, He is the only righteousness that you will ever have, or that you will ever need. We need to see that Truth. Now, we are NOT going to see it unless our UNrighteousness is exposed -- or unless our self righteousness is exposed. Now, a lot of people don't realize that self righteousness is SIN. Self righteousness is unbelief. Self-righteousness, therefore, ironically IS Unrighteousness. And the law of God, if we are open and true to God -- as much as know to be -- will expose all of this about us when it's true.

Now that exposure may take years, but God who promises us that he'll lead us into the truth, will lead us to THIS Truth. And that is what the purpose of the law on the Old Covenant was -- and despite the fact that were not under the law or under the Old Covenant, how many understand that the law nevertheless still does do that job today? If you're somebody that has tried to make your self righteous through law keeping you may very well -- and I hope you have -- discovered how unrighteous you are. Because the more you

try to keep the law, the more ultimately the law will show you how unable you are to keep even the smallest point. But if that's happening -- rejoice -- because it's all unto the intention that you fall to your knees before Jesus as your righteousness.

So, in other words, if you gather all this up from verse 19, all the way through verse 24, what Paul is saying is that the law of God is there -- and what it's speaks it speaks, "that every mouth might be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." Because by the law comes the exposure of me as a sinner, and I'm left, if I'm seeing the Truth that the law speaks -- I'm left without any hope if I were to look to myself.

Now if that were the end of the story it would leave us all nowhere. We would be hopeless creations. And, of course, many supposed Christians feel that way. We feel like we are hopeless, and have no hope. But despite the fact that we are going to see our lost condition, and will, at times, feel a despair and a hopelessness -- that should not govern us -- because side by side with any conviction like that that God brings is going to be a hope in One who is other than ourselves: Jesus Christ.

And so we see that very often if we are LIVING in despair, it's because we haven't yet seen Christ. It is because we are not believing the way we should. And we need to seek God further for the Truth that sets us free from all of that.

## **All Unto Grace**

Now it takes years for most of us to straighten all this stuff out in our thinking because we're so preoccupied with ourselves. For example -- this goes hand-in-hand with what Paul says the law will do -- it's been my observation that for those who are under the law, usually there are two kinds of professing Christians that emerge from being under the law. And both, of course, are in error. The first kind is a Pharisee. These are the folks who try law-keeping to make themselves righteous, and they think that they have done it. The other kind are people who try to use law-keeping to make themselves righteous, and they are forever frustrated because they don't believe that they have done it. Now, what is the solution to that? Better law? No. The solution is to come into an inward realization of Jesus Christ -- the solution Paul gave in Galatians 4:19.

The whole purpose of the law was given and intended by God to bring man to an end of his own self; to bring man to an end of trying to make himself right for God. You get under the law, and even today, the law stands there and is doing this work. As soon as you approach what Paul calls, "a holy, just, and good," law -- as soon as you approach a law like that -- you're going to be proven to be unholy, unjust, and bad. And that's not a lie is it? The law will speak the Truth about you -- so that you will see that your only hope is to turn to Jesus Christ by grace through faith. This is the outcome that God intended for the law.

In fact, there is a bit of a type and shadow, even in that. You remember how John the Baptist, who was the last and the greatest prophet of the Old Covenant -- he was that -- he was as, "A voice crying in the wilderness -- to pave the way -- to prepare the way for the Lord." How many understand that this is exactly what Paul says the law was intended to do in each human heart? Paul says, in Galatians, "The law was a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ." How? By making us righteous enough for Christ? No. By showing us we can never be. By getting us on our knees and saying to God, "By thy grace oh Lord!" The law was a schoolmaster. John paved the way -- the Old Covenant can be said to have been that which paved the way for Jesus Christ the Savior. Again, NOT by making people righteous enough for God. No. The law exposed us as lost and unrighteous so that by faith we would come and receive Jesus Christ.

And so all this in verse 19 through 24 -- as I noted -- you gather it up: The law is going to speak the Truth -- that you and I have no hope in ourselves -- none whatsoever. The law is going to expose us dead sinners. But then he says there is a righteousness of God -- a Person named Jesus Christ -- Who is apart from law keeping; a righteousness that God gives us by grace in Jesus Christ -- a righteousness that in no way, shape, or form, is based on our works -- really a righteousness that is in no way based on anything about US.

You know, the Bible teaches that we are given the grace of God in Jesus Christ -- we are given Christ Himself -- fully independent of any works,

or anything about US. But then we're told once that's established that then the result; the fruit -- will be works. By grace, through faith, unto good works. (see Eph. 2:8-10) That's the Truth. Disturb that order, and get it wrong, and you will be under ANOTHER GOSPEL. Now, this righteousness that is a Person dwelling in you and I -- Who we abide in by faith -- it is witness to buy the law and the prophets -- and like I said, it's in there in type and shadow -- it is the righteousness of God which is by our faith in the Person who is the righteousness of God -- unto all and upon them believe.

So there you have in Romans 3 a tremendous description by the apostle Paul of the intent of God's law. Isn't it amazing how so many Christian people continue to think that the purpose of God's law was to give us a standard of holiness to live up to? I mean, the law is called, "holy, just, and good." Here we are reading that the law IS holy, just, and good, but because it is, it's going to expose us as being anything but -- so that by grace through faith..." But the key here is to understand that if Christ is in us and we are losing our life into His hands -- such that HE becomes our life -- then IN that Christ the righteousness of God will be made manifest in us and through us. It takes work; it takes a lifetime. But our righteousness IS Christ. It is just that simple, and it is no more complicated than that. But if we try to get a righteousness some other way, then we are, in fact, under a law, and we are in unbelief, and we are in error -- because there is no such thing.

## Chapter 3

### Reconciliation Unto God

***Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (II Cor. 5:17-21)***

The above passage can certainly be considered a summary of the gospel; a summary of the finished work of Jesus Christ – and what that means for humanity. And yet the good news contained in this passage is often either overlooked, or corrupted, by religious flesh. That is why it merits a close examination.

Paul begins by telling us exactly what a Christian person is: A Christian person is one who is IN CHRIST. Or, if you prefer, a Christian person is one in whom Christ dwells. This corresponds to his words to this same Corinthian church in his first letter – it is there that Paul tells us HOW Christ dwells in the believer:

***He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit  
(with Him). (I Cor. 6:17)***

So we see that the believers in one in spirit with the risen Christ. That is why He is our life; why we are alive with His life: He is THE LIFE, and if we are one with Him in spirit we are alive in Him – in other words, saved.

Paul tells us that this resurrection, spiritual union with Christ constitutes the NEW CREATION in Christ. Note that the believer is not, “acted upon,” and morphed INTO a new creation simply because of faith in Christ. Neither is a person a new creation only in a legal sense. No. The believer BECOMES and IS a new creation solely because of spiritual union WITH Christ – “if anyone is IN CHRIST they ARE a new creation.” This is, of course, equal to the NEW BIRTH.

Now, what follows in Paul’s description of what it means to be IN CHRIST is essential to see. But there is a translation problem here. The KJV and many other versions read, “old things are passed away.” That is not correct. The Greek actually reads, “old things are passed by; old things are passed over.”

What are these, “old things?” Well, if we are joined to the Lord and made one spirit with Him – if that is what it means to be IN CHRIST – if that spiritual union constitutes the new creation – then the old things that are passed over must be all that is NOT united with Christ; not in Him. And what would those things be? Not our human spirit – for that IS united with Christ. No. What is not united with Christ is our physical body and our natural, soul man. These are NOT united with

Christ in spirit – they could not be, for they are NOT spirit. Rather, they remain outside of our spiritual union with Christ – they are passed over – that is, not incorporated into the new creation in Christ Jesus.

It ought to make sense that Paul would say that our physical body and natural soul man are PASSED OVER as it pertains to the new creation, rather than passed AWAY. Our physical bodies and natural soul man haven't passed away – and don't we know that! We deal with them every day.

So what Paul is describing here is what is often referred to as, "the separation of soul from spirit," in the believer. When the believer puts faith in Christ, it is then that Christ joins us to Himself in spirit – our human spirit united with Him by the means of the Holy Spirit – and we become a new creation IN HIM. That is the new man; the inner man. But our physical body and natural soul man are NOT united with Him in this age. They remain outside of this resurrection union. Thus, we have a separation between that which IS united with Christ – the spirit – and that which is NOT united with Christ – the natural. The Bible often refers to this distinction as, "the flesh vs. the spirit."

Having established that separation – having defined what constitutes the new creation in Christ Jesus – Paul then makes this statement: "All things are become new -- and all things are OUT FROM God." This is the Greek reading.

What is Paul referring to when he says, "All things are become new?" Well, we have already

seen that the OLD things that are passed over with regards to the new creation are the physical body and natural soul man – these remain outside of our resurrection union with Christ. Therefore, what Paul means by, “all things are become new,” is all that constitutes the new creation in Christ.

The verse division between verses 17 and 18 is unfortunate because it tends to cloud Paul’s thought. He is actually saying, “All things that are of the new creation in Christ are OUT FROM GOD – no things that are of the new creation in Christ are out from the natural man, for natural man is passed over as it pertains to the new creation.”

This is so essential to grasp. There is absolutely NO contribution to the new creation in Christ Jesus that comes from our old nature; from our natural man. No. That is passed by; passed over -- nothing that is of God in our lives is OUT FROM ourselves. But ALL that is of God in the life of the believer – ALL that is new is OUT FROM God through the Christ with Whom we are joined in spirit. ALL is out from Christ – NOTHING is out from us. That is a complete separation; a complete setting aside of natural man and shows that Jesus Christ is the very life of the believer.

This also shows the danger of incorporating into the spiritual life that which God says is passed over – the natural man. No. There is nothing that can be found in natural man – not even what we might call “good” – that has been incorporated by God into the new creation. Thus, if WE incorporate any part of natural man into the new creation we are in error. We are bringing in corruption.

The way in which God deals with this issue is by bringing the believer under the work of the Cross so that the natural man might be experientially crucified – in order that Christ, who is our life, might be manifested. All of this is already a done deal. But because humanity has a free will, and because God wants us to grow to KNOW HIM – it all must be worked out and experienced. Paul is simply giving us the Truth.

### **Reconciliation**

This great Truth of the new creation in Christ – and what that really means – is preliminary to the statements that follow in this passage by the apostle Paul. They are statements that are so wonderful, freeing, and eternal, that they have often been buried under the corruption of religious flesh. Let's read them again:

***And all things are OUT FROM God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.***

The first thing we notice in this passage is that God has reconciled US to HIMSELF – by Jesus Christ. There is no suggestion in all of scripture that God ever needed to be reconciled back to humanity. No. The problem between God and humanity has always been humanity. And that problem has never been limited to what we DO. The problem is what we ARE. The Adam race is a dead race; utterly and completely at enmity

against God. This is why the redemption of the Adam race was MORE than a matter of forgiveness for sins. Rather, redemption for the Adam race required a full deliverance from what we are through death and resurrection unto a new creation in Christ Jesus.

So often we define salvation as a matter of God forgiving us for our sins – so that we can be sure we are, “going to heaven.” But this is an extremely limited definition that is actually blinds people to the magnitude of the real Truth of what Christ has done. If all that Jesus Christ made possible was for God to forgive our sins then what did that do to address SIN ITSELF – what does forgiveness FOR sin do to set me free FROM sin? We might say we are forgiven for sins, but that does nothing to deliver humanity FROM the condition of sin; from death.

The reason so many people accept this limited version of the redemption is that we have accepted the error that the problem between God and man IS GOD. We believe that God is mad; God must punish for sin. In other words, contrary to the words of Paul, we do think that Jesus Christ reconciled GOD back to MAN. We have bought into the false notion that because humanity sins that God is angry – and because God is holy He MUST punish humanity with death. But wait. Jesus was sent to appease God in His anger – give Him the death He needed to justify His forgiveness for sin. Thus, God is appeased, and forgives humanity. To many, THAT is salvation. It is how Jesus reconciled GOD back to MAN.

But if you examine this notion, it does nothing at all to actually address the sin IN HUMANITY. It simply forgives the sin – it simply lifts the death penalty from the sinner while leaving the sinner IN SIN. It does absolutely NOTHING to deliver us from the Adam race or birth us in Christ as a new creation.

Paul is telling us directly that, “God was IN CHRIST reconciling US back to GOD.” That one statement alone ought to completely adjust and redefine our false assumptions about the redemption. It agrees completely with the rest of scripture, including the most well known passage from John 3:

***For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)***

Note the motives of God in giving His Son: “For God so loved the world.” Does it say, “For God was so angry with the world that He gave...?” No. Indeed, John states that God gave His Son so that no one needs to perish, but so that whoever would believe could be saved. If the false notion of the redemption were true then this could not be true – for John would have to write that God gave His Son to appease His own anger. The false notion makes the penalty for sin God’s anger – rather than the penalty for sin to be what it really is: The death of the sinner. Sin kills. Not God. The fact that God must judge the sinner

worthy of death if the sinner will not turn does not change that fact.

Paul states that God was, in Christ reconciling humanity back to Himself – by giving His Son so that none need to perish. God initiated the redemption of humanity because, “God so loved the world.” God did all that is necessary for the redemption of every single human being who will ever live – in His Son.

But now we can see that this great redemption was not merely some legal forgiveness. It was not merely a forgiveness FOR sin – in the sense of removing the death penalty – only to leave the sinner in sin as a member of the Adam race. Rather, the redemption was a deliverance from the Adam race through death and resurrection in Christ into a NEW race – the new creation in Christ.

Redemption is not a, “fixing up,” of the Adam race. It is not the removal of God’s death penalty from the Adam race. Rather, on the Cross the death penalty was completely FILLED and satisfied. Jesus Christ not only died for our sins – but He died AS US. On the Cross, Jesus bore the entirety of the Adam race in His own person – and consequently He bore all of the sins of the Adam race – and He died. Thus, the Adam race was planted into the death of Jesus Christ. The Adam race -- as the race in which God was working ENDED at the Cross.

This is why Jesus is called, “The Last Adam.” Having brought the Adam race fully into God’s glory by His sinless life as a human being, He offered Himself as the One who would bear all of

the rest of the Adam race down into death. He was the Last Adam in the sense that He was the fullness of what God wanted in Adam – the consummate Adam, if you will – but He was the Last Adam because in Him the Adam race ended at the Cross. What was risen three days later was not a, “fixed up,” Adam race. No. Jesus Christ was the author of a NEW race – a new creature born of resurrection life.

This is what Paul is getting at in our passage. “If anyone is IN CHRIST they are a NEW CREATION. Old things are passed over. All things that are of that spiritual union with Christ are NEW – and all of that NEW is OUT FROM GOD through Christ.” This is a full deliverance – through death and resurrection in Christ – from out of the old creation in Adam into the new creation in Christ Jesus. It is utter and complete deliverance from, and separation from the old – and an utter and complete reconciliation of humanity back to God through His Son.

### **All Are Reconciled Back to God**

What Paul states next in this passage is not commonly understood or preached. Religious tradition and self-righteousness has blinded most of us to the enormity of the Truth that Paul states. He says:

***God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.***

Note two phrases in this passage: First, "God HAS (past tense) reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." Second, "God was in Christ (past tense) reconciling the world unto Himself – NOT IMPUTING their trespasses unto them." You have TWO groups being spoken of – "US," meaning believers, and, "the world," meaning unbelievers. Yet Paul states that God has already reconciled both US and THE WORLD to Himself through Jesus Christ. Indeed, he even states that because God has reconciled the world to Himself, He is NOT IMPUTING their sins unto them. That is astounding. But what does that really mean?

It means that full reconciliation is a completed work for every human being that has ever lived or will live. It means the unbelievers are just as much reconciled to God as are believers. Read it. That is what it says. And just so we would not misunderstand, Paul says that God is, "not imputing," the sins of unbelievers unto them – precisely because of the reconciliation that Christ has finished for them.

Yet how many of us actually believe that? Most of us do not believe it. What we believe is that believers are reconciled to God because we believe – and that unbelievers are not reconciled to God because they don't believe. Yet Paul is clearly stating that ALL are reconciled to God whether they believe or not – God is not imputing sin even to unbelievers.

Is this universal salvation? Is Paul saying that people are saved whether they believe or not? NO. We need to be clear about that. Paul is NOT saying all are saved whether they believe or not – He is not saying that all are in Christ as new

creations whether they believe or not. He is simply saying that all are reconciled back to God whether they believe it or know it. Being reconciled to God is not equal to salvation. Being reconciled to God simply means that Jesus Christ has removed all obstacles between God and humanity – by taking away the sin of humanity – by no longer imputing sin to humanity. This does not mean that everyone will actually believe or embrace that great Truth.

And therein is the entire issue. Solely by the grace and initiative of God – because God so loves the world – Jesus Christ has – in Himself -- reconciled the entire human race back to God. He has taken away all sin – taken away every sin that could separate humanity from God. We need only believe and embrace Him – knowing this is finished. We need only take our place -- through repentance -- in His death – the death that made this possible. And if we do, and ONLY if we do, will we be raised in Him as new creatures unto newness of life. But if we will not believe, then we remain reconciled to God – but it will do us no good. Indeed, we will be guilty of refusing the grace of God.

To put it simply, the way into the holy of holies is clear for all humanity – the veil is forever rent. There is no sin that you and I could commit that can sew that veil back up and keep us out – there is no sin that can undo what Jesus has done. Therefore, THE SIN is the refusal to enter in; THE SIN is unbelief. The only sin that can keep you and I from Jesus Christ is THE SIN of refusing Jesus Christ. THE SIN of refusing Jesus Christ is THE SIN of refusing reconciliation back to God.

To follow up on the example of the holy of holies – no sin can close the door that Jesus has opened; no sin can sew that veil back up. But THE SIN is our refusal to walk through that eternally opened door.

Herein we see the ONE sin that has no forgiveness. Jesus Christ died for every sin ever committed by every human being. But He could not die for THE SIN of refusing His death. How could He? That would be a contradiction. Jesus did not die for the sin of refusing His death. God cannot forgive the refusal of His forgiveness. That is why it is the sin that has no forgiveness.

This sin that has no forgiveness is the sin of unbelief – not a temporary lapse of faith – but the sin of finally neglecting or refusing God's only way through Jesus Christ. You will remember that the first words of the gospel are, "Repent and believe." Well, what do we repent of? Sins? Ok. But ultimately we are to repent of UNBELIEF – and if we do, then we will do what? – we will BELIEVE. And if we do believe then it is only because we have repented of unbelief. Thus, the real issue between God and humanity is no longer acts of sin. The real issue is faith verses unbelief. If I believe and embrace Christ the sin issue is addressed. If I refuse to believe and embrace Christ, then I am refusing to believe that the sin issue is addressed – and am guilty of the ultimate sin of refusing God's deliverance from sin through His Son.

Jesus Christ has reconciled all of humanity back to God. The choice of humanity is whether we will enter BY FAITH into all that His reconciliation has made possible – the choice is faith or

unbelief. In short, Jesus died for the entire Adam race. But only those who believe will be united with Christ in resurrection union, and thus saved.

### **The Ministry of Reconciliation**

***God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***

What is the, "ministry of reconciliation?" Well, a deeper meaning is found in this passage if we once again examine the original Greek. The words, "has given us the ministry of reconciliation," actually read, "has LODGED in us the ministry of reconciliation." In other words, this ministry of reconciliation is more than just a message that we repeat. It is Christ in us – it is part of those NEW things that are all OUT FROM GOD. In short, if we are in Christ, then His very presence in us is not only the means of our reconciliation back to God – but this very same Christ is the means of reconciliation for ALL. The ministry that ought to emerge is that of the Truth of God in Jesus Christ – the Truth of grace. God has, in Christ, reconciled all back to Himself. It is an ongoing, abiding, Truth. It is a continual plea and exhortation to all: Be you reconciled to God,

that is, walk through the open way back to God through Jesus Christ.

Now, how his applies to unbelievers ought to be apparent. But Paul says to believers, "Be you reconciled to God." And isn't it a fact that so often when we sin or fail – isn't it a fact that we don't feel as if we are reconciled to God? We feel cut off from Him. But while conviction and confession are right – we need to state the Truth if we have sinned – we also need to state the Truth that we are already forever reconciled to God. For if God is not imputing the trespasses of unbelievers unto them, then He certainly is not imputing trespasses to those in Christ.

Do we imagine that if we accept this great Truth that we will begin to sin because grace abounds? Well, we need not worry that we will begin to sin -- simply because we never stopped. The real Truth is, if we believe and accept the grace of God through Christ -- this is the only path to freedom FROM sin. We must first believe and enter in.

Is this not grace? What do you and I think we are going to do about our sin otherwise? No. God has, in Christ, done everything there is to do about sin. He has not only forgiven all sin forever, and reconciled the human race back to Himself, but He has delivered those who believe from out of the Adam race into resurrection union with Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 4

### Forgiveness in Christ

***Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has 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)***

In Jesus Christ, and in Him alone, there is forgiveness for ALL sin. This is, of course, the foundational Truth of Christianity. But in order to more fully grasp it, we must set in order a number of related Truths, and get to the root of what forgiveness of sin really is.

The Truth of the Redemption, indeed, of forgiveness in Jesus Christ, is predicated on another Truth: That we need it. If I do not believe that I am a dead sinner, who is lost and deceived without God, I am not going to think I need redemption. If I do not believe that I need forgiveness from God and deliverance from sin, then I am not going to take seriously the finished work of Jesus Christ.

When I say, "believe it" I mean more than simply "agree to." Any of us can give assent to the Biblical doctrine of repentance from sin, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. But the question is, "Do I realize that I must repent? Do I realize that I must receive forgiveness?" And more importantly, "Have I done so?" Have I actually BELIEVED – that is – placed my whole self into

the hands of God through Jesus Christ? – in an unconditional moral surrender?

There is no salvation for me unless I have done so. Salvation is the result of seeing my helplessness as a sinner who has lived independent of God. But that is not all. Likewise, I must see the One who is the solution. I have to place my faith in Jesus Christ. IN HIM is forgiveness of sin.

## **The Sin**

The fundamental problem with human beings – in the eyes of God – is not found in the bad things we DO. Certainly we have all done many bad, sinful things. But there is a root cause for all of our "acts of sin." The fundamental problem is that we have all been living independent of God. That is THE SIN.

God made man a dependent creature. Note that: A DEPENDENT creature is the KIND of creature we are. Nothing will ever change that. So right now, like it or not, you have your faith and dependency in something. If it is not in God, it is in yourself – or in some projection of yourself. As a dependent creature, you don't have the choice as to whether to have faith. You only decide what to put your faith IN: God or yourself.

This principle was there right from the creation of Adam. When God created Adam, He planted two trees. The tree of life represented faith and dependence upon God. The forbidden tree represented faith in oneself – independence from God. That is why it was said that if you ate of the forbidden tree that you would "be as God,"

deciding good and evil. Eating of that tree was a declaration of independence from God – in favor of self-rule.

So here we see that the original sin of Adam was that he declared his independence from God. He chose self-rule and self-ownership – over and against belonging to God. This sin had catastrophic consequences. Why? Well, independence from God is willful separation from God. And we all know what "separation from God" is, don't we? It is death. When Adam walked away from God, he died. He walked away from the Source of all life.

When Adam severed his relationship with God, he died spiritually, and corrupted what a human being IS -- as a creature. But he also severed the entire human race from God. Thus, each of us are born into this world separated from God.

None of us since Adam ever sat down and chose to be born separated from God. We were born into it. But we affirm Adam's choice every second that we continue to live independent of God. And if God brings the Light and Truth of Jesus Christ into our world, then we affirm Adam's sin by neglecting or refusing to come back to God through Jesus Christ.

So now we clearly see THE SIN – THE SIN of the human race. It is independence from God; self-rule; belonging to myself. We are not only born that way, but we continue to AFFIRM this rebellion and independence throughout our lives.

As mentioned, the problem with each of us is not fundamentally in what we DO. The problem is what we ARE. We are a fallen race – a dead race. We are creatures who are MADE FOR GOD, but who are separated from God. The sinful things we DO are nothing more than the outcome of our faith being in ourselves, and of us living for ourselves. All of the "acts of sin" that we DO are the result of independence from God.

Jesus Christ came to redeem us from this condition, and to restore us back to God. It is by taking our faith off of ourselves, and putting it in Him, that we are saved. In short, rather than live in the unbelief of self-rule, we must repent and "come to Jesus" by faith. We have to get back to the purpose for which God originally created man: Eternal fellowship with Him.

## **Unbelief**

The sin of independence from God has a name – one which is used quite often in the Bible. That sin is called UNBELIEF. This only makes sense once you realize that FAITH is trust, dependence, and reliance, upon God. Unbelief, which is the opposite, is therefore independence and self-reliance.

I am living in unbelief if I am living independent of God. Most of us, of course, do this without any knowledge of what we are doing. Living in unbelief comes natural – we are born "in Adam" to do that. Tell someone in this condition that they are ABNORMAL, and need deliverance, and they will think that you are foolish.

Today – even in some churches – if you suggest that people who are "in Adam" are ABNORMAL, and need the Cross of Jesus Christ to deliver them, you will be branded as mean-spirited. People like the gospel of self-esteem. They don't want to talk about themselves as sinners.

Paul addressed this possibility in his epistle to the Corinthians. He said:

***For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (I Cor. 1:18)***

According to the apostle Paul, if I think that the Cross of Jesus Christ – the means of God's forgiveness – is foolish or unnecessary, it is evidence that I am ALREADY in the process of perishing. Of course. I don't see any need for Jesus Christ, or His Cross. I see no need for forgiveness. Therefore, I am still living in my sin – the sin of independence from God.

There can be only one solution to independence from God: Dependence upon Him. Faith. Back to the original relationship God intended. Back to being NORMAL. This spells LIFE. It is the relationship Jesus came to restore.

Unbelief is the affirmation of Adam's sin: To live independent from God. Again, we are born into this condition -- through the nature we inherit from Adam. But once Light comes into our world, and we see that we need to be delivered, we are no longer blind. At that point we must choose.

Ultimately, willful unbelief is the refusal or neglect to surrender to Jesus Christ.

We are now beginning to see why FAITH in Christ is necessary. FAITH in Christ is a renouncing of our independence, through repentance, and is a moral choice to fully dependent on God. We are saved "by grace through faith." We fully depend and rely upon what Jesus Christ has done. And our faith in Him stays in Him – forever.

### **God's Light**

God must show us we are ABNORMAL. The only way to do this is to introduce the NORMAL. If I had an inaccurate yard stick, but no other, I would just go on, not aware that everything I was measuring was inaccurate. But if someone provides an accurate yard stick, which I can put alongside of the bad one, then I will be able to see the Truth. I will see the wrong, because now I have the right. I will see what is ABNORMAL, because there is now a NORMAL in front of me – a correct standard.

God has to show us that we are unrighteous and abnormal. We cannot see this ourselves, because all we have to work with is an abnormal "yardstick." We cannot measure ourselves by ourselves and expect to arrive at the Truth. So what God does is introduce His righteousness – which is the accurate "yardstick." And actually, God has been doing this right from the point when Adam sinned.

A big step in God's plan of redemption occurred when God gave Israel His law. That was quite a

yardstick for righteousness. Paul tells us the purpose for which God gave His law:

***Now we know that whatever things the law says, it says them to those who are under the law -- that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:19-20)***

God certainly gave His law to reveal to us His righteousness. He was saying to us, "If you want to know how to live perfectly in My sight, here is how." But did God actually think we could? No. The fundamental purpose of God's law was to expose us as sinners. As Romans says, when the law speaks, every mouth is stopped, and the whole world is shown to be guilty before God. Everyone of us is shown to be ABNORMAL.

In effect, the law of God was His "accurate yard stick." Once we see His law, we see how crooked and ABNORMAL we are. It leads us to realize that we have been living independent of God.

### **Conscience**

The law of God is holy, just, and good. (Rom. 7:14) There is nothing wrong with God's law. But when we look into the law of God, we see that we are NOT holy, just, and good. Indeed, we see that we are unholy, unjust, and bad. God's law was therefore His instrument for bringing Light in our world, that we might see just how far short we are from His glory.

Again – the law of God represents God's NORMAL. Once it is put along side of us, we see that we are ABNORMAL – and in need of something far beyond ourselves.

The law was a witness to man of his corrupt condition. But even those who were not given the law have such a witness. The Gentiles were never given the law of God. Yet Paul tells us that they – as well as Israel – have the witness of right and wrong within them of CONSCIENCE.

***For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (Romans 2:14-16)***

Paul is telling us that there is a "moral monitor" in each of us which bears witness to right and wrong. In fallen man it is an imperfect witness, for it does not always perfectly define what is right and wrong. But it is there, telling us we OUGHT to do right. We all have a conscience. We all know SOME right and wrong.

Do you doubt that everyone knows right and wrong? Well, the next time someone does wrong to YOU – it will prove my point. You will protest because you believe you have been wronged!

From where did you get that knowledge? You KNOW right from wrong.

Our conscience is a residual of what God originally created in man. And while it cannot, in and of itself, reveal to us Jesus Christ, and cannot, in and of itself, save us even if we obey it, it CAN and DOES tell us what failures we are. We cannot even live up to the standard of our own conscience!

God's law, and even our conscience, tells us one thing if it tells us nothing else: We fall short. It tells us that there is a standard which is outside of ourselves, and which is higher than ourselves – which shows us to be ABNORMAL. Thus, it points us to GOD. Add to the law and our conscience the fact that God will orchestrate various situations in life to show us our need. God is at work to point us to Christ.

## **Repentance**

In all of this, we begin see how a bad person – one born in Adam -- can make a right choice. It is true that a bad person cannot make himself good. But a bad person can be shown how bad he is – and how good Jesus is. He can then make the choice to put his faith in Christ. Again – we must put our faith in something or someone. We have never lost this capacity. It is fundamental to what we are.

What we are describing here is really the outcome of repentance. Once we see what THE SIN is – that we have been living for ourselves independent of God – we then know what we

need to repent of. We need to repent of self-rule – of self-dependence. We do this by surrendering to God and by putting our faith in Jesus Christ.

There is simply no escaping it: Man is accountable to God. We can deny it, avoid it, and even protest it. But in the final analysis, we will answer to Him. We have been living independent of God, and if we have heard the gospel, we have refused or neglected to come to Jesus. THAT IS SIN – great sin. It is sin against God Himself. We must repent of it.

God doesn't make it complicated. If our root sin is that we have affirmed the sin of Adam by living independent of God, then the solution is that we need to come back to God. I have to stop putting my faith in myself – stop living for myself – and I have to START putting my faith in Jesus Christ. I have to return to totally dependence and surrender to God.

What we see here is CHANGE. It is a change of direction and a change of mind. That is what the terms "conversion" and "repentance" mean. I have to stop walking away from Jesus, and turn around, and "come to Jesus."

Thus, to "come to Jesus," I must repent. But of what? Of NOT "coming to Jesus!" Of unbelief. And if I do repent of unbelief, I will do what? Well, I will come to Jesus! I will BELIEVE. That is what at the forefront of the gospel message is always the command, "Repent and believe!"

Some folks imagine that they must take inventory and confess and repent of every sin they have

ever committed before they can come to Jesus. But this is not Biblical. The Bible tells us to confess our sins. Repent of our sins. But always, the confession and repentance of my many sins is the RESULT of coming to Jesus – and never the requirement BEFORE I can come.

We see this in the first epistle of John. John says:

***This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***  
***(1 John 1:5-9)***

Here we see that if we come to the Light, we have fellowship. If we come into the Light, we will see our sins and confess them. None of this is required – or possible – before we come to the Light. All of these things are the result of coming into the Light and Truth of Jesus Christ.

Thus, we see this wonderful Truth: The sin of the human race is that we have lived independent of God. It is THE SIN. Our affirmation of this sin is unbelief. We must therefore repent of unbelief – and in doing so, BELIEVE, i.e., come to Jesus.

Once we do, salvation is ours. And in Christ we will find forgiveness for all of our sins.

## **The Finality of Forgiveness**

When we turn to Christ by faith, we receive forgiveness in Him. It is forgiveness for unbelief – for our refusal or neglect to turn to Him. But once we do turn to Christ, we also find forgiveness, indeed, deliverance, from all the "acts of sin" which we committed as the result of living independent of God.

God's forgiveness through Christ is a done deal. It cannot not be undone, or added to. Forgiveness is finished. It would be finished and complete if not one person ever believed or benefited from it. God's forgiveness is as finished and as final as is the death of His Son which paid for it.

We need to understand what this means. It means that God has done all the forgiving He is going to do. It means that if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you are as forgiven, right now, as you are ever going to be. You are not getting forgiven, but you are a forgiven person.

If there is one Truth of Christianity which has been misrepresented and misunderstood, it is this one: The finality of God's forgiveness. Understanding it sets so much in place. Misunderstanding it throws everything else out of whack.

For instance, in Romans 8:1, Paul tells us that there is NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why is he able to make such a

statement? Because forgiveness is finished. There is nothing you can do to UNFINISH it. There is therefore no possibility of condemnation when forgiveness is finished and unalterable.

All through the New Testament, the forgiveness of God is a FINISHED act:

***And be ye kind one to another,  
tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even  
as God for Christ's sake HAS forgiven you.  
(Eph. 4:32)***

***And you, being dead in your sins and the  
uncircumcision of your flesh, HAS he  
quickened together with  
Him, HAVING forgiven ALL your trespasses.  
(Col. 2:13)***

***I write unto you, little children, because  
your sins ARE forgiven you for His name's  
sake. (I John 2:12)***

***To wit, that God was, in Christ, reconciling  
the world unto Himself, not imputing their  
trespasses unto them. (II Cor. 5:19)***

***"In whom we have redemption through His  
blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to  
the riches of His grace." (Eph. 1:7)***

Have we realized that right now -- if we are in Christ -- that we are eternally and unalterably forgiven? And that there is nothing which stands between us and God? This is a Truth, which if realized, would change our lives.

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