

## [IN GOD'S IMAGE 44 – SALVATION EXTENDED TO ALL]

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### ***We have been looking at the resurrection of Jesus.***

- ◆ Last time we talked about how this resurrection from the dead was unique in that Jesus was the first mortal man raised from the dead and granted immortality.
- ◆ Here was the first human truly in God's image.
- ◆ The resurrection of Jesus is also living proof that we serve a God who has power to raise someone from the dead.
- ◆ And not only to raise them to immortality, but the resurrection of Jesus proves the nature of a finite person, their unique identity or "personhood" can extend beyond death into immortality.

### ***But there is much more we need to discuss about Jesus' resurrection.***

- ◆ Up to this point, we have spent quite a bit of time examining the various aspects of Jesus' saving ministry.
- ◆ Through it all, we emphasised Jesus' willingness to submit His own will to that of the Father's, ***"not my will, but yours be done."*** (Luke 22:42).
- ◆ What we see now in the resurrection of Jesus is the Father's validation of Jesus' cry on the cross, ***"It is finished"*** (John 19:30).
- ◆ The Father has given His stamp of approval on Jesus successfully fulfilling every task the Father had given Him in order to provide salvation for humanity.
- ◆ It's the Father effectively saying, ***"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*** (2 Peter 1:17).
- ◆ In other words, the Father is saying, "I am satisfied Jesus has fulfilled all we set out to accomplish in order to restore our relationship with our wayward children.
- ◆ In theological terms this is called the doctrine of "Satisfaction."
- ◆ The Father is satisfied justification of sinners has occurred by Jesus' willingness to accept God's judgment on sin by submitting to the death penalty on our behalf.
- ◆ The Father is satisfied sinners have been clothed with Jesus' righteousness which He lived on our behalf.
- ◆ The Father is satisfied our fallen human nature has been sanctified and infused with Christ's righteousness through union with Him.
- ◆ The Father is satisfied reconciliation has occurred as the barrier of sin preventing peace between the two parties has been removed.
- ◆ And remarkably, the Father is satisfied the way has been opened for Him to forgive His dear children so He can adopt them into "sonship."

### ***And if the Father has given His stamp of approval to all Jesus has accomplished, what does it mean for humanity?***

- ◆ Well it effectively means the relationship between a holy God and His creation has changed dramatically.
- ◆ It is entirely built on a new basis pictured by the New Covenant instituted by the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Prior to the atonement and the resurrection, because of man's sin, the relationship between God and humanity was based on law and as a consequence, judgment, because of our failure to obey the requirement of the law.
- ◆ ***Ephesians 2:1-18 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.***
- ◆ We opposed God through our sinfulness, while God rightfully opposed us because of His holiness.
- ◆ But God was not going to abandon His children in our lost and sinful condition.
- ◆ ***V.4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions— it is by grace you have been saved.***
- ◆ But now that Christ has taken care of the problem of sin and our lack of righteousness, the law no longer exerts its deadly hold over us.
- ◆ How can it when the penalty for our sin demanded under the law, spiritual death, has been paid for by our Savior?
- ◆ To now turn around and demand it be paid a second time would mean Jesus' death was totally unnecessary and make the good news of the gospel a grotesque fabrication.
- ◆ God is not a liar and He certainly would not subject His dear Son to the horrendous ordeal of the crucifixion unnecessarily.

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- ◆ So if the demands of the law have been satisfied by the saving work of Jesus Christ, God's dealings with His creation can now proceed on a whole new basis.
- ◆ And this is where the New Covenant based on grace makes its glorious entry.
- ◆ **V.6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.**
- ◆ God is no longer opposed to humanity as Jesus Christ has abolished the barrier caused by humanity's sin.
- ◆ So God's mission of reconciliation can now proceed on the basis of grace, no longer hindered by the demands of the law.

**At this point it's important to understand that this new covenant of grace is extended to all mankind in a general or corporate sense.**

- ◆ In other words, this New Covenant is extended so all can have access to its promises.
- ◆ But a gift extended has to be accepted and this is where it has to move from the corporate to the personal.
- ◆ **V.11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**
- ◆ The promises of the Mosaic Covenant were only made to Israel, but now we see the promises of this New Covenant of grace based on Christ's blood being extended to all peoples.
- ◆ **V.14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations.**
- ◆ Not only did Jesus break down the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles, but more importantly the dividing wall between God and humanity.
- ◆ But notice He did it by setting aside the unrelenting demands of the law through the sacrifice of **His flesh** on the cross.
- ◆ **V.15...His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.**
- ◆ Labels now become a thing of the past. As far as God is concerned we are all part of the **one new humanity**.
- ◆ So we see confirmed all **have access to the Father by one Spirit**.

**This last phrase all "have access to the Father by one Spirit" is important because it gives us an insight into how God plans on drawing us into this new humanity in a personal or individual sense.**

- ◆ As we just read, all humanity is embraced in this circle of grace in a general or corporate sense.
- ◆ However as in all gift giving, a gift offered has to be accepted by the recipient.
- ◆ This is what moves the gift from the corporate sense to the individual sense.
- ◆ There has to be an acknowledgement on the part of the individual receiving this remarkable gift of the terrible price paid by God in order for this gift of eternal life to be offered to them.
- ◆ But as in the rest of this remarkable saga so far, this last critical step in the process of salvation is not left to us otherwise we would surely mess it up.
- ◆ The "Spirit" mentioned above, the Holy Spirit, has the mission of drawing us as individuals into the fellowship of this **new humanity**.
- ◆ We will speak more of this later when we get to the subject of Pentecost but wanted to mention it here to dispel any notion we are condoning universal reconciliation (the belief all humanity will eventually be reconciled to God).

**For the moment though we need to understand the vital connection between the Father giving His stamp of approval on all Jesus had accomplished by raising Him from the dead, and how that has changed the basis on which the relationship between God and all humanity rests.**

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- ◆ No longer is God dealing with mankind on the basis of the law, but on the basis of grace.
- ◆ The act of the Father in resurrecting Jesus and the Father's acceptance of Jesus when He presented Himself as the first sheaf of the firstfruits (Leviticus 23:9:14) after His appearance to Mary in the garden (John 20:17) confirmed the statement, ***This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.***
- ◆ The whole basis of the relationship between God and man had been placed on a whole new basis because of the saving work of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ The task of the law was to judge and condemn us, but now that that has been satisfied by the cross, God can extend grace to sinful humanity so that we are raised up with Christ, justified, reconciled and at peace with God.
- ◆ The task of Immanuel (God with us) has been accomplished in all its fullness.
- ◆ By God humbling Himself, mankind in turn has been exalted to an entirely new status in his relationship with God.
- ◆ And if "God is with us," then the opposite is also true, "We are also with God."

***Now we need to go back and take a closer look at Paul's comment in v.15, "His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity."***

- ◆ As mentioned earlier, Jesus' resurrection from the dead was different from all other resurrections in that He was the first human to be raised to immortality.
- ◆ But God is not satisfied with just one new human. His purpose as stated above is ***one new humanity.***
- ◆ Jesus is the first of the "firstfruits" the implication being there are more fruits to follow (2 Thessalonians 2:13)
- ◆ ***1 Corinthians 15:22-23 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.***
- ◆ So the emphasis that leaps off the pages of scripture as we have already discovered is for "inclusion" rather than "exclusion."
- ◆ The pattern for the way God operates is preserved for us in the way He dealt with the "old" humanity, ancient Israel.
- ◆ He started with one man, Abraham and then extended it to Abraham's offspring, Isaac, Jacob, then Jacob's twelve sons who eventually became known as the twelve tribes of Israel who comprised the nation of Israel.
- ◆ We see this pattern being followed with this new humanity, or "spiritual" Israel. Jesus is the first of the firstfruits, then come other firstfruits, the twelve disciples, the church, then by implication, second-fruits.
- ◆ There is this ever-expanding circle as more are included in the process of raising up this new humanity.
- ◆ It's a very important principle to remember as we move forward in God's plan of redemption.