

The gospel of our salvation

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After the apostle John had received the revelation of Jesus Christ on the Isle of Patmos, he wrote to the Gentile believers of the church age. This was John's obedience to the directions given by Jesus, who said, 'Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.' Rev 1:19.

The Gospel of John is the record of what he 'had seen' when the Word became flesh and ministered among them for three and a half years. Joh 1:14. John's three epistles were 'the things which are'. Through these letters, John defined what a Christian needs to know to have an assurance of eternal life. He confronted various heresies and called believers to receive and live only by the word from the beginning as sons of God. Finally, John recorded 'the things which will take place after this' in the book of Revelation.

With this in mind, let us begin our meditation today by reviewing the main points of the gospel, which is the word from the beginning outlined by the apostle John in the first two chapters of his first epistle. John said that if this word abides in us, we will abide in the Father and in the Son, and that this is eternal life. 1Jn 2:24-25.

The message from the beginning

The gospel story has a beginning. In his Gospel, Mark tells us that the gospel of Jesus Christ has its origin in the Old Testament Scriptures that were written by the prophets. Mar 1:1-2. The Scriptures also tell us that Jesus is the Beginning of the creation of God, and that He was sent by the Father, from the beginning, to bring the word of the Father to us. Rev 3:14. Joh 1:1-2.

The word from the Father is that we must know Him as the only true God, and must accept Jesus Christ, His Son, whom He has sent. Joh 17:3. Further, we are to be born again of His Seed, and come to know Him as our Father. Joh 3:3-6. 1Pe 1:23.

The mark of a spiritual father is that they know Him who is from the beginning. 1Jn 2:13-14. That is, they know the Son and, therefore, know the Father. Joh 12:45. Joh 14:9. As it is for our spiritual fathers, so it should be for us.

We are assured that we know the Son if we keep His commandments, which He received from the Father. 1Jn 2:3. Joh 14:10. John called this word from the beginning, 'an old commandment'. 1Jn 2:7. This is the message that 'God is light and in Him is no darkness at all'. 1Jn 1:5.

Significantly, John said that there is no new commandment other than the word from the beginning. 1Jn 2:7. However, he then said, 'A new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.' 1Jn 2:8. How are we to understand this seeming contradiction?

The new commandment is that what is true in God, which is the old commandment, can now be true in us. That is, the culture of fellowship and love, which John described as 'the

light', is to be our culture. This happens because the darkness is passing away and the true light is shining.

'The darkness that is passing away' as we receive the word from the beginning and abide in the Father and the Son is the darkness of our carnal perspectives and judgements. Jesus taught that the lamp of the body, which is our spirit, is the eye. It is the faculty of our sight. He said, 'If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, *your whole body will be full of darkness*. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!' Mat 6:22-23.

With this understanding, we note Christ's instruction, 'If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.' Mat 5:29. Our darkened sight is only able to be cast out when we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. This is the implication of receiving and walking in the light of the word from the beginning. 1Jn 1:7.

The true light is shining in us when we are born of the Spirit. We are no longer walking according to our own darkened perspective, which is based in our knowledge of good and evil. Instead, we are seeing and walking by the Spirit. Describing this way of living, Jesus said, 'The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Joh 3:8.

We see that the new commandment is the New Covenant of the Spirit. 2Co 3:6. By the Spirit, we are able to abide and walk in the light of the word that we are hearing. What is true in God, who is light, is becoming true in us; it is the reality of our life. Our culture is one of fellowship and love with our brothers and sisters in Christ. The fallen propensities of our flesh are being removed from us so that there is no cause for stumbling within us. 1Jn 2:10.

When we allow the word from the beginning to abide in us, we abide in the light. That is, we abide in the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:5. 1Jn 2:10. 1Jn 2:24. As we abide in the light, we receive an anointing from Jesus Christ, the Holy One. 1Jn 2:20. This anointing, which is the Holy Spirit, teaches us to abide in Christ. 1Jn 2:27.

If we abide in the Son, we will have confidence in the day of His second coming, because we will not be ashamed before Him. We will also have confidence when He comes to us in the seasons of our life to confront us in relation to our Christian stewardship and culture. 1Jn 2:28. 1Co 4:4-5. We are not ashamed when Christ comes to us, because we have been born again and joined to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. We are being delivered from the shame-driven motivation to define our own life and works, which are a lie, and are doing the righteous works of our sonship in Christ. 1Jn 2:29. In other words, the righteousness that is true in Him is true in us! This is the new commandment being fulfilled in us, and is the reason for our confidence when He appears.

As we continue to abide in Christ, there is a progressive manifestation of our birth as a son of God, which reveals the love of God. We testify that we are sons of God *now*, and are growing up in Christ. 1Jn 3:2. The testimony of a person who is learning this by the anointing that they have received from Christ is, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!' 1Jn 3:1.

The message from the beginning is that God has promised us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. 1Jn 5:11-12. The eternal life that was with the Father, in the beginning,

was manifest to mankind in the Person of Jesus Christ. Joh 1:4. Jesus, who is the Father's Firstborn Son, is the express image of the Father's Person. Heb 1:3. As the Firstborn Son of God, He is the full manifestation of the Father's life. Joh 14:9.

The message from the beginning is that the Son of God has also become the Son of Man. The Word has become flesh and dwelt among us. Joh 1:14. Those to whom the Son made Himself known have testified that they have seen, looked upon, and handled, by close relationship with Him, the new dimension of life that He came from the Father to give to mankind. 1Jn 1:1. They taught what the Son had made known to them.

The Son was sent to be the Saviour of the world. His work on the cross was a complete work. By the grace of God, Jesus died the death of every person who has ever lived, and will ever live; and, by one offering, He purged from them their self-centredness and sin. Heb 2:9. Heb 1:3. Christ reconciled mankind to God, enabling them to be born again as sons of God by giving to them the divine nature that He possessed. He was the prototype of a new creation son of God, which we are all to become.

Those whom Christ sends to us, whose work is to deliver His message to us, also have the obligation to warn us that there will be no escape from eternal judgement if we neglect this 'so great salvation' that has been proclaimed to us. Heb 2:1-4.

The spirit of antichrist

Although Christ reveals the word of truth to us through the ministry of His messengers, the apostle John alerted us to the fact that opposition to the gospel of sonship is raised within the church by the spirit of antichrist. 1Jn 2:18-23.

Those who are of the spirit of antichrist deny that Jesus Christ is *coming* in the flesh. 1Jn 4:3. 2Jn 7. They reject the call to be born of God and to be joined to the fellowship of Yahweh as part of the body of Christ. 1Jn 2:19. Accordingly, they refuse to accept that the divine nature is coming in the flesh of those who are born of God and members of Christ's body. They deny that a person's salvation depends on them being joined to this fellowship by receiving and obeying the word of life that is proclaimed from the presbytery.

As John warned, there are many alternative doctrines promoted by the spirit of antichrist within the Christian community. These doctrines, and those who promote them, are antagonistic to the gospel of sonship and to those who minister the Spirit of life through the word of truth.

The knowledge of good and evil

The account of Adam and Eve's fall into sin is also a fundamental aspect of the gospel, which is the word from the beginning that is being proclaimed to us today. In Adam, we were all made sinners. The apostle John said that if we say we have no sin, and deny that we are sinners, we have no eternal life. 1Jn 1:8-10.

Let us not continue to hide under the branches of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, asking Christ's messengers to bring to us some fruit from the tree of life so that we can make a 'salad' with it as we mix it with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has no capacity to feed our identity. In fact, it has the opposite effect upon us. It causes dystrophy in our lives, motivating us to sin, which results in alienation, trouble and grief.

The knowledge of our shame is only energised as we make the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the basis of our fellowship, or communion. Our confessions of shame, and the voluntary humiliation of ourselves, are self-justifying actions that God does not receive as repentance. They are the dead works of penance, which neither minister nor achieve life. They reveal only that we are self-righteous.

Self-justification, and apportioning blame to others and ourselves, is the good and evil that results from the insight received from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This becomes an emotion of sin which, when it develops to hatred, becomes murderous. If we claim that we do not need to deal with the issue of hatred, we deceive ourselves. Jesus Himself said that we hated Him without a cause. Joh 15:25.

The Advocate

In relation to our sin, our Advocate with the Father is His Son, Jesus Christ. 1Jn 2:1. Jesus is our great High Priest, through whom we make confession to the Father and find forgiveness. The Father forgives us when we do not maintain an attitude of unforgiveness towards others. Mat 18:21-35. That is, He forgives our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Luk 11:4.

As we find forgiveness from the Father, we are able to confess our faults to one another for the purpose of finding healing through prayer. We do this because we recognise that most of our sinful attitudes and behaviours spring from the lameness, or frailties, of our identity. In fellowship with others, we pray in faith for healing so that we do not continue to sin against others in this manner. Jas 5:16.

When we are not walking in fellowship with the presbytery and with one another, we walk in darkness. It is only in the context of fellowship that sin is remitted and cleansed from our lives.

All the nations will mourn

After Christ had yielded His Spirit to the Father and died on the cross, His side was pierced with a soldier's spear. Joh 19:34. A spirit of grace and supplication was poured out from Christ's heart upon the house of David. Zec 12:10. These were the Jews and inhabitants of Jerusalem who witnessed His crucifixion. Grace and supplication gave to them illumination so that they understood that they had crucified the Lord of glory, their Saviour. The conviction of their sin enabled them to mourn in repentance, to become bankrupt in spirit, and to find forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Luk 23:48.

Christ was raised from the dead by resurrection life, and then ascended to the right hand of the Father. Rom 8:34. Eph 1:19-23. As our Melchizedek High Priest, *He continues His ministry from the cross* to subsequent generations of humanity, through the power of Eternal Spirit. This ministry will continue until the end of the age. The apostle John made this point when he said, 'Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And *all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him*. Even so, Amen.' Rev 1:7.

In the book of Revelation, John observed that Christ, as Melchizedek, is *currently* dressed in the priestly garments of a servant-priest. Rev 1:13. These are the *same garments* that He wore when He offered Himself to God as a living sacrifice during His journey from the last Passover until His work, on our account, was finished on the cross. The eschatology of the cross, which is the content of the book of Revelation, reveals that Jesus is

continuing to priest to us the finished work that He accomplished on the cross for every person.

As High Priest, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us, ministering the eternal work that He accomplished on the cross for every person. Heb 7:25. This ministry will continue until the prophetic word concerning every individual is accomplished. At this point, time as we know it, will come to an end. As we noted in Part 6 of *The Steps of Salvation*, the word as a sword defines two prophetic destinies, which are written in the Scriptures, for each individual.

Christ, dressed in the garments of a servant-priest, is now standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands. Rev 1:12-13. While He personally poured out grace and supplication on the house of David from the cross, it is now ministered from the cross through the word of His messengers who are part of a lampstand church administration. Illumination is being brought to all the nations of the earth through this administration.

The word of the cross is to be preached and portrayed to all mankind by those who now *handle* the word of life. 1Jn 1:1. These are messengers whom Christ described as stars in His right hand. Each star is a messenger administration that belongs to a lampstand church. Rev 1:20.

A messenger of Christ handles the divine nature by exemplifying, in himself, the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Co 4:10. By this means, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among those to whom they are sent with the message of sonship. Gal 3:1. Grace and supplication from Christ is poured out upon those who hear and receive the ministry of His messengers.