



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

****PUBLISHED AS A MISSION PROJECT OF PILGRIMS HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH****

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2000 Conference Speakers and Subjects

Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church

3084 Woodrow • Memphis, TN 38127

October 5-7, 2000

THEME

BLESSED IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS Ephesians 1:1-14

THURSDAY EVENING

- 5:30 Evening Meal
- 7:00 Singing
- 7:25 CHOSEN IN CHRIST
Eld Royce Smith
- 8:05 Singing
- 8:15 PREDESTINATED TO THE ADOPTION OF CHILDREN
Eld. Dan Cozart

FRIDAY MORNING

- 10:00 Singing
- 10:10 MADE ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED
Eld John Kohler
- 10:50 BREAK
- 11:05 Singing
- 11:25 REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST
Eld. Richard Eckstein
- 12:05 Break for Lunch

FRIDAY EVENING

- 5:30 EVENING MEAL
- 7:00 Singing
- 7:25 SEALD WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE
Eld. Jack Duplechain
- 8:05 Singing
- 8:15 THE INHERITANCE OBTAINED BY CHRIST
Eld. Bill McDaniel

SATURDAY MORNING

- 10:00 Singing
- 10:10 TROPHIES OF HIS GRACE
Eld. Bill Lee
- 10:50 Break
- 11:05 Singing
- 11:25 THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODIES
Eld. Laurence Justice
- 12:05 Lunch (Conference ends after lunch)

Special music by the Fayards, Laurence Justice, and possibly others.

Pastor: Wayne Camp, Phones (901) 357-0215 (901) 876-5015

EDITORIAL
THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM
 (First in a series)

I am the kind of *Old Landmarker* who believes in a truly local church and only in the local church. I believe that to be truly local, a church must assemble in *one place*. As one *Old Landmarker* wrote, "*The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*"

In preparing to write this series of editorials, and in an effort to determine what are truly Landmark principles and what tenets have been added to the doctrine I have been doing a good deal of reading of *Old Landmarkers* to see what they set forth as "*Old Landmarkism.*" I have also consulted others who were advocates of the local church only position.

Recently, I was reading "*Old Landmarkism—What Is It?*" by the late J. R. Graves. Surely no one will dispute the fact that Graves was a Landmark Baptist. In chapter three of that work, Graves was showing that the New Testament church was a local assembly. He first sets forth the Catholic and Protestant concepts of the *ecclesia* and then proceeds to show the Baptist belief concerning the church of the New Testament. In that discussion, Graves took the position that an *ecclesia* **MUST** assemble in one place.

"The *ecclesia* of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place. This is impossible for a universal or invisible church to do. It was often required to assemble. (Matt. 18: 17; I Cor. 11:18; 14:23.) Discipline, baptism and the Lord's Supper could only be administered by the assembled church." (Old Landmarkism, P. 40).

Lest I be charged with taking Graves out of context, I am here presenting the context of the statement just quoted:

The third is the Baptist, or scriptural theory, viz., the church is a local organization. This implies that the primitive model was a single congregation, complete in itself, independent of all other bodies, civil or religious, and the highest and only source of ecclesiastical authority on earth, amenable only to Christ,

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Bible Study 10:00 A. M. Sunday

Worship Service 11:00 A. M. Sunday

Evening Service 5:00 P. M. Sunday

Mid-Week Service 7:00 P. M. Wednesday

You Are Welcome!

whose laws alone it receives and executes—not possessing the authority or right to *enact* or *modify* the least law or ordinance, or to discipline a member, save for the violation of what Christ himself has enjoined. This church acknowledges no body of men on earth, council, conference or assembly as its head, but Christ alone, who is invisible, as "head over all things" to it.

PROOFS.—1. *The term ecclesia itself.*—The Holy Spirit selected the Greek word, *ecclesia*, which had but *one* possible literal meaning to the Greek—that of a *local* organization.

2. *New Testament use.*—It is used in the New Testament 110 times, referring to the Christian institution, and in 100 of these it undoubtedly refers to a local organization; and in the remaining 10 instances it is used *figuratively*—by synecdoche—where a part is put for the whole, the singular for the plural, one for all. In each of these instances what is true of all the churches is true of any one—*e. g.*, Ephesians 1:22; 3:10; 21:5, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32; Colossians 1:18. There is no occasion whatever for any *misapprehension* touching this use, nor is there one passage that affords the shadow of a ground for the idea of an invisible church in heaven, any more than for a huge universal, national or provincial church on earth, but a multitude of passages preclude the idea.

3. *Ecclesia in the plural.*—It is used in the plural thirty-six times, which fact is demonstrative that the universal or provincial idea was not then known.

4. *The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.*—This is impossible for a universal or invisible church to do. It was often required to assemble. (Matthew 18:17; 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:23.) Discipline, baptism and the Lord's Supper could only be administered by the assembled church.

5. *Ecclesia in a single city and house.*—"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2); "the church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22); "the churches of Asia salute you;" "Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord with the church that is in their house" (1 Cor. 16:19). "Salute . . . Nymphas and the church which is in his house" (Col. 4:15); "and to the church in thy house" (Philem. 2). Now a complete

church was composed of the members of these individual households, and, probably, a few others, and were wont stately to meet in the houses of these brethren for worship and the transaction of business, and it is certain that it could have been nothing else than a *local society*.

6. *Historical testimony.*—The earliest writers knew nothing of an invisible, universal or provincial church.

CLEMENT, A. D. 217.—"To the church of God which sojourns at Rome;" "To the church of God sojourning at Corinth."

Eusebius referring to this epistle says: "There is one acknowledged epistle of this Clement, great and admirable, which he wrote in the name of the *church of Rome* to the *church of Corinth*; sedition then having arisen in the latter church. We are aware that this epistle has been publicly read in *very many churches*—both in old times, also in our day."

IRENAEUS, A.D. 175-200—"For the churches which have been planted in *Germany* do not believe or hand down any thing different; nor do those [*i.e.*, churches] in *Spain*; nor those in *Gaul*; nor those in the *East*; nor those in *Egypt*; nor those in *Lybia*; nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world."

TERTULLIAN, A.D. 150.—Expressed the idea of a Christian church in his day in these words: "Three are sufficient to form a church, although they be laymen."

GIESLER.—Of the churches of the first and second centuries, says: "All congregations were independent of one another" (Vol. 1, chap. 3).

MOSHEIM.—"During a great part of this [second] century all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other; . . . each church was a kind of little independent republic" (Vol. 1, p. 142).

Dr. OWEN.—"In no approved writer for two hundred years after Christ is mention made of

any organized, visibly professing church except a local *congregation*' (By Crowell, in "Chap. Man., p. 36).

No fact is better established than this, and therefore the various Catholic and Protestant organizations can lay no just claim to be patterned after the apostolic model; and, according to Bishop Doggett's axioms, should not be considered or called Christian churches. (*Old Landmarkism—What Is It?*, J. R. Graves, Baptist Sunday School Committee, 1928, Pp. 40-42).

Grave's *Old Landmarkism* (Second Edition) was published in 1880. Did he change his mind about the necessity of a true church of Christ assembling in one place? In 1884 he published *The New Great Iron Wheel*. In that monumental exposure of the ecclesiological errors of Methodism, Graves wrote again of the fact that a true New Testament type of ecclesia assembles in only one place, not two or several. The following quotes are from this later work and they show that Graves still held the same position on this matter. [Note: In the following quotes, the double underlined emphases are those of this editor. All other emphases are those of Eld. Graves.]

First. Let us first carefully notice the **structural characteristics of a N. T. Church**.

The first thing that strikes us in reading the Scriptures is

1. *That the N. T. Churches were assemblies or congregations.*

By this I mean such bodies as **could assemble, every member of them in one place**; for we find that they were commanded both by Christ and his apostles to frequently do this, — and that they did do it, for various purposes, and that every thing required of the Church was done by the **individual** local assembly, not by representatives, but by the **whole Church**, as a church acting organically. Therefore, each assembly was a **complete** Church, and being complete in itself, it was independent of all other like bodies in other localities, and being each independent it was divinely invested with

all the powers and prerogatives of a Church of Christ.

From the above I am warranted in formulating this definition:—

A Scriptural Church is (1) a local organized assembly, (2) of professedly believing and truly baptized persons, (3) consisting of the ministers and lay men living in or near the same place, (4) organized upon terms of equality in all Church privileges, and (5) in conformity with the governmental and doctrinal teachings of Christ and his apostles, (6) united in covenant with Christ and each other for the maintenance of his worship, doctrines, and ordinances, and the universal promulgation of his Gospel; (7) each body being complete in itself and absolutely independent of all other organizations.

A local or single assembly alone can meet in one place and act together-organically.

The term *ekklesia*, selected by Christ, has but this one meaning—an assembly, an **organized** assembly,—and in its religious sense, always an **organized congregation** of professed Christians. When I say that it has but this one specific natural or literal meaning, I do not deny that it is some times used in a **figurative** or **secondary** sense, for I know not a term in any language that is not used **figuratively**, but I do assert that **figurative uses of words are not definitions of those words**, else there is no limit to the meaning of words. Take the familiar text "to eat," we say, the rust eats the iron. Is "to rust," then, a definition of to eat? "men say, he is immersed in debt," in "troubles," "in wine," etc., does "to immerse" then, mean to contract debts, undergo troubles or to drink copiously of wine?

So a **few** and, considering the number of the uses of *ekklesia* in the N. T., a **very few** instances of the figurative uses of this word are found—as where the singular is used for the plural,—a part for the whole. In

justification of this I call your attention to the fact that the term **Church**, is used in a religious sense as referring to Church institutions one hundred and ten times in the New Testament and ninety-six times it confessedly refers to a local organized assembly, that could, and did, and was required to assemble in one place and act organically.

The irresistible conclusion from this is that a religious organization that can not assemble in one place, and all its members act as a unit, can not be a Scriptural Ekklesia or Church of Christ! ! ! (*The New Great Iron Wheel*, J. R. Graves, Originally published 1884, Baptist Sunday School Committee republished 1928, Pp. 125-127)

Scriptural features. The Apostolic churches embraced their elders and deacons—were composed of all the ministers and laymen in a given place or locality. (*Ibid.*, P. 131).

Let me note again the statements I have emphasized in these quotes from Graves. He said, ". . . **every member of them in one place**". Not two places or three or more places! Not every member of the one ecclesia that assemble in Arkansas, Mexico, and Brazil. But, "**every member of them**" that assemble "**in one place.**" Surely a wayfaring man, though a fool can understand what Graves meant.

Again we saw that Graves held that a New Testament kind of church was "**a local organized assembly.**" This does not allow for an alleged local assembly that is not local but interstate or even international.

Graves also indicated that an ecclesia of the New Testament type was a local organized assembly "**consisting of the ministers and lay men living in or near the same place.**" Graves did not believe that a local organized assembly could consist of some members living and assembling in Jerusalem, some members living and assembling in Antioch, and some members living and assembling in Ephesus. This was one of the errors that he was pointing out concerning the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in *The New Great Iron Wheel*.

Graves also insisted that to be a true ecclesia, "**A local or single assembly alone can meet in one place and act together—organically.**" Could Graves have made it any clearer than this? A local or **SINGLE** assembly is the only kind that can meet in one place and act together—organically.

Graves says that the word ecclesia is used 110 times in the New Testament of church institutions and that 96 of those times it refers to "**a local organized assembly, that could, and did, and was required to assemble in one place and act organically.**" It should be unequivocally obvious to the simplest of minds that Graves did not believe the members of a church could assemble in more than one place for worship and service and be a true New Testament type of ecclesia. To the *Old Landmarker*, J. R. Graves local assembly meant just that, local assembly.

Graves did not stop there. He argued that "**a religious organization that can not assemble in one place, and all its members act as a unit, can not be a Scriptural Ekklesia or Church of Christ! ! !**" Need I comment? I think it unnecessary. Graves position is unequivocally clear. A local assembly is a local assembly is a local assembly! It is an ecclesia that assembles in one place with all its members acting as a unit, and if it cannot or does not do that it does not qualify as a true New Testament kind of ecclesia.

Finally, the *Old Landmarker*, James Robinson Graves, declared that the Apostolic churches "**were composed of all the ministers and laymen in a given place or locality.**" Graves did not buy the notion that a true New Testament type of ecclesia (a local church) could have some ministers/minister and laymen who assemble in Ohio, other ministers/minister and laymen who assemble in Tennessee, other ministers/minister and laymen who assemble in Mexico, other ministers/minister and laymen who assemble in Korea.

If J. R. Graves were alive today, he would probably be calling for some Baptist churches that wear the Landmark name to return to this distinctive of *Old Landmarkism*—"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."

Please note again the statement I made in the

beginning. ***"I believe that to be truly local, a church must assemble in one place."*** Note also the statement of J. R. Graves, the author of *Old Landmarkism—What Is It? "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."*

Graves was giving the marks of a true *ecclesia* in the New Testament sense. He said, ***"The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."***

This is not something new that I have recently espoused. I have pointed out on these pages in past issues that to be truly local in nature, a church must assemble in one place, not in two or more places. In October, 1998, I wrote, "According to the popular tradition, if Antioch were not an independent church at this time, Paul and Barnabas would still be members at Jerusalem. If, in fact, Antioch was not truly a church at this time, the entire assembly, according to the tradition, would be members of the international church that was headquartered in Jerusalem. Antioch would only be a branch of the body in Jerusalem. Therefore, it seems the Holy Spirit would have instructed Jerusalem [rather than Antioch] to send forth these missionaries whom he had called."

Again I wrote in the same issue, "It is unequivocally evident that the church in Antioch was a local, visible, independent, autonomous body carrying out the Lord's work, not some distant part of a dissected, divided, international body headquartered in Jerusalem."

In November, 1997, I wrote the following,

The question is, ***"Is A Church Truly Local When It Has Congregations Meeting In Several Different Locations?"*** According to current tradition, when a church sends forth a missionary he goes where the Lord has called him to go and to which his sponsoring church sends him, preaches the gospel, and baptizes those who are saved into the church back home. Let me set up a scenario of how this may work. Pilgrims Hope is a local, visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ which meets in Memphis, Tennessee, more specifically, at 3084 Woodrow St., Memphis, Tennessee. We assemble visibly each Sunday morning and evening, and

Wednesday evening (except on rare occasions).

Let's suppose that in time, PHBC sends a missionary to Canada who sets up a "mission", in time some are saved and baptized into PHBC. This "mission" that assembles regularly in Canada is, according to the current tradition, said to be a part of the local, visible assembly at 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN. We then send a missionary to Mexico and he does as the missionary in Canada. We send yet another to some city in Africa, and another to India, and then another to the Philippines. All of these make disciples, baptize those disciples, and hold regular assemblies in their respective localities. But, they cannot be called a local, visible assembly because they have not yet been organized into a church and are members of the local (?), visible assembly which regularly assembles at 3084 Woodrow, Memphis, TN.

A part of PHBC assembles in Canada; a part of PHBC assembles in Mexico; a part of PHBC assembles in Africa; a part of PHBC assembles in India; and, yet another part of PHBC assembles in the Philippines. Pilgrims Hope Baptist Church is no longer a local assembly, it is an international assembly which regularly assembles in several different countries. How could we claim to be a local, visible assembly when we are actually six local assemblies which meet in six different countries? How can we claim to be a visible assembly when we are actually six visible assemblies which may be seen in six different countries. To the congregation in Canada, the assembly in Memphis is not visible. To the congregation in Mexico none of the other five are visible. There is a sense then in which Pilgrims Hope has ceased to be a visible assembly.

As long as 25 years ago I questioned the practice of churches having unorganized assemblies meeting in other places but were supposedly part of their assembly. It is a practice that is foreign to the New Testament practice

though some read it into the New Testament, reasoning from their current practice back into the New Testament. That is poor interpretation, to say the least. At worst, it amounts to adding to the word of God.

In setting forth what he held to be the "**Old Landmarks**" of the faith once delivered to the saints, J. R. Graves wrote, "***The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.***"

There is no way, according to Graves, that a church that has an assembly that meets in Memphis, Tennessee, another in Romania, and another in the Philippines can truly call itself a local **ecclesia** in the New Testament sense of the word. There is no way, that such a "church" with two or more assemblies meeting in two or more places, even in two or more nations, can qualify as a truly local **ecclesia** in the "**Old Landmark**" sense. "***The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.***" It has strayed from what Bro. Graves declared to be an essential of "**Old Landmarkism.**"

Dear Readers, I believe that a truly local **ecclesia** is one that can and does regularly assemble in one place for worship—preaching, teaching, praying, singing, the observance of the ordinances and giving of tithes and offerings—and the conducting of other necessary business. Since ANY DOCTRINE STANDS OR FALLS ON SCRIPTURE ALONE, please notice that the churches of the New Testament were churches each of which met in a single and specific locality.

1. "The church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1).
2. "The church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22).
3. "The church that was in Antioch" (Acts 13:1).
4. "The church at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1).
5. "The church that is in their house" (Rom. 16:5).
6. "The church of God which is at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2).
7. "The church which is in his house" (Col. 4:15).
8. "The church of the Laodiceans" (Col. 4:16).
9. "The church of the Thessalonians" (I Thess. 1:1).
10. "The church of the Thessalonians" (II Thess. 1:1).
11. "The church in thy house" (Phile. 2).
12. "The church of Ephesus" (Rev. 2:1).
13. "The church in Smyrna" (Rev. 2:8).

14. "The church at Pergamos" (Rev. 2:12).
15. "The church in Thyatira" (Rev. 2:18).
16. "The church in Sardis" (Rev. 3:1).
17. "The church in Philadelphia" (Rev. 3:7).
18. "The church of the Laodiceans" (Rev. 3:14).

Not one of these churches was assembling in more than one place. Each was the **body** of Christ in its specific location. A few body parts located in Memphis and a few other body parts located in Canada, and a few other body parts located in some town in the Philippines cannot sensibly or correctly be called a human body, even if all the body parts are from one body. One would have to collect them all and gather them together and organize and assemble them into one bodily unit in one place to sensibly and logically call them a human body. By the same token, a true New Testament type of assembly meets in one place for worship and service. It is not a true local **ecclesia** if the main portion of its members meets in Memphis, while another group of its members meets in Mexico City, Mexico, and another group of its members meets in the Philippines. **One body** cannot meet in **three countries** on a given day of worship.

When more than one **ecclesia** was located in a region or country they were referred to in the plural. "The sever churches of Asia,

When more than one church was located in a region or country, they were referred to in the plural. "***The churches of Macedonia***" (II Cor. 8:1), "***the seven churches which are in Asia***" (Rev. 1:4), etc. Never, ever, in all of God's word will you read of a specific church which assembles in "***Jerusalem, Antioch, and Thessalonica.***" Doctrine stands or falls on Scripture alone.

I have consulted many sources, and I have not found one Landmark Baptist writer who has defined a New Testament type of **ecclesia** as two or more groups of baptized believers meeting in different localities. We will hear from a cloud of witnesses on this matter before this theme is finished.

Beware of religious innovations. They always produce spiritual deterioration. I endorse wholeheartedly the statement of that great **Old Landmarker**, J. R. Graves when he said, "***The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place.***"

THAT IS THE KIND OF OLD LANDMARKER I AM!
—Wayne Camp,

SALVATION BY GRACE ACCOMPLISHED BY ATONEMENT

Fifth in a Series

By Wayne Camp

“I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (Jn. 17:4).

“Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished ...said, it is finished” (Jn. 19:28-30).

Some of the most wonderful words to be found in the Word are those in these texts. When Jesus cried: ***“It is finished,”*** He meant an atonement was made. Eternal redemption was accomplished. By one sacrifice He had perfected forever them that were set apart and marked out for Him. Divine satisfaction for all Christ's seed had been fully rendered. Every type and prophecy of the atonement has been fulfilled. Mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Salvation by grace has been fully accomplished through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY A NECESSARY ATONEMENT

Must atonement be made? Could God save without atonement? Was it absolutely necessary for Christ to die? The answers to these questions must be found in Scripture.

ATONEMENT NECESSITATED BY THE WILL OF GOD

If for no other reason, atonement was necessary because God willed it so. His will is sovereign and cannot be thwarted. Since he willed it, an atonement must be made. No salvation is to be found outside that atonement. ***“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to the good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself . . . being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:7-11).***

The passage just cited clearly declares that our redemption was accomplished **according to and** because of the will, pleasure and purpose of God.

It must be that way because God willed it so. When Christ went to the cross to make the atonement he was ***“delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge (foreordination) of God” (Acts 2:23).*** ***“Those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled” (Acts 3:18).*** When Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and Israel gathered together to crucify Jesus Christ they were gathered ***“to do whatsoever God's hand and God's counsel determined to be done” (Acts 4:23-28).*** Christ ***“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,”*** was the lamb ***“who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:18-20).*** ***“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,”*** declared Jesus, and Paul adds: ***“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:9-10).***

ATONEMENT NECESSITATED BY THE NATURE OF GOD

The nature of God is such that it necessitated that salvation be accomplished through a full and perfect atonement. It must be all-sufficient. ***“For it became him, for who are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).*** It was in accordance with God's nature and grace to meet man's every need in salvation through the atoning work of Christ. ***“It became Him!”***

He commended his love toward his people in the atonement (Rom. 5:8). God's grace was revealed in Christ tasting death for every man who would be an heir of salvation (Heb. 1:14); 2:9). The righteousness, justice, mercy and peace of God were manifest in the atonement. ***“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other”*** is how David described the atoning work of Christ (Psa. 85:10). Paul taught that the only way that God could be both just and the justifier of sinners was through a

propitiating atoning sacrifice of an acceptable substitute (Rom. 3:23-26). It became the glory of God's nature to make atonement for our sins. It was a time when God would glorify his name on earth (Jn. 12:27-28). Jesus said: ***“Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him” (Jn. 13:31).***

It became the nature of God to accomplish salvation by a gracious atonement. It was consistent with his nature. It was harmonious with his character. Mercy and truth must meet together in that atonement. Righteousness and peace must kiss each other in that atonement. We are therefore ***“justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26).***

ATONEMENT NECESSITATED BY COVENANT

Before the foundation of the world God the Father, God the Word, and God the Spirit entered into a covenant of redemption. In that covenant God did give to the Son a great host of people to whom He must give eternal life (Jn. 17:2). The work of Christ in the covenant required him to make a satisfactory atonement for his people. He would be the Kinsman-Redeemer of those of whom he laid hold in the covenant. When the Good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep, that ***“great shepherd of the sheep”*** was shedding ***“the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20)*** and meeting every requirement of that covenant.

ATONEMENT NECESSITATED BY LAW

The law of God is holy and inflexible. Its demands of pure holiness must be met by the offender, which is impossible, or by a qualified substitute. Man has sinned and is under the curse of God's law and must suffer eternal death and separation from God in the lake of fire. ***“But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4).*** ***“It is written, cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10).*** Man has a problem with the

law. He cannot meet its demands ***“because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7-8).*** The only hope that sinful men have is an atoning substitute. ***“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse, for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:10).*** What the law necessitated and sinful man could not meet God has graciously accomplished in the atoning work of Christ.

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY A QUALIFIED MEDIATOR IN THE ATONEMENT

Simply anyone suffering and dying was not enough to accomplish the necessary atonement. A qualified mediator must be found. I am reminded of a scene in the Revelation in which One qualified to open the seven-sealed book is sought. John writes: ***“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth was able to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Rev. 5:2-5).***

When the time came to choose a qualified mediator to make an atonement for sin there was no earth created in which to search. There were no men among whom a search could be made. The mediator must meet very special qualifications.

THE MEDIATOR MAKING THE ATONEMENT MUST BE A MAN

In order to qualify as mediator, the one making the atonement that would accomplish salvation by grace must be a man. Since the children whom the Father had given to him in the covenant were men and ***“partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).*** Again Paul writes: ***“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and***

faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

To be an acceptable daysman Christ must be able to lay his hand upon man as well as God. Thus he who was in the form of God laid hold of the nature of man to accomplish an acceptable atonement. Therefore Paul wrote: ***“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the MAN, Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).*** Again he wrote: ***“For since by man came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead” (I Cor. 15:21).***

Death came by man, Christ must be man to bring the resurrection of the covenant-seed. Separation and enmity came by man; mediation and reconciliation must come by man. The Mediator who accomplished the atonement was the MAN, Jesus Christ.

THE MEDIATOR MAKING THE ATONEMENT MUST BE SINLESS

Under the law, no lamb was to be offered if it had a spot or a blemish. Such sacrifices were an abomination to God; He hated them. If such perfection were demanded in the type, certainly the true Lamb of God must be spotless and free of blemish. No sin must be found in him. He must be One who ***“had done no violence”*** and there must not be ***“any deceit in his mouth”*** when God ***“shalt make his soul an offering for sin” (Isa. 53:9-10).*** God called Jesus ***“My righteous servant”*** who shall ***“justify many; for he shall bear their iniquity” (Isa. 53:11).***

The Lamb of God must be one ***“who knew no sin”*** if he is to be ***“made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21).*** Our Mediator, the one who accomplished the salvation that is by grace through his atoning sacrifice, could do so because he ***“did no sin neither was any guile found in his mouth” (I Pet. 1:22).*** ***“We have not a 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).*** Salvation for the unjust must be accomplished through the suffering of the JUST ONE. ***1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.***

THE MEDIATOR MAKING THE ATONEMENT MUST BE HOLY

It is not enough that the Mediator simply be sinless; He must possess a positive holiness. Jesus met this requirement fully and abundantly.

The angel said to Mary: ***“That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Lu. 1:35).*** Those who crucified Christ were gathered together ***“against thy holy child (servant) Jesus,”*** prayed the congregation at Jerusalem (Acts 4:27). Our great High Priest is declared to be ***“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, as those high priests (Aaronic priests), to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s” (Heb. 7:26-27).*** Being holy and sinless, it was unnecessary for Jesus to offer any sacrifice for his own sins. He had no sin and was positively holy. His holiness is, therefore, imputable to his people.

THE MEDIATOR MAKING THE ATONEMENT MUST ACT VOLUNTARILY

I shall never forget the infamous and blasphemous rock opera called ***Jesus Christ Superstar***. In it Jesus was portrayed as a reluctant, involuntary victim. Let me cry aloud that this was a blasphemous lie! When our Mediator went to Golgotha he did so willingly, readily, voluntarily, joyfully, and with delight.

The Psalmist described the attitude of Christ thusly: ***“Then said I, Lo. I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God” (Psa. 40:7-8).*** Jesus declared: ***“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me” (Jn. 4:34).*** ***“I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Psa. 50:5-6).***

We are admonished as we run the Christian race to do so ***“looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who FOR THE JOY that was set before him endured the cross, despising (counting as nothing) the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:3).*** In the light of these verses we can know that our Saviour died willingly and voluntarily. ***“What shall I say?”*** asked Jesus, ***“Father save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.”***

THE MEDIATOR MAKING THE ATONEMENT MUST BE UNITED WITH THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM HE IS MAKING ATONEMENT

In the redemptive work of Christ in the covenant of grace he did not lay hold of angels. Nor did he lay hold of the whole human race. He only laid hold of the **“seed of Abraham”** (*Heb. 2:16*). These are his people and **“he shall save his people from their sins”** (*Matt. 1:21*).

His people were **“chosen in him before the foundation of the world”** (*Eph. 1:4*). They were **“predestinated unto the adoption of children”** by him (*Eph. 1:5*). His people were **“created unto good works”** in him (*Eph. 2:10*). His people **“are complete in him”** and **“circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands”** in him (*Col. 2:10, 11*). His people were **“made the righteousness of God in him”** (*II Cor. 5:11*).

THE MEDIATOR MUST BE UNITED WITH THE ONE TO WHOM HE IS MAKING THE ATONEMENT

We have seen abundant evidence that Christ was united with his people in the covenant. It is also true that he was united to the Father whom he was propitiating in the atonement. **“God was in Christ”** when reconciliation was being made (*II Cor. 5:19*). Christ was with God and was God. He was made flesh and tabernacled among men but never lost his unity with the Father (*Jn. 1:1, 14*). **“I and my Father are one,”** Jesus declared (*Jn. 10:30*). **“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,”** (*Jn. 14:9*). **“Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me”** (*Jn. 14:11*). Two times in his great mediatorial prayer Jesus prayed for those given to him by the Father **“that they be one, as we are one”** (*Jn. 17:11, 22*).

Jesus Christ was fully and sufficiently united with those **for** whom he was making atonement and to the one **to** whom he was making atonement. His atonement was therefore satisfactory to the Father and efficient for the salvation of all his people.

SALVATION BY GRACE WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY THE ATONEMENT WHICH CHRIST MADE

The “gospel of the grace of God” (*Acts 20:24*) does not declare an atonement that is possible for all but assured for none. The gospel of grace does not bear news of a salvation that is merely available; it is the glorious news of salvation and atonement accomplished by our Saviour!

When Jesus came to this earth it was announced: **“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins”** (*Matt. 1:21*). It does not say that he will make salvation possible or available for his people. It declares with absolute certainty that Jesus **“shall save”** his people. Every one of his sheep he **“must bring”** and **“they shall hear”** his voice (*Jn. 10:16*). If one of the sheep of Christ were to perish he would be a failure and Matthew 1:21 would be found to be a lie.

Jesus Christ gave eternal life to as many as the Father gave to him in the covenant of grace. **“Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him”** (*Jn. 17:2*). This was the great work to which Jesus referred when he said: **“I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do”** (*Jn. 17:4*). Many would have you believe, dear reader, that Christ only commenced the work. ***The gospel of God's grace heralds its full accomplishment!***

When Christ suffered for his people, God looked upon that gory scene where the outward appearance of his Son had been so marred and mutilated that he no longer looked like a man (*Isa. 52:14*). His back was lacerated and a quivering mass of pulverized flesh. His beard had been forcefully plucked from his face. He wore a crown of thorns. Spit covered his bruised, smitten face. All his bones were out of joint. His dry, swollen tongue cleaved to his jaws forcing his mouth to remain open and dry out more and more. The nails in his feet and hands wracked his body with further pain. God turned his back upon him and let him drink of the dregs of the cup of Divine justice and wrath alone. When God looked upon that scene from the throne of justice he saw the seed which he had given to Christ (*Isa. 53:10*) and he saw the travail of Christ's soul (*Isa. 53:11*) which he had made an offering from sin (*V-10*). When he saw these things God was fully satisfied. Satisfaction was accomplished; propitiation was completed; salvation was accomplished for all the seed that God saw!

Christ could now sit down on the right hand of his Father. He had offered **“one sacrifice for sins forever”** (*Heb. 10:12*). By that one sacrifice **“he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified”** (*Heb. 10:14*). It is accomplished, finished, perfected forever!

Eternal redemption has been obtained. *“By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 10:12).* It is not something that is yet to be obtained; it has been obtained. He has paid the price in full.

CONCLUSION

When Jesus cried from the cross: *“It is finished,”* it was really finished. Salvation by grace was fully accomplished. The veil was rent and the way into the holiest was thrown open. The blessed mercy seat, hidden through the ages by the cloud of sin, the veil of wrath, was now open to every regenerated sinner. Boldly we may approach the throne of grace. The work is finished. All things are accomplished. Salvation is sure to all the seed. If he has not done so already, I pray that God may open your heart and grant you the faith to embrace this great truth: *“It is finished!”*

May God be pleased to bless this message to the hearts of the reader. If you do not know Christ, may it be an instrumental means of opening your heart to him.

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