

THE CROSS IN CONTEXT

The cross is central to the Christian faith. See - 1 Cor 2:1-2, Gal 6:14, 1 Cor 1: 23-24.
It is the one act of God by which he brings about the salvation of humanity and inaugurates the new creation

Aim

Not just a theology of the cross but that we will comprehend the magnitude of this incredible act of God and live accordingly.

Some Examples

Take a look at these passages. The actions described in them are the effects of the cross. See what they mean for our living?

2 Cor 5: 17-21 Therefore, if anyone [is] **in Christ**, [he] [is] a **new creation**; **old things have passed away**; **behold**, all things have become new. 18 Now all things [are] of God, who **has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ**, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, **not imputing their trespasses to them**, and has **committed to us the word of reconciliation**. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore [you] on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin [to] [be] sin for us, that **we might become the righteousness of God in Him**.

Eph 2:13-22 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both [groups into] one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, [which is] the Law of commandments [contained] in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man (new Humanity) , [thus] establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And 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 our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner [stone], 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Where are we going?

Unclean—► cleansed—► sanctified—► Justified—► glorified—► reconciled—► restored
to covenant relationship with God

Examine the Cross we find that there are at least **nine** things that we have been set free from.

sin,	Rom 6:8-11
law,	Romans 7:4
wrath,	Romans 5:9
Satan,	Acts 26:14
P&P,	Col 2:13-16
conscience	Heb 9:14
death,	Heb 2:14-15
world,	Gal 6:14
flesh.	Gal 5:24

None of this makes sense apart from the biblical teaching of Covenant.
 The cross is the act of God which establishes the New Covenant
 Covenant understood in terms of ancient world treatises is inadequate.
 A closer look at the OT shows that there is more to the Biblical idea of covenant than this.
 The first reference to Covenant is found in Gen 6:18, 9:8-17 See.
 God shows mercy and compassion in the face of Judgment. There is a longing in the heart of God for the Garden fellowship.

Usual term... to cut a covenant.... not here. The idea is that God is reinforcing a covenant already in existence ie. the unwritten covenant of Creation.

John tells us that God is love. The statement points to the Trinitarian relationships within the Godhead. Overflow of love from the Godhead to the creation. The creation then is not just something that God did. It is the expression of his love and the object of his love. (God saw that it was good).

This means that the creation of man is something incredible. There is a sense in which God has created humanity to share in a love relationship.

We get a little glimpse of God' intention in

Gen 3: 8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day

Gene 1:26 (NRSV) Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' 27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

The assertion that we are created in the likeness of God is a staggering claim. It is the claim that in a way each human being is the representative of God.

In places in the ancient world a sovereign set up statues of himself in various places and the subjects paid homage to the statue as to the king.

God prohibited people from making images to represent him. That is because he has created us in his image and we are his **stand-ins or viceroys**. The human person is the only image that there can be. Of Christ he says,

Heb 1: 3 He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power.....5 Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. 6 But someone has testified somewhere, 'What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them? 7 You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor, 8 subjecting all things under their feet.'

You are the covenant people of God, made in the image of God, Called to live in an all embracing communion with God and each other. You are created for holy love and your maker has bound himself to you in covenant love.

After the man & woman are excluded from Eden we see that God cannot help himself. He loves the rebels. See - Gen 6:18, Gen 26:1-4, Gen 31:3, Exod 3:10-12, Exod 6:7, Deut 26:17-19

Another glimpse of Covenant showing God's intent for his beloved.

Isai 61:1 (NASB) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me **to bind up the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;** 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 **To grant those who mourn [in] Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.** 4 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.

5 And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. 6 But you will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of [as] ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast.

7 Instead of your shame [you will have a] double [portion,] And [instead of] humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double [portion] in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs. 8 For I, the Lord, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense, And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

9 Then their offspring will be known among the nations, And their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them Because they are the offspring [whom] the Lord has blessed. **10 I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, And as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise To spring up before all the nations.**

The promises of the New covenant are specific, Jer 31:31-34, Ezek 36:24-28

This deep longing of God for his people is brought to be in Christ by this death on the cross.

Jn 17: 20 'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 **that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.** 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me

Matt 28: 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, even to the end of the age.** '

The Union Of God And Man Takes Place In The Risen Christ.

Cleansing, Justification, forgiveness must happen, they are critical but we must see that all of that serves the higher purpose of union with God. 'That union is specifically as the children or the sons of God.

Eph 1: 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

Add to that the picture of the Church as the Bride

Eph 5: 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; 26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also [does] the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and [let] the wife [see to it] that she respect her husband.

You are the covenant people of God, made in the image of God, Called to live in an all embracing communion with God and each other. You are created for holy love and your maker has bound himself to you in covenant love.

This is what the cross is all about.

THE CROSS AND COVENANT LOVE

Ahavah = election love. God's purpose for his people

Ezek 16:4 (NASB) 'As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. 5 'No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born. 6 'When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you [while you were] in your blood, 'Live!' I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!' 7 'I made you numerous like plants of the field. Then you grew up, became tall, and reached the age for fine ornaments; [your] breasts were formed and your hair had grown. Yet you were naked and bare. 8 'Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine,' declares the Lord God. 9 'Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you, and anointed you with oil. 10 'I also clothed you with embroidered cloth, and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 'And I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands, and a necklace around your neck. 12 'I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 'Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey, and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. 14 'Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you,' declares the Lord God.

Wesley Hymn, He has loved, he has loved us because he would love.

(= NT prevenient grace)

We are secure then in that he has chosen us. It is not that we have chosen him.

***Hesed* covenant love**

The love of God for his people within the covenant. Love demonstrated in this ongoing love relationship.

A covenant relationship with conditions layed down by God. (as ancient treatise)

4 points are made in OT

- Yahweh existed before Israel
- If he existed with out them he could do so again
- If he has chosen them he can reject them
- He was different from any other pagan God in that the demands of his covenant were different

Amos 3:2 '2 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Deut 28-30 Blessings and cursings?

What then are these conditions for God's blessing? The same as those of the NT.

The gospel is not like some kind of insurance policy. You pay your money and all will be well. You come to Church and do your on Sunday mornings and you will get to heaven.

The Gospel calls us into a covenant relationship with God. Some of what this means is seen very clearly in John 14.

Jn 14:15 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Ancient world, covenant, conditions. Deut 28 –30 There are blessings and cursings. Well God's Covenant places obligation on us and here they are. Keep my commandments.

16 'And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 [that is] the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, [but] **you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you.** 18 **'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.**

Here is the promise of the Covenant. We have seen it in the OT. I will be with you.

19 'After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you [will] behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. 20 'In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

The promise is repeated and expanded.

21 'He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.'

The condition is again repeated and then the promise.

Judas (not Iscariot) ^said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?' 23 Jesus answered and said to him, '**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.**

Once more we see the same things. Here it is, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;' the same thing as commandments but it brings us back to the Genesis Story. Adam and Eve listened to a different word. They refuse to hear and live in the word of God. To hear and live in the word of God makes it possible for God to come in the cool of the day and speak to us without our hiding because of our guilt and shame.

God's covenant then is to do with a love relationship in which we hear his word. In which we love him, ie. obey his commandments. There is also something else and that is sonship.

Those to whom the covenant is given are called Sons of God.

Exod 4: 22 'Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Israel is My son , My first-born.

The Promise Of The Spirit Is The Promise Of Sonship.

Romans 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,

God does not love us from a distance but embraces us within his family as Father.

The primary demand of God is this. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and love your neighbour as yourself.

DESPAIR AND HOPE

God's Ahavah or electing love reveals his innermost being. – consuming love

In his love God then entered into Covenant with creation and with mankind.

Hesed love, covenant love is God's love expressed to those who live in covenant relationship with him.

eg Joseph Gen

Gene 39:20 (NIV) Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, 21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness (covenant love) and granted him favor (grace) in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.

In a covenant the blessings of the covenant require that certain conditions are met. These are set down by the conquering king. In this case by God who is king of all creation.

Conditions for blessing -

Hear my Word – Obey my word – Jesus made that a matter of our love response, (if you love me keep my commandments Jn14:15,21,22)

Come to it in a round about way – The one whom God enters into covenant with he regards as his son. Israel my son, Exod 4:22 - NT rec Spirit sons of God and from the heart we cry out Abba Father.

We see that sonship is no small matter when we realize that sonship involves kingship.

Sonship – Kingship This is clearly seen in the case of Jesus

Psalm 2: 6 'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.' 7 I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' 10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling 12 kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Matt 3:16 And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; 17 and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'

Declaration of kingship.

Acts 2:29 'Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, 35 till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.' 36 **Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.'**

This is not only so in the case of Jesus for we see the same intention in God's words to Adam

Gen 1: 27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and

multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'

Now Adam was the son of God

Luke 3: Ca-i'nan, 38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam , the son of God.

He is also appointed as Gods vicegerent – in covenant terms we could say vassal king.

Ezek 16: 13 'Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey, and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.

These are the issues that God is addressing in the Cross. Restoring humanity to covenant relationship, as his sons, children, as his vice regents. The cross them is the means by which we are advanced to royalty. Covenant then, is tied to the idea of the kingdom of God and the people of God reigning.

Rev 3: 21 He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne , as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne

Rev 22: 3 There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; 4 they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

To understand the place of the cross in all of this we must take another look at the Eden story as it powerfully demonstrates the consequences of failure to live within the covenant set down by God, our creator, King. It shows us the devastating nature of our fall from covenant grace and points to the healing that must be effected by the cross.

Background

Eden is man's home, it is also the worship place, the place where God comes to meet with his covenant partners, his children. It is a place of fellowship, a family place.

Here in Eden, God speaks. Here Man and Woman receive God's word. God's word commands them to kingship, 'have dominion, rule' they are to rule as a covenant partner with God.

This word of God sets them up for life. The big questions are answered.

1. God's Fatherly word tells them who they are, They are children of God, they are the kings and queens of the earth. In this they are assured, empowered for life. In this word of God they live. They don't have to spend all of their lives discovering who they are.
2. It is this word of God that determines their vocation, it gives them purpose and meaning. This word instructs them for living. This is what they are to be about. In fellowship with God they are to rule over his creation. They are not aimless and without purpose.
3. This word gives hope and speaks of their future. There is a tomorrow for them. They will never be redundant. They will ever be wanted not just because they have something to do as God's vice regents, but because of who they are, beloved Children of God.

It is into this scene that Satan now comes.

It is important to understand that Satan is creature. He is created. He is not another God. He is a rebel citizen of the kingdom of Heaven. He is adversary, he is a saboteur.

It is no surprise to find him in the Garden. Here is herein the garden, at the beginning, confronting the primal pair, making a bid for God's kingdom.

We are told,

3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made

And the serpent came with great subtlety and with intent to slander God.

He came with intent to deceive the man and the woman, God's covenant partners.

He came with intent to divide God's kingdom. To usurp and overthrow God's authority and to enslave God's children by reason of their guilt.

What we need to see is how he managed to do this. He did it by coming with a different word.

Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?' 2 And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' 4 But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

This new/different word, contradicts God's word. It questions God's integrity, it slanders God.

'Has God indeed said,' .. There is no question that God exists, the devil believes in God and his cunning is that when he comes to tempt us he acknowledges that but then he opens up a discussion.

Let us have a discussion about what God has said. In the process of that discussion we are invited to question God?

Everything is up for discussion?

Love your neighbour as yourself? Who is my neighbour? (good Samaritan) God doesn't really mean everyone who comes across my path?

Don't commit adultery, seen TV soapies, a bit old hat everyone does it now days?

Honour your mother and father.... Yes but God wouldn't have said that if he had know about my parents

Eve entered the discussion in defence of God,

2 And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 'but of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' '

God is really very generous? We can eat anything at all except this one thing. When there are peaches and strawberries, and melons and pears and passionfruit and a thousand more who would be concerned with one fruit that God has kept for himself?

Eve loved God, she had no reason to doubt God's goodness, no intention of disobeying God until the discussion started.

4 And the serpent said to the woman, 'You surely shall not die!

5 'For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

God is different to what you think. You really cannot rely on what God says. God cannot be trusted?.....What God says is not true. You will not die. God is keeping something from you; the knowledge of good and evil. If you have the knowledge of good and evil you will be

like God. You can then determine how you will live. You won't have to kowtow to God nor submit to his covenant demands. Rule in life in your own right. Why should God tell you how to live. He does not want you to be like him.

The first demand of our creator and king is that we hear his word and obey his word. The moment that we give heed to another word we have breached his covenant, we deserve to die..

Seduced by wanting to be kings and rule their own lives.

2 Thess 2: 3 ...the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

They received Satan's word they rejected God's word.

The very things that they sought they lost.

They were created to rule as covenant partner with God.

They rejected God's kingship, seeking their own power, Instead of being kings they became slaves to the usurper.

1 Jn 5: 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in [the power of] the evil one

Our loyalty lies with the one whose word we hear and live in.

By refusing God's word and his covenant they have become covenant partners of Satan.

So that Satan's word inspires them to an evil heart and an evil purpose.

Satan's word not God's now determined their identity, their vocation and their future.

Their identity and person and sense of wellbeing was determined by Father God. They were Created in the image God, they were like God, righteous, holy, filled with Joy and peace loving, giving , delighting in each other.

Rejecting Father God they were adopted by Satan. Don't take the words of Jesus lightly -

Jn 8:40 'But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. 41 'You are doing the deeds of your father .' They said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father , [even] God.' 42 Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father , you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 'Why do you not understand what I am saying? [It is] because you cannot hear My word. 44 'You are of [your] father the devil , and you want to do the desires of your father .

Children Of The Evil One

about the business of the Satan and his kingdom, the world system which has risen up in rebellion against God and so they accused and blamed and lied murdered and were possessed of every evil way and filled with misery and despair for Satan's fatherly word taught them every evil under the sun.

And their hope and their future is that of their father whose intention is to destroy those who follow him for he knows that in their being they are fashioned in the image of God and so he cannot stand those whom he has seduced turns on them to accuse them, condemn them, mock them and takes away their will to live and brings them to death.

decay, death, disease, clouds in sky foreboding of judgment. pain, sickness, weeds sprung up, thorns and thistles. dandelions. Stench of death hung over creation.

Beauty, peace Eden mere dream from the past.

Worse:- Blackness not only about them but within them.

consequences:-

6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make [one] wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

V7-10 Naked/ Ashamed

Innocence;- perfect openness, free with each other. Comfortable in each others presence. Something dreadful has happened Man/ woman. For the first time they know shame.

ashamed of nakedness and sexuality, uncomfortable with Intimacy,

Intimacy which is the source and fountain of human life is contaminated by sin.

From this time always longing for intimacy...distance...because sin

driven to intimacy, their new found father will give them intimacy, illicit love and sex of every kind.. searching for relationship lost.

Second consequence

Relationship with God destroyed.. naked ashamed/Afraid

8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?'

10 And he said, 'I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.'

11 And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?'

Could not face God, father creator. Father....children.... Father provided.. loved .. wanted best.. They feared his presence because of their guilt. They had heard his word.. rejected. Now they feared the one who loved them most of all.

Alienation compounded

12 And the man said, 'The woman whom Thou gavest [to be] with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.' 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'

The woman... blame and accuse ... cannot acknowledge own sin...self justify.. blame others big slanging match. Guilt raised up barriers...between them.

Who can live with sin???

V13... Eve did the same thing... Both blamed God....

14 And the Lord God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat All the days of your life;

15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.'

Promise of the gospel yet a word of lifelong conflict and struggle.

16 To the woman He said, 'I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.'

On first reading this text it sounds as if to be ruled, to be submissive, is a punishment. It seems to say that Eves punishment is to be ruled over.

We see however that in the whole story, to be ruled by her husband is clearly not a punishment. The husband has authority over her from the beginning. His authority over her has nothing to do with their fall from grace. She is created to be his helper, he has authority. This is also clear in that Adam is twice said to name his wife, (2:23, 3:20), she belongs to him. (contentious.. don't give away bride)

What does it mean then when God says,

your urge shall be to your husband but he shall rule over you.

The usual way to understand this is to say though the woman has a deep urge for he man, that man will now rule over his wife in a harsh domineering exploitative way. eg. (Who would be a woman in the Moslem world?) (We not too good either)

to love and to cherish becomes to desire and to dominate (Kidner, 71)

Eph- Paul submit to one another in love wives submit to your husbands, husbands love your wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her.

The headship of Adam in Eden was surely like the headship of Christ. A headship of caring and serving in love. (Do yourself a favour.. love your wife)

A second way to understand this – Susan Foh – She says, the expression 'your urge will be to your husband' does not mean that the woman craves for her man however he treats her.

In 4:7 the same Hebrew word urge/desire is used. The text reads

4:6 The LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.'

- Sin is crouching ready to get you, you must master it.
- So here it means that there will be an ongoing struggle between the man and the woman. Her urge towards her husband is an urge for independence.
- So in Chap 4, 'sins desire is for you, sin will attempt to Lord it over you. So here it can mean that the woman will attempt to lord it over you, to be independent of you, to exercise Lordship apart from you.
- Man you must master it.
- How can a man master his wife's urge for independence, her urge to be a lord apart from him? What is he to do? Tie her up by the leg to the kitchen sink?
- How does Christ master our urge for independence?
- Paul – The love of Christ constrains/controls me.

JUDGMENT FOR THE MAN

3:17 And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

Man's judgment also relates to his role as provider and food gatherer. There is no curse on the man but on the ground, thorns and thistles will spring up and you will live by the sweat of your brow.

And God says to the man you were taken from the ground, you will return to the ground.

Heb play on words, *adam adamah*, taken from the dust earth boy, living dust.

The fantasy of 'being like God is to end with sorrow sweat and a pile of dust.' Ashes to ashes, earth to earth and dust to dust. There is your greatness Adam.

The diary of a young airman shot down in WW11 tells of an incident in which this young man was picking bunches of Lilac in a field. As he bent down to pick some he pushed back a tree branch and there was the dead body of another young soldier. He recalls how he was absolutely shocked and horrified. Not because of the body itself, he has seen many, but because in his hand there was such life and fragrance and beauty, and there on the ground was the obscene horror of death. We cannot reconcile the two things. Life in all its beauty. Death with all its vileness.

Our Genesis story is profound. It deals with life's greatest contradictions. We wake up to they joyful singing of birds, we find joy in the sunrise, in eating and drinking, in watching children play, in loving and in being loved, fellowship. Yet in every new day we are confronted by the obscenity of death. Yesterday a young woman killed on our roads, a famous comedian fell off his roof while fixing his TV antenna and was killed, a child died with cancer, a plane crashes and 30 lives are lost. Our hospitals are overcrowded with those suffering from sicknesses and diseases.

We cry out Why, Why this great obscenity.

Some try and tell us that this is just nature. Death is natural. The young airman did not see it this way. It is unnatural, shocking, a denial, an enemy of life itself.

But every sickness every death remind us of who we are, reminds us of our failed quest for immortality. We are mortals, we are not Gods. (yet still we work hard to live forever and death dates us by the throat.

The miracles of Jesus declare that sickness and death are not natural. They are unnatural and were never meant to be. Our quest for immortality

The Bible story is itself shocking in its conclusion, it does not just say, well that's the way it is, its just natural, it is the cycle of life.

It very simply says, at the back of death lies human guilt.

Put another way, the wages sin is death.

I cannot attribute my death to nature, to biology, to old age, The wages of sin is death?

And so every day I am confronted with sickness and death and the shock that I am not God.

3:22 Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever' -- 23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

The tree of life was there in Eden for the man and the woman to eat. But now they must be thrown out of Eden so that they cannot now eat and be eternally evil.

What a tragic story. What a hopeless word. There is no hope, no good news here.
Yet hope is scattered all over the story.
The curse on Satan is hope for us...

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.'

Easter will tell us the story of the one who came to hang upon a cross. The one who bore our sin in his body on the tree, The one that all creation long for as in his coming again he will set creation free from its bondage to serve mankind with joy.

Adam saw this hope

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

In the face of death, Adam heard the promise of God, a conqueror of Satan, a redeemer.
In the face of Death Adam named his wife Eve, mother of the living.

And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them.

Another glimpse of Grace. The Heb word clothed is unusual. It is not the usual word for clothing someone. It is the word used for just two things.

It is used when a king honours someone and clothes them in a special robe.

It is used when the priest is robed (usually by Mosses)

FROM DAMNATION TO SALVATION

Deut 28 the blessing and the cursing.

God is outraged that his covenant partners, made in his image created to live in love, should profane his holy name.

Wrath of God.

Sin is first of all a breach of covenant We have turned our backs on our creator and Father. We have been unfaithful to God who has loved us. We have rejected our sonship, lost our righteousness, our right standing with God. We have chosen to be enemies, we are under God's wrath and deserve to die. We find ourselves trapped in a hellish abyss from which we cannot escape. Our sin and alienation for God is the cause of our existential anguish and pain, our sense of lostness and not knowing who we are any why we are here.

Forsyth says God's judgment has to do with God's holiness.

Sin, a filthy black mass of evil has taken hold of humanity and is bringing those whom God has created, and loved down into death. Robbing them of their beauty as those created in the image of God.

God's covenant action, blessing and cursing, Read:- Deut 29:1, 29:10-30:4

Ezra 8:22 The hand of our God is for good upon them that seek him and the power of his wrath is against all that forsake him

Amos 3:1 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt: 2 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities....

6 Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does evil befall a city, unless the LORD has done it?

WHAT IS WRATH:- its nature and purpose.

While God's love is spontaneous to his own being, his wrath is called forth by the wickedness of his creatures. It is the wounding of his gracious love, the rejection of his proffered mercy which evokes his holy wrath. In the total Biblical portrayal his wrath is not so much an emotion or a frame of mind as it is the settled opposition of God to evil. Bakers dict

TV. 2 policemen -- this is not a crime it is a sin which leads to damnation.

Younger, - I don't believe in damnation.

Older – you don't believe in damnation, therefore you don't believe in salvation, you don't believe in redemption so you live without hope not knowing right from wrong.

See what it means to be under wrath

Roma 1:18 (NASB) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

Wrath is both present and future. We are saved from it by the Lord Jesus Christ

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but **they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

This is what it means to be under wrath - Claiming to be wise they became fools... will not see .. cannot see.. lack the wisdom of life – the wisdom of God as gift Bad news --- Freed from wrath (if any man lack wisdom...ask)

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 24 Therefore **God gave them over** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

This is what it means to under wrath – it is to be given over and caught up in our idolatry. Idolatry is the consequence of not ack God. Idolatry fear bondage... pokies bondage.... (Govt \$1in 8 comes form gambling into the state coffers)

To be under wrath is also to be given over to lust and impurity.

26 For this reason **God gave them over to degrading passions**; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

This is what it means to be under wrath – it is to become perverse and twisted. Twist the truth and the truth will twist you.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper**, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; [they are] gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

This is what it means to be under wrath - -- and the guilt, turmoil the despair, that all this brings is more than we can bear.

Ps 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I declared not my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Tornier Guilt and Grace:- Man's punishment is precisely his intolerable guilt, the unconfessed guilt, bitter, repressed, provoking revolt which seems in his eyes to be an act of abandonment. He feels himself placed under a curse, repulsed and driven away from God. A final result of the law of guilt is insecurity.

In Eph Paul writes,

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest. Bad news

This makes it sound as if God's wrath only falls on those who are not Christians.

Just as God's wrath is directed against his covenant people who are unfaithful in the OT, we see the same in the NT.

Col 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, (As Eph 5:5)

Luther:- This is the liberty wherewith Christ hat made us free, not from an earthly bondage, from a Babylonian captivity or from the Turks but from God's everlasting wrath, and where is this done? In the conscience.

AT THE CROSS,

'Christ confronts us as the reconciler'

John 3: 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

In the coming of Jesus we see that God is about the reconciliation of the world. In the depths of God's being Father Son and Spirit long for communion and fellowship to be restored with rebellious man.

Aboriginal Culture. Reconciliation is a most difficult thing to effect.

In God's Culture Reconciliation is a most difficult thing to bring about.

Christ then must first make propitiation for man's sin,

Propitiation – Explain The term *propitiation* carries within it the idea of appeasing anger, of turning away the wrath of God.

It is important to understand the nature of God's judgement.

Forsyth says,

Do not think of God's judgment as an arbitrary infliction but as the necessary reaction to sin in a holy God. There alone do you have the *divine* necessity of the cross in a sinful world.

Forsyth is saying that God's judgment has to do with God's holiness.

Sin, a filthy black mass of evil has taken hold of humanity and is bringing those whom God has created, and loved down into death. Robbing those created in the image of God of their beauty and glory as children of God.

When we speak of the Cross we understand that at least three things need to happen.

- ◆ Christ then had the task of turning away the holy wrath of God
- ◆ To do this the sin of mankind must be judged and destroyed
- ◆ In order to bring about reconciliation the judgment of God must be executed upon those who have sinned. (What! see lect 5)

This will then give way to mankind being reconciled, recreated and made new.

The Cross

He turned away the wrath of God from us by making propitiation for sin. He did this by sucking up into himself all **of that filthy black mass of evil** that had fallen on humanity. Christ did not merely take the penalty of our sin

1 Pet 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

2 Cor 5:21 **For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Is 53: 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

What does it mean to be made sin?

What is it to be sinner? Hell.

What does it mean to be made sin? It is to be totally polluted by sin. To be so overwhelmed by sin that it rules over you. Its will becomes your will. Your every thought and action is sin and wickedness. Christ became sin for us. He gave himself to up to be polluted and defiled as the sin bearer to bring about our reconciliation.

In the Australian Aboriginal culture reconciliation is a most difficult thing to bring about. **In God's Culture** Reconciliation is horribly difficult, painful and costly to God and to his dear Son.

Where is your sin this right now?

Is it pressing hard down on your conscience? Terrorising you, causing your body to waste away in your guilt and shame?

God has reached out to you in Christ to reconcile you. Repent, ask for forgiveness.

You may be a Christian, in Christ yet you still wallow around in the guilt of your past.

If you are in Christ then let me ask you, Where is your sin this right now?

It has been borne in his body on the tree, it has been consumed by the fire of God's holy love and destroyed at the cross.

Roma 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

What remains is only a shadow from the past. Don't hang on to, or play with shadows. Cry out, There is now no condemnation. I am forgiven, I am forgiven.

Two thing have been accomplished.

- ◆ Christ has turning away the holy wrath of God from us by taking it into himself
- ◆ In doing this the sin of mankind is judged and its power destroyed.

There is one more thing yet to consider. I have said that there can be no reconciliation until God has executed his executed his judgment upon those who have sinned !

FROM JUDGMENT TO PEACE

We have come to see that at its heart, sin is a breach of Covenant.

We have said that God is outraged that those whom he has entered into covenant relationship with have rejected his love and refused to live as his dear children.

As we have examined the idea of God's wrath we have seen that the action of God's wrath is to give us up to the foolishness of our own thinking and ways (Romans 1). God also withholds his blessings and we come under the covenant curses. (Deut 28-30).

The teaching of the wrath of God provides a framework for us to understand the evil and wickedness that we see around us. (Given up in our sin to its consequences). It also liberates us from the 'moral campaigner mentality' where we are always preaching against the evils of the world. The sins and evils that pervert, pollute and corrupt society are the consequence of our primary sin which is our breach of covenant – failure to acknowledge our creator and live as his children. There can be no true reform, nor is there any remedy apart from the reconciliation effected by God in the Cross. Our message is not a word against.... but it is Gospel, good news that we are reconciled to God in Jesus.

If sin is breach of covenant then we need to clearly understand what forgiveness is. Vincent Taylor and eminent Greek scholar commenting on the word 'forgiveness' (αζφιζημι) says, 'as always, when this word is used, forgiveness is the setting aside of the obstacles to fellowship'. ¹

Reconciliation is not an easy matter but God has chosen to reconcile the world to himself at the cross. The work of the cross is the working out of the judgement and so the wrath of God upon humanity. In speaking of his impending death Jesus said,

John 12:31 (NRSV) Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out.

The Cross is the judgement of man in Christ, the complete judgement of God upon all the sin of all humanity in all of time, for Christ is the propitiation not just for our sins but for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn 2:1-2).

There cannot be partial atonement – sin has either been dealt with in its totality or it has not been dealt with at all. We may ask, are all then saved? The answer is no, as not all accept God's reconciliation but reject the reconciler.

We finished by saying that two things have been accomplished.

- ◆ Christ has turned away the holy wrath of God from us by taking it into himself
- ◆ In doing this the sin of mankind is judged and its power destroyed.

There is yet something else that we need to understand and this will help to set our guilty minds at rest.

- In order to bring about reconciliation the judgment of God must be executed upon those who have sinned.

¹ Taylor, V. *The Gospel According to Mark* (Macmillan & Co Ltd 1952) p.243 Mk 3:29.

A simple substitutionary atonement as is sometimes heard is quite wrong.

eg. Big Tom taking a beating for little Freddie? Imagine trying to do this in a court?

In order for God to be just, and to bring about reconciliation, the judgment of God must in fact be executed upon those who have sinned, not just on some scapegoat. How can this be?

Karl Barth said,

That Jesus Christ died for us, does not mean, therefore, that we do not have to die but that we have died in and with him, that as the people we were we have been done away with and destroyed.

Paul understood this matter perfectly. He constantly speaks about being *in Christ*. We were in Adam, now we are in Christ. This means that what has happened to him has happened to us.

Roma 6:3 (NASB) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus **have been baptized into His death?** 4 Therefore **we have been buried with Him through baptism into death**, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if **we have become united with [Him] in the likeness of His death**, certainly we shall be also [in the likeness] of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that **our old man was crucified with [Him,]** that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for **he who has died is freed from sin.**

These three verses indicate that we have taken part in the fate of the Son of man. 2000 yrs ago he took me up into himself and as he bore my sin and died for my sin I died then with him. I now take hold of that death by faith which is expressed in my baptism

In that action of God at the cross 2000 yrs ago the judgement of God fell me as it fell upon Christ. I am crucified with Christ. Gal 2:20 What we were in Adam is finished.

Again we need to see that this is not something that we have to do. It happened when we were crucified with Him. V4 **We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death**, 'Baptism is presented as our funeral rite and a decisive break with the life and values of the present age.'²

Colin Gunton is right in saying,

.... to undergo baptism is to accept a sentence of death, metaphorical but real. To be baptised is to undergo judgement by accepting the work of Christ in our stead. ...

You in Christ – not a theological thing? This is a life thing. If you are in Christ know that your judgment has been effected. When He died you died. When he rose from the dead never to die again you rose to life with him. In Christ you are now at one with God. You are restored to covenant relationship. You have stepped out of Wrath into blessing. Out of alienation into sonship, out of death into life.

Colin Gunton

The end of baptism is, therefore, the actuality not simply the possibility, of a new form of existence. There is a *new act of creation*, (2 Cor 5:17).

What a relief to know that we have been judged in Christ, our Judgement has passed,

- there is no longer any condemnation (Rom 8:1),
- we will never again face judgement.

²Peterson, p69

- We will not die again because of our sin. (Jn 11:26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die)
- Recalling Romans one we see that, our darkened minds are now flooded with the wisdom of God.
- Our idols who have held us in bondage are recognised and discarded as empty and worthless
- Our immorality, perversity and deviant behaviour is washed away as the love of God floods our lives by the Spirit and we learn to live in holy love.
- Our bones which waste away because of the anguish of our guilt are healed as we find peace

This gospel liberates.

That cry, 'my God, my God Why have you forsaken me?' indicates that God's wrath has been poured out, our judgment has been effected. They cry, 'It is Finished' tells us that all that was necessary has been done, God has worked reconciliation for all who will receive his Christ. In Christ wrath gives way to peace.

Peace is the opposite to wrath. Peace is living in covenant and enjoying all of its blessings. So God seeks us out in covenant love to once more bind us to himself and bless us.

Is 57:15 For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. 16 For I will not contend for ever, nor will I always be angry; for from me proceeds the spirit, and I have made the breath of life. 17 Because of the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry, I smote him, I hid my face and was angry; but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart. 18 I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and requite him with comfort, creating for his mourners the fruit of the lips. 19 Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the LORD; and I will heal him.

Is 54 :10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

There is no peace of God apart from Christ, He is our peace and only in him do we enjoy the blessing of the covenant.

Paul tells us that as we are justified by faith and now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1).

Peace is always more than a subjective good feeling and the concept of peace as opposite to war is only a part of the thought here. Dunn commenting on Romans says that the Jewish concept of peace is found in the greeting 'shalom'. It is 'a prayer for the unbounded and wholly generous outreaching power of God which makes for humankind's best well-being' God has generously, graciously reached out to us for our good and he has done this through Jesus. His declaration of peace is also his declaration that he will love us and do good to us. If you are justified you are already at peace with God. You are drawn into fellowship with God and his unbounded and generous power reaches out to you for your good.

Rom 8:28 We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

Eph 2:14 (NASB) For He Himself is our peace, who made both [groups into] one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, [which is] the Law of commandments [contained] in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, [thus] establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And 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 our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

1 Th 5:9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Rom 5: 9 Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, **we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.**

Jn 14:27 'Peace I leave with you ; My peace I give to you ; not as the world gives, do I give to you . Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Go in Peace.

THE CROSS AND THE CONSCIENCE

Introduction

Last week I spoke of the cross being the judgment of God. See p. 13ff of the NCTM booklet, 'The Judgments of God', by Deane Metheringham.

Martin Luther understood that God's wrath is worked out in our conscience. In his commentary on Galatians he says,

'This is the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, not from an earthly bondage, from the Babylonian captivity, or from the tyranny of the Turks, but from God's everlasting wrath. And where is this done? In the conscience. That is to say, we are made free in such sort, that our conscience is now free and quiet, not fearing the wrath to come.'

The NT writer puts it this way,

Hebr 9:13 (NASB) For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Conscience – some quotations and definitions

Philo. It is born in every soul and makes its abode within it, not is it want to admit anything that offends. Its property is ever to hate the evil and love the good. The same thing is at once accuser and judge. When one stirred up as accuser it lays charge, it makes accusation, it puts to shame. Then a judge it teaches, warns and counsels the soul to repent. If its persuasions but prevail, joyfully it is reconciled, but if it cannot prevail it gives no peace but makes war. Never does it depart by day nor by night but it stabs us with a goad and inflicts wounds that know no healing until it snaps the thread of that soul's pitiful and accursed life.

Dictionary... derived from the latin 'conscientia' to be conscious--to know with.

Hallesby. Conscience, to know together with something or someone .. God. Thus conscience is that knowledge of consciousness by which a man knows he is conforming to the moral law, or to the will of God. Conscience is remarkable in that it is a kind of other self which stands outside the self and judges the self. The judgment which the other self pronounces on the self is objective and unbiased. This is a remarkable judgment seat indeed. In other courts of justice we require the judge to be a disinterested party in the case, fearing that his judgment might otherwise be prejudiced. But at the judgment bar of conscience it is the accused person himself who passes judgment.

Aboriginal folk law....The invisible Mielba, man's watchful twin spirit, always present to punish disrespect of the sacred.

Eric Fromm Conscience judges our functioning as human beings, it is knowledge within oneself, knowledge of one's success or failure.. it is more than knowing it is a feeling. It has an effective quality involving the total personality and not only the intellect.

PT Forsyth. Conscience makes us man , makes us one, makes us eternal. Man of all creatures is bestowed with conscience and without conscience he is not truly man.

Tillich:- Sin is mans' estrangement from God and himself.....sin is an active denial of man's essence, a contradiction in his being and existence. (at odds with himself, not himself, out of sorts?....)

We have seen conscience at work in the Garden of Eden story. Where are you Adam? . I was afraid. He had never behave this way before.

See Ps 32:1-5 Ps 38:1-13, 16-18, 21-22, Ps 51:1-13

The conscience has a threefold function.³

- ◆ Obligatory – It urges us to do right and restrains us from doing wrong
- ◆ Judicial – It passes judgment upon our decisions and acts
- ◆ Executive – It executes its judgment in the heart, it condemns us by causing disquiet, unrest, distress, shame and terrors. It also commends us when we do what is right.

eg. Jack & Rose

Gurnal:- The envenomed head of sins arrows lies burning in the conscience and by its continual voking and throbbing there keeps the poor sinner out of quiet, ye in unsupportable torment and horror in his guilt. By it the creature is alarmed unto judgment and bound over to the punishment due to his sins which being no less than the infinite wrath of the eternal living God. He therefore who would us an argument to pacify a distressed conscience that lies roasting on the burning coals of God's wrath kindled by his guilt must quench these coals and bring him the certain news of this joyful message that his sins are all pardoned and that God whose wrath doth soak right in does undoubtedly ye everlastingly reconcile to him. This and no other argument will stop the mouth of conscience and bring the creature true peace with his own thoughts.

Gurnal:- The conscience demands as much to satisfy it as God does to satisfy him for the wrong that we have done. Nothing can take of the conscience from accusing but that which takes off God from threatening. Conscience is Gods sergeant that he employs to arrest the sinner. Now the sergeant has no power to release the prisoner but listens as to wether the debt be fully paid or the creditor fully satisfied and then and not till then he discharges the prisoner.

Cleansing the conscience from dead works

Heb 9:6-10, 12-14,

Dead works somehow relate to the Jewish cultus, the ritual and teaching (see 6:1f) that gives no peace and leads instead to death. This relates also to acts of justification apart from God's justification.⁴ This may involve those acts by which we attempt to get right with God.

OT context Numbers 19:1-9, 20-21. The point is that unless we who are unclean are made clean we cannot participate in the worship of God. That cleansing must extend to the conscience for us to offer acceptable worship.

When the conscience sees that the debt has been fully paid then it can let us live in peace.

Baptism and the conscience 1 Peter 3:18-4:6

Further Reading:-

Bingham, G. *The conscience – Conquering or Conquered* (NCTM Publications 1987)

³ *Bakers Dictionary of Theology* (Pickering and Inglis 1960)

⁴ Ellingworth, P. *Commentary of Hebrews : New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Eerdmans 1993)

THE CROSS & THE CONSCIENCE – THE CHRISTIAN AND SIN

We finished last week by saying:-

Paul Tournier writes,

The only true guilt is not to depend upon God and God alone... you shall have no other gods before me.

My parents are not God, my school is not God, my society and Church are not God. My conscience must be captive to the word of God and to the Spirit who teaches us the things of Christ. Here my conscience is secured. It rightly address my guilt but justly frees me to walk at liberty from the tyranny of false guilts and those who would play God to me.

Such statements of course raise questions that need to be addressed. What are we to say about the authority of the Church? Is this encouraging a situation were everyone does what is right in their own eyes? Think of Luther; he belonged to the Church, loved the Church and sought to stand against its errors. He came under the Churches authority and discipline until he perceived that it was not acting under the Lordship of Christ and by the Word of God. At that point he elected to live by the word of God. Luther did not set himself up as a judge of the church but he bowed to the judgment of the Scriptures and was obedient to God rather than an erring Church.

eg. The young fisherman.

Recall that True guilt relates to a breach of law, a breach of covenant. eg. civil law.

In speaking of true and false guilts we also need to discern between those matters which are cultural and those which are required by God.

Col 2:8, 14-16, 20-23, Rom 14

eg. Spurgeon and smoking. You are not sure of your justification are you?

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. As we sit under the Word of God the Spirit re-educates the conscience and the mind.

Sin and the Christian

Romans 6:1-4.. Walk in newness of life. **Note V2. We who died to sin** ? Died to sin in what manner? to its penalty and to its power. Sin cannot now bring into judgment.

6:5-6 United with him in a death like his.. V10... Death to sin. V6..Old self crucified..... Old man.. What we were in Adam.

6:8-14 **Consider** yourselves dead to sin. **Reckon** count on.. The just shall live by faith

Reckon.. consider the Word of God. eg Abraham.. 90yrs old

*Yet he was strong in faith giving glory to God being persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform. **Reckoned** on the Word of God Baptism... Buried with Christ died to sin. Remember Rom 7, the good that I would I do not.. 8:1-4 No condemnation and the Spirit enabling to keep the law.*

The Good I do not, the conscience and the confession syndrome.

1John 1:5-2:6

The problem

1: 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

So you say that you are a Christian? Do you ever walk in darkness? Is there still darkness and evil in your heart? Does that mean that you are not a Christian?

1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

What if I have sinned and have not confessed that sin? What if I sin and then get run over by a truck before I confess my sin? Will I be saved.

2: 3 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 4 The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

What goes on in your life? Do you live in obedience, Do you always obey Christ's commands? If you disobey then does that mean that you are you no longer a child of God?

Come to a passage like this it can stir up anxiety, guilt, fear and uncertainty about our salvation.

Listen to these statements and see if you agree with them

- It is very difficult to be forgiven
- You are only forgiven for the sins that you have confessed
- Keep short accounts with God
- If there is sin and disobedience in your life then clearly you are not a Christian.
- Your salvation depends on you confessing your sin and on your obedience to God

We have said that the Cross is the judgement of man in Christ, the complete judgement of God upon all the sin of all humanity in all of time, for Christ is the propitiation not just for our sins but for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn 2:1-2).

Cannot be partial atonement – it is all dealt with or it is not dealt with at all

Are all then saved? no, not all accept God's reconciliation.

Have you accepted God's reconciliation in Christ? Yes. then have no doubts or fears.

If you are in Christ then let me ask you, Where is your sin right now?

It has been borne in his body on the tree, it has been consumed by the fire of God's holy love and destroyed at the cross.

There is therefore now no condemnation.... As far as the east is from the west... **What remains is only a shadow from the past.**

So where is your sin this at this moment?

Is it pressing hard down on your conscience? Terrorising you, causing you to be fearful and uncertain, causing your body to waste away in your guilt and shame,?

There are two possible reasons for this.

1. You have never repented and turned to Christ—If that is the case then hear this God has reached out to you in Christ to reconcile you. Repent, ask for forgiveness.
2. Christian, in Christ yet you still wallow around in the guilt of your past. You do not understand grace and you are caught up in the Cinderella after midnight syndrome.

Titu 3:4 (NRSV) But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, **not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy**, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, 7 so that, **having been justified by his grace**, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Heb 10: 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God... 14 because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

Listen to these statements and see if you agree with them

Christ died for all of your sins—past present and future

You do not have to confess every sin for it to be forgiven

You will never in this life be sinless or perfect yet you are just and holy in Christ

Cinderella – went home after the ball and next morning woke up her heart beating with excitement she got up early and rushed around and did her chores but then she looked in the mirror, her hair was a mess, she had dirt on her face, her clothes were in tatters and she burst into tears and cried out. It was only a dream? I'm not really Cinderella the beautiful princess at all. But of it wasn't long before the handsome prince appeared and she rediscovered who she was.

John and the Gnostics. explain

Confession—Where is it found in the New Testament?

Matt 3: 5 (and parallel in Mark) People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. 6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

In Acts 19 A demon announced who Jesus was and we read—

19:18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.

James 5: 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

New Testament Gospel preaching speaks of Repenting, believing, being converted but there is no mention of Confession.

In the context of John's letter our confession of sin is contained in our repentance, our believing our turning to walk in Christ. The Gnostics would not acknowledge that they had ever sinned. They would not acknowledge that their evil lifestyle was sinful.

I am not saying that if we sin we should not acknowledge our sin when we do something wrong. We must do that. But understand – your confession does not bring about our forgiveness. What brings about your forgiveness? The act of God at the Cross. (confessional Churches).

I'm sorry Lord, I've messed up again. I'm so glad that I'm forgiven.

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

THE CROSS – CLEANSING AND SANCTIFYING

To commune with God we must be both clean and holy, cleansed and sanctified.

1Cor 6:9 (RSV) Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

We see God's purpose

Col 1: 18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. 19 For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to **reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.** 21 And you, who once were estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him,

We can say that the holiness of God is the essence of his being

Person too afraid to come into the Chapel - unclean

Before we can be reconciled to God we must first be made clean

(See Mark's Gospel ,1:21 The man with the unclean Spirit 1:40 A man with leprosy 2:1 The paralytic, 5:21f Dead Girl, Woman with issue of blood, 7:24 Syro Phoenician woman, 7:1 Clean and unclean)

OHP – Diagram – Holy – Common – Unclean

God alone is Holy and anyone or anything only becomes holy in association with God.

The opposite to being holy is to be common or profane, (not in a derogatory sense but available for common use). That which is unclean has no contact with God. So as sinners alienated from God we are unclean. To come into the presence of God we must first of all be purified, made clean and then sanctified

1 Cor 6: 9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers--none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

That process of reconciliation has involved Christ taking our sin into himself and bearing the fullness of its horror and vileness, being abandoned, given up to God's righteous judgments and wrath. We were united with him in that death so that as he died to sin we died in him and with him. The great exchange was effected He took our sin, in exchange he gave us the gift of righteousness.. In the Cross Christ justified us before the Father who is the judge of all creation. He forgave us for our sins. In doing so he cleansed and purified us. That means that we who were unclean and far away from God have been made clean.

We are, impure, godless, unholy unclean as we accept Jesus and his reconciling death we walk away cleansed, purified, forgiven.

Scripture says –

Hebr 1:3 (RSV) He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Eph 5: Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, 27 so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind--yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.

Titu 2:14 (RSV) who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

James Denney—

There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Their relation to God is not determined now in the very least by sin or law; it is determined by Christ, the propitiation and by faith. The position of the believer is not that of one trembling at the judgement seat, or of one for whom everything remains somehow in a condition of suspense. It is of one who has the assurance of a divine love which has gone deeper than all his sins. ⁵

Forsyth says—

Christian faith is our life-experience of complete forgiveness and final redemption in Christ. It does not *include* forgiveness; it *is* forgiveness—The feeble gospel preaches, 'God is ready to forgive'; the mighty gospel preaches, 'God has redeemed'.

We have been unclean – in Jesus we are cleansed or purified and are now classified as common (profane). There is still more to be done if we are to enter the presence of God.

Eph 1:4 just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

We are still not sanctified or holy. It helps to see that the creation itself is neither holy nor unclean but common (profane) and being purified from our sins we are brought into this common state. But God in his grace has gone much further. Not only have we been purified and made clean we have also been sanctified and made holy.

That which is holy is chosen by God, sanctified and brought into his presence to be his own possession.

V4 just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

To be sanctified is a very exiting thing. To be sanctified means that we are set aside for God. He brings us into his presence to be his very own.

Levi 19:2 (NRSV) Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

We are taken into his presence and placed before him as his holy ones, his saints.

It is important to understand that Holiness is not perfection

Dr John Kleinig writes,

When God calls us to holiness he does not call us to a perfect human life or even to the realisation of our true humanity; He calls us to himself and his own divine life.. We are to become as he is, to share in his being. ⁶

He then quotes Andrew Murray,

⁵ Denney, p159

⁶ John Kleinig, *Sharing in God's Holiness* (Lutheran Laymen's League, 175 Archer St, North Adelaide, 5006), p9

Holiness is not something we do or attain; it is the communication of Divine Life, the inbreathing of the Divine nature, the power of the divine presence resting upon us..... the Holy One calls us to himself that he may make us holy in possessing Himself. (Kleinig p9)

We are sanctified by being taken up into Christ.

We are told that—

1 Cor 1:30 you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,

Heb 10: 10 And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Understand that sanctification like justification is also is a gift not a work.⁷

- Christ has Justified you
- Christ has given you his righteousness,
- Christ has made you clean,
- Christ has Sanctified you and made you Holy.

Are you in Christ Jesus? Then you will never be more holy than you are right now.

Sanctification has often been understood as an ongoing process of becoming holy.

Part of the grace of sanctification is God's enabling to live holy lives so there is a sense in which sanctification is an ongoing process.

Are we holy because we live holy lives?

Do we live holy lives because we are holy people?

If we are holy because we live holy lives then we are sanctified by works not by Christ.

Martin Luther said that the Christian is simultaneously both saint and sinner.

The demands of the Law have been fully satisfied in Christ, and Christian must trust in Christ, not their own works for their righteousness and for their right standing before God.

From God's perspective we are perfectly justified and sanctified in Christ.

It is not how well we live our lives as Christians that establishes our righteousness or our holiness. That would simply be 'works' with Christian paint on them. Rather, the basis of our justification and sanctification is the finished work of Christ.

If you get the order of those mixed up, you'll end up with a religion other than Christianity with works not grace.

Our motivation for holy living then is the result, not the cause of our salvation.

Jesus said, 'Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.'

1Cor 1:26 (RSV) For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; 27 but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption;

⁷ Geoffrey Bingham, *Great and Glorious Grace*. (New Creation Publications 1988) P 57ff , 66ff

LIVING IN THE CROSS —SANCTIFICATION AND LAW

When speaking of sanctification and holiness it may help to see that these things are the one.

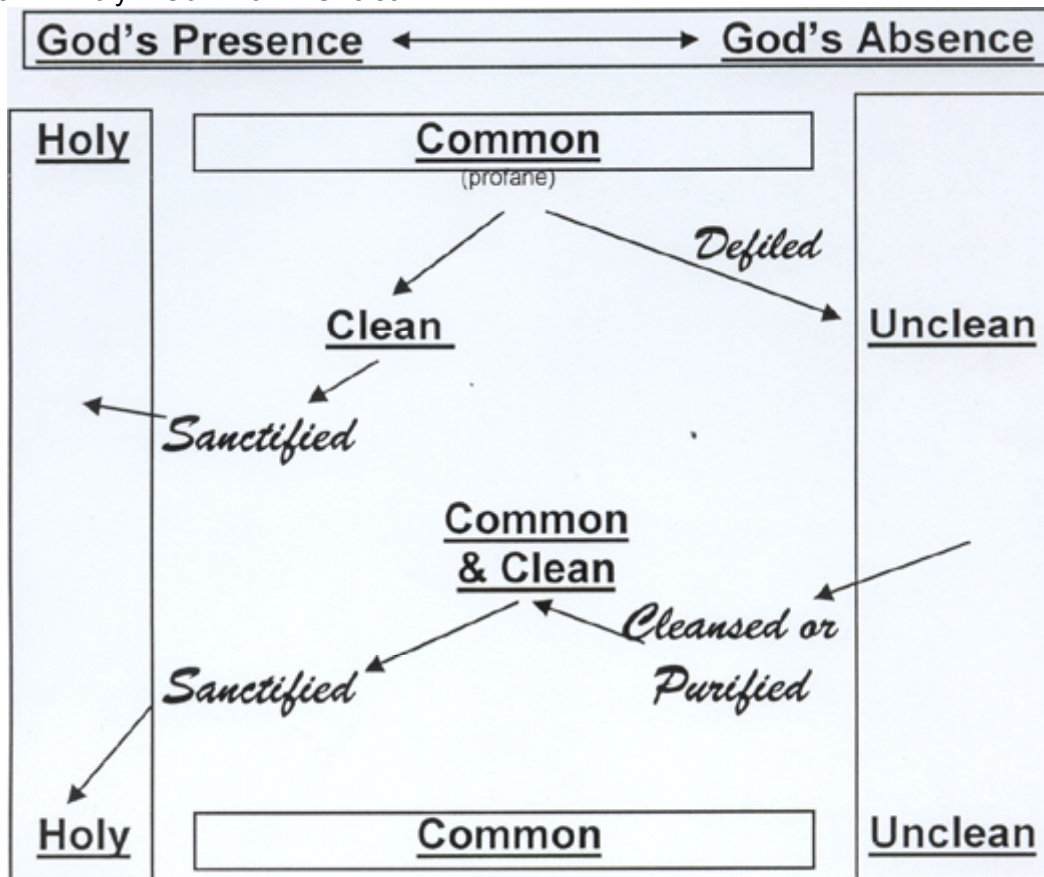
hagiazō verb ἀγιάζω *set apart as sacred to God; make holy, sanctify (Jn 17:9) consecrate; purify, cleanse*

hagiasmos, noun ἀγιασμός, οὐ̂ m *consecration, dedication, sanctification,(1 Cor 1:30) holiness*

hagios adjective ἅγιος, α, ον̂ *set apart to or by God, consecrated; holy, morally pure, upright; The plural, used with a definite article is commonly used as a noun οἱ ἅγιοι God's people ie. the holy ones or as it is translated, the saints.*

1 Cor 6: 11 And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Diagram – Holy – Common – Unclean



God alone is Holy and anyone or anything only becomes holy in association with God.

eg. Cup – chalice – Sacred

Andrew Murray says that

Holiness is not something we do or attain; it is the communication of Divine Life, the inbreathing of the Divine nature, the power of the divine presence resting upon us. And our power to become holy is found in the call of God: the Holy One calls us to himself that he may make us holy in possessing Himself.⁸

⁸ Murray, A. *Holy in Christ* (London: James Nisbet, 1888), p.38

God the Father is Holy 1 Sam 2:2, Jesus is the Holy One of God Mark 1:24, The Spirit is the Holy Spirit Rom 5:5

We are sanctified as we are called by God taken up into the Holy one, Jesus Christ and as we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Mark's Gospel demonstrates what happens when we touch Christ. Mark 1:21-24

Contact with Jesus cleansed the man of the evil spirit and sanctified him for fellowship with God.

Mark 5:22 And one of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and upon seeing Him, fell at His feet, 23 and entreated Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter is at the point of death; [please] come and lay Your hands on her, that she may get well and live.' 24 And He went off with him; and a great multitude was following Him and pressing in on Him.

25 And a woman who had had a haemorrhage for twelve years, 26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse, 27 after hearing about Jesus, **came up in the crowd behind [Him,] and touched His cloak.** 28 For she thought, **'If I just touch His garments, I shall get well.'** 29 **And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.**

The unclean woman was now healed and so made clean and able to come to worship.

Jesus then proceeds to the house of the official where he does something quite outrageous.

Mark 5:35 While He was still speaking, they came from the [house of] the synagogue official, saying, 'Your **daughter has died**; why trouble the Teacher any more?' 36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, 'Do not be afraid [any longer,] only believe.'

40 And they [began] laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and entered [the room] where the child was. **41 And taking the child by the hand,** He said to her, 'Talitha kum!' (which translated means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise!'). 42 And immediately the girl rose and [began] to walk; for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded.

To touch a dead person is to defile oneself and become unclean. Such an action is outrageous. Yet as evidenced by the power of God's action, The Holy One was not defiled but cleansed the girl, restoring her to life.

What then does it mean to receive the Holy Spirit? You are made as holy as the holy one who has come to you.

Last week I asked, 'Are we holy because we live holy lives? Do we live holy lives because we are holy people?' Paul warned the Galatians about turning away from grace and going back to law/works Gal 3:1-6. It is very easy to do this with regard to Sanctification.

eg. A Christian school emphasis, holy living ? Do we agree that this is a good thing? We certainly agree that we need to teach our children the right way to live and the right way to live is to live as Christ lived. But if our holiness in Christ and not in our good deeds then our first concern must be to introduce children to Jesus so that as Jesus touches them they become holy and the live holy lives. We cannot teach those who are not in the Holy one to be holy? Remember Paul White's story of Toto the monkey who wanted to be a lion?

eg. As parents we desperately want our children to live holy lives and so we generally surround them with lots of laws so that they will be good. What they need is to see Jesus.

Being made holy leads to holy living.

From God's perspective we are perfectly justified and sanctified in Christ. When the NT speaks of cleansing ourselves or being sanctified it needs to be understood that in Christ we are cleansed and sanctified. The call then is to live out what we are in Christ.

Read 2 Tim 2:19-22 Rom 6:19-23 -23

Peter Stuhlmacher ⁹ helps us at this point,

Paul ... speaks of the sanctification which is not only allotted to the baptised by virtue of the atoning death of Christ but now determines their way of life. ...

Paul demands from baptised Christians a righteous way of life and designates sanctification to be his goal. The transformation of life into holiness which pleases God is the gift and obligation which baptism makes possible for Christians

See 1 Cor 6:11-20 1 Thess 4:1-8 1Pet 1:13-19.

Our consciences once seared (1 Tim 4:2) by habitual sin come alive again being renewed by the Spirit and the Word when we come to Christ. If we fail to live as covenant children then our consciences torment us far worse than when we did not know Christ. David's anguish (Ps 32, 51) is the anguish of a covenant person not of an unbeliever). Sanctified or holy living, keeps our conscience at rest.

Martin Luther reminds us that the demands of the Law have been fully satisfied in Christ, and Christian must trust in Christ, not their own works for their righteousness and for their right standing before God.

The Cross and the Law

This leads us then to see that the Cross has dealt with the Law.

The conscience, will never give us rest until it know that the law has been fully dealt with. The law is ever demanding our death for sin and we live in life long fear of death because after death we must face the judge. (Heb 2:14-15, 9:27).

The cross then is good news as it has also silenced the law which has loudly condemned us.

Gala 2:19 (NASB) 'For through the Law I died to the Law, that I might live to God. 20 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Paul deals with this in detail in **Romans 7: 1-6**

Death has no dominion, sin has no dominion and now he will show us that the law has no dominion over us.

1-2 Paul uses an illustration from Jewish law relating to divorce. Under Jewish law the husband could divorce his wife but the only way the woman could be free was for her husband to die.

When her husband died she was free to do as she liked.

1 Cor 7:39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

Let me say to begin with:

⁹ Stuhlmacher, P. *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Westminster/John Know Press 1994) p. 96

V3. Paul is not really interested in discussing the rights of wrongs of the divorce law. His interest is in our relationship to the Torah, the law, now that we have been united with Christ and have died with Christ in our baptism. What is our relationship to the law as Christians?

So here is the story. One woman two men. The woman is married to the first man law. He is a good man, you can't say that there is anything wrong with him at all. He is demanding, he is perfectionist and the woman is fairly slack and so is constantly criticised and condemned by husband law. She cannot live with her guilt, she cannot live with him, there is no way that they can live together and be happy. Yet the only way to be free, is for husband law to die. She could then be married to the second man Christ.

Christ is kind and gracious, no less demanding mind you; His standards are the same as those of husband law. The difference is that Christ takes the woman's guilt, he forgives her, he helps her to do what she cannot do herself.

If only she could leave her husband law and be married to Christ but she is bound to him as long as he lives and the trouble is that he will never die. So what solution is there? The wife in the story of course is you and me. We are married to the law, and are always guilty and condemned and cannot go on living that way. Is there any solution?

V4 you have died to the law through the body of Christ, Better translated **you have been put to death in regard to the law** through the body of Christ.

Note the surprise here. The only way out for the woman, and for us, is for Husband, law, to die. Only death can set the woman free according to Jewish law.

Here then is the surprise. The husband, law, does not die but the woman, that's us, we die.

The law has not died but we have in Christ.

We are free then from husband law and we belong to another, to Christ.

You have died to the law through the body of Christ

His death, bearing your sin has set you free from husband law. The law now has nothing on you. You no longer belong to law. eg. If you rob a bank you spend all your life on the run. The law keeps looking for you. If you die you are free from the law. The emphasis here is that You have been put to death by God to the law which has taken hold of you by the throat because of your guilt. You did not just simply die to law naturally like the Jewish husband did, setting his wife free. God has put you to death as far as the law is concerned. God has acted for your good. He done something to make you dead to the law. The law no longer exercises lordship over you. It cannot because your sins have been forgiven. The law has nothing on you any more. You are no longer a guilty man or woman as far as law is concerned.

God has done this **through the body of Christ**. Paul means, through the crucifixion of Christ.

Note:-

Heb 10:9f then he added, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

This is **so that you may belong to another**, The law is no longer Lord over you, Messiah Jesus is. You now no longer belong to the law but to someone else. The one that you belong to is **him who has been raised from the dead**. ie you belong to Christ Jesus. He died for our sin under the law. By his death for sin, he has liberated us from the law. In him we are dead to sin, dead to the law, it cannot now touch us.

We belong to another, we belong to Christ. We do not now belong to one who seeks our death (law) but one who loves us and gives us life.

The key to Christian living.

We belong to Christ, the law demanded much but never did a thing to help us meet those demands. Every demand that Christ makes he gives us power to carry out so long as we trust him. In any second marriage there is always trouble because the parties revert to living as they were accustomed to in the first marriage and so we often, quite unconsciously, go back to living like we did when married to law. Now that we belong to Christ, our life, our worship, our service does not flow from the demands of law and our guilt ridden efforts to obey but we live out of our relationship with Christ. We love him, we serve him, we worship him because he has first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). Loved by Christ we are constrained, controlled by his love (2 Cor 5:14) and our joy is to love and serve him. You are no longer under law but under grace.

We belong to him **in order that we may bear fruit for God.** The law left us barren. Destitute in our guilt unable to help ourselves or others. What did the Pharisees ever produce for all his law works? The great delusion is that law produces good works. That's what our government thinks so it keeps passing laws to make us good? That's why we lay down the law with a heavy hand on our kids. We are under the delusion that the law produces good works. Paul say, 'Law increases the trespass'. Love your Children, let them see grace in action and see what happens.

V5 Fruit for death... the action following the sinful passions that lead to death.

V6 discharged from the law. Ah what a feeling, the prison doors are flung wide open and we step out into freedom. Freedom from guilt and condemnation is really something. Any Jew would rejoice in that.

You believe in Jesus? Yes **YOUR SIN IS FORGIVEN, YOUR GUILT IS TAKEN AWAY.**
you are discharged from the law. You are free.

dead to that which held us captive,

Paul however is saying even more than that you are free from your guilt and sin. He is saying that you are discharged from the Torah, the law as a way of life. Bold statement. Discharged from the law with its sacrifices, The daily ritual at the temple, the prayers and fasting days, you are free from the law with its festivals and feast days, you are not obligated to attend them any more. You need not make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem 3 times a year. You are discharged from the law with its sacred days. You can kick a football on Saturday if you like. You are discharged from the law. Full stop. The day of the Pharisee is ended, no wonder they crucified Christ. Remember how at his trial they, accused him of saying that he would destroy the temple. Destroy the temple destroy the Jewish nation or so they thought. It's whole life revolved around law and temple. How radical.

But Paul the law is our whole way of life. How will we live without the law? What will we do?

we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

Something very different and freeing about serving in the new life of the Spirit. (your bodies are now the temple of the living God, (1 Cor 3:16, 6:19 Eph 2:19-22) You are being built into the temple of the Lord. In the old epoch we are always looking over our shoulder, always looking in the book to see what the law requires.

(I think that's why churches have constitutions. It shows whether we live under the law or in the Spirit. eg. Constitution says meeting finishes at 10pm so on the stroke of 10 Tom gets up

and walks out.) The law is to be fulfilled, the law is to be obeyed to the letter, nothing more, nothing less.

we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

For the Jew three things were bound together, law, righteousness and life.

You were righteous by obeying the law, by fulfilling the sacrifices and demands of the law, you lived then by the law being worked out. Service flowed from the compulsion of the law.

Your service was the service of a slave. You went to Jerusalem not because you wanted to, because you had to, if you didn't then you did not receive the mercy of God.

But now Paul says that we serve in a new way the way of the Spirit. Let's go back a little.

How can you be righteous / live apart from the law? We are righteous in Christ.

Now the equation is not law / righteousness / life.

Now the equation is Spirit / righteousness / life.

Our service flows not from law but from the new life of the Spirit.

Your not at the AGM because you have to be. But because you are new in Christ and you want to share in the work of the kingdom.

Context, the promise of the New Covenant

Ezek 36:26 (RSV) A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

Ah but Paul this all sounds rather dangerous. Discharged from the law? Heavens what would happen if every policeman in the land decided to become potato farmers overnight. Where would we be with out the law? anarchy would reign.

Remember what Paul has just said? **we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.** We still serve? Note: Being dead to the law does not mean that we are free to do as we please. Man is always servant. (never more so than when he thinks he is master.)

We now serve in a new manner.

Roma 6:18 (NRSV) and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

22 But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.

We now serve in the new life of the Spirit. What constrains us now? The Spirit. Who is this Spirit? the Holy Spirit of God.

What about that Church constitution? Legally wise, a guide to proper behaviour in Church administration and life. But we don't do these thing simply because the constitution says so, we do things this way because that's the right way to do things. We might even say that the constitution is a reflection of what we see as right. We have set it in place for our own protection against anyone who may come in wanting to do the wrong thing. But constrained by the Spirit to live in love and consideration for others we don't need it. It can gather dust.

Once our obedience was brought about by the threat of law Now we obey out of love for Christ and in the power of the Spirit.

But there is more to living in the new life of the Spirit than this. Remember what Paul said in V4 about bearing fruit for God. He also writes,

2Cor 3:5 Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.

To live under law is a burden, our service was slavery. The law ever condemned and threatened with death. Our burden was heavy and our service dead works. Now we serve in the new life of the Spirit. Not competent in ourselves we are picked up and carried along by God, made by the power and working of the Spirit competent to minister and that ministry issues in new life.

Serving under the law and living in the new life of the Spirit is a bit like the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly. The caterpillar plods along and is always earth bound. The butterfly rises up and the new laws of aerodynamics allow it do things a caterpillar could only dream of doing. It rises up and flies, carried along by the breezes that blow.

Through the cross Father, Son and Spirit have graciously cleansed us, sanctified us, freed us from the law, purged our consciences, set us free from the fear of death, taken away Satan's power over us, brought us out from wrath and into blessing so that we might live as his covenant partners. Holy God, Holy people. Thanks be to God.

LIVING FROM THE CROSS

There appears to be two laws and many understand it in this way. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus and, The law of sin and death But the term law has consistently referred to the Torah and Paul is probably speaking of the Torah being used in two ways. - The law of sin and death is the law working in league with our sin to bring us to death. The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus then is the Torah working in league with the Spirit of life (The Holy Spirit) and with Christ to bring us to life.

Law is not opposed to faith.

3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. **3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,**

See the law is OK. It is holy and just and good. Why couldn't the law do What it intended to do? It was weakened by the flesh. As long as we are in the flesh the law hasn't got much chance as we are in Adam and sinful, no law can change that?

What couldn't the law do?

The law could not make us live up to God's standards

The law could not justify us and forgive us but God has by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. The law could not sanctify us but God has by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin offering-The law was no help in stopping us from sinning but God helps us by his Spirit. But the primary thing that the law could not do is to bring us to life. 7:10 'I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.'

What did the law in fact do? Roma 7:13 The law hi-lighted sin, provoked us to sin and here we are told through the commandment it became sinful beyond measure. The law sought to bring us to life but it failed to do this because of the weakness of the flesh God has now condemned, sin in the flesh and has stepped in and here is the surprise:

4 in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Remember that Paul is speaking to Jews

Jere 31:31 (RSV) 'Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me,** from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'

Ezek 36:27 (RSV) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

It is clear that the law has a vital role to play in the Era of the New Covenant. We are not set free from the law per se, but we are free from the law as manipulated by sin and death. (Law

is no way for us to be justified.) We are set free from being under the guilt of the law. More than this we are now enabled by the spirit to live out the demands of law. (Ezek)

For us the law, the Torah, is taken up by the Spirit, we are caused to walk in it. The law then is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The law as brought to our hearts by the Spirit in Christ is the eschatological law of life. As we live in the new Epoch and in the new creation, which in this sense has already begun, (if any man is in Christ he is a new creation) we live out the law by the power of the Spirit knowing that the law is the reflection of things they way they were meant to be and the way that they will be in the fullness of the kingdom.

So what hope is there for us in our battles of doing and not doing? God has acted. We belong to Christ. The law is written on our heart... Internal part of our new nature. We are forgiven. The Spirit of God is within us.

So now the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The old epoch, with us in Adam is marked by our inability to live according to God’s will. The new Epoch is different it is marked by God intervening to help us. The Spirit does this. Paul is making it clear that the law is not finished. Christ has come so that we might live Fulfilling the law through the Spirit. That means living in Christ who has satisfied the law on our behalf It means living with the law as our yardstick or standard of what God wants for us as his people. At the end of Romans 7 Paul did not cry out ‘wretched man who will deliver us from the Torah? But who will deliver us from this body of death?

Discontinuity yet continuity. The law remains the norm of the Christian’s existence.

You are the covenant people of God, made in the image of God, Called to live in an all embracing communion with God and each other. You are created for holy love and your maker has bound himself to you in covenant love.

The union of God and man takes place in the risen Christ.

Cleansing, Justification, forgiveness and sanctification are essential for such a union to be effected but each of these things serve the higher purpose of union with God as children or Sons of God. Eph 1: 4 Our Union with God is the most intimate union in that he has called us to be the Church which is the Bride of Christ.

Eph 5:25f

Where are we going?

Unclean - cleansed - sanctified - Justified - glorified - reconciled - restored to covenant relationship with God

Examine the Cross we find that there are at least nine things that we have been set free from.

Sin	Rom 6:8-11	Law	Romans 7:4	Wrath	Rom 5:9
Satan	Acts 26:14	P&P	Col 2:13-16	Conscience	Heb 9:14
Death	Heb 2:14-15	World	Gal 6:14	Flesh	Gal 5:24

Discharged From Law To Live in Christ

Romans 7:1-7 Paul’s story of one woman and two men.

Rom 7:4 Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.

Now note the surprise here. The only way out for the woman, and for us, is for Husband law to die. Only death can set the woman free according to Jewish law.

Here then is the surprise. The husband, law, does not die but the woman, that's us, we die.

The law has not died but we have in Christ. We are free then from husband law and we **belong to another, to Christ.**

Roma 7:6 (RSV) But now we are **discharged** from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

A radical teaching for the Jew whose everyday life revolves around the law. The key to Christian living is not law, it is belonging to Christ. My thinking and doing are determined not by the *thou shalt not's* of law but by the love relationship that I have with Jesus. - so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. You may not have thought about it or want it but if you do not belong to Christ then by default you belong to law and Law has you by the throat. It is important to recognise this. This is where we are before we come to Christ. This is where the world is and how it functions. Under law you behave like your Master - Law. You become critical, judgmental, condemning. You cannot forgive, knowing nothing of grace.

In Galatians Paul warns us of our continuing desires to go back to Law. First he speaks of our freedom and the basis of our new life (Gala 2:19-20) and then warns us of failing to live in the new life of the Spirit 3:1-14.

Difference - Law - a do it yourself kit. (do this and live). Christ - A Spirit assisted Life. Gal 5:19-25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. We can be Christians and so live in the Spirit yet behave and live as we used to before we came to Christ ie. We behave as if we are still under law when we are not.

So what happened this week? Does Old man law determine how you live or does New man Christ?

It is important to understand that our relationship with God is not the result of a bargain, (mummy wont love you if you're not a good girl). It is the result of grace or as we have seen the electing love of God. I love you because I love you. Living in the new life of the Spirit we are led into person to person relationships, first with God and with others. We no longer stand in the dock as guilty persons before a condemning judge but we delight in the just judge who is our loving Father. We are no longer enemies but friends. That is covenant friends, and that covenant friendship results in the obedience of God's covenant partners. See Jn 15:13-15 and recall what Paul said, Rom 7:6 We serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. The point is - we still serve, our service now is a service of love.

Discharged From the Law to Delight in Law

Understanding our freedom from the law we now need to understand the freedom of the law After everything that Paul has told us about being free from the Law he makes another remarkable and unexpected statement.

Rom 7:7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good

So what of the Law? Paul answers in Romans 8:1-4

8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.**

ENEMIES:- THE WORLD

Once upon a time in the West worldliness and separation were code words among gospel people. Worldliness meant smoking, drinking, ballroom dancing, novel reading, theatre- and movie-going, makeup for women, deodorant for men, mixed bathing for adults, and late nights for children. Separation meant eschewing all the above, being frugal at home, ignoring fashion, fleeing from luxury, being in church several times on Sunday, and building life around Bible study, personal evangelism, missionary support, and perhaps some local philanthropy. Most exponents of this form of pietism worked hard, looked after their families, and were warm-hearted and generous to those they helped, but their interests were narrow. As those in the world but not of it, they tried to have as little to do with it as possible. They spoke of a coming apostasy and breakdown of community life, and watched fatalistically to see if it was yet happening, while debating whether taking out insurance would be an act of faith or of unbelief. What I describe must sound light years away to the modern reader, but in my youth it was all going strong; I remember how it bemused me when I became a Christian at age 18.... There was far more to worldliness than was dreamed of at the fag-end of the Christendom culture of the West fifty years ago, and a far more radical view of separation from the world has now to be thought out. J I Packer¹

The term **WORLD** is used in a variety of ways:

The NT term for *world* is *cosmos* (Κοσμος). In classical Greek the term originally meant *building, construction*. It then came to mean *the order of things*. Hence out term cosmic.

In the NT the term is used in a number of different ways. It has the idea of -

Cosmic

Acts 17-24.. God who made the world and everything in it.

The created World:

Psa 24:1 The earth (אֶרֶץ) is the Lords, and all its fullness, The world (הַגּוֹל) and those Who dwell therein.

Matt 4:8 Jesus is offered all the kingdoms of the world

The inhabitants of the world:

Psa 96:13 For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.

Psa 96:13 For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world With righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.

John 3:17 'For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹ Packer writing an Introduction in Gay C *The Way of the Modern World* p x

Unbelieving mankind in contrast to the people of God: Luke 16-8 ‘So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

John 15:18ff., ‘ If *the world* hates you keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to *the world*, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to *the world*, but I have chosen you out of *the world*. That is why *the world* hates you.’

This unbelieving world is under the control of Satan

2 Cor 4:4. The God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers Eph 2:1-2 You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 1 John 5-19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one

Definitions

We understand then that the world used in this negative sense is a creation of mankind in league with principalities and powers standing against God.

With this in mind we then need to define worldliness. If we are ‘conservative,’ we have probably tended to think of ‘the world’ - and hence ‘worldliness’ - in terms of temptations to various kinds of dissipation and to personal, and particularly sexual, immorality. If we are ‘liberal’ in disposition, we have perhaps conceived of ‘the world’ in terms of socio-structural evils such as racism or oppressive political-economic systems, and of ‘worldliness’ as complicity in these evils. Both views are certainly correct. Personal immorality and socio-political injustices are indeed worldly evils to be condemned and avoided. But what if it can be shown that both the ‘conservative’ and the ‘liberal’ positions, while partly correct, actually miss the heart of the matter? What if the essence of ‘the world’ - and hence of ‘worldliness’ - is not personal immorality and/or social injustice as such, but is instead an interpretation of reality that essentially excludes the reality of God from the business of life? ²

Worldliness is excluding God from the business of life.

Good News - We are delivered from the enemy World.

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Questions that we need to address

- What does Paul mean, ‘the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world’?
- What is ‘The course of this world.’ We must seek to understand it. (course of this world like a car trial course, bends and twists and changes, difficult, hideous, some plain sailing, smooth & comfortable)
- How is the Christian to live in the world and yet not be of the world?

The course of this world, the city, Babylon ³ The world is easily understood by looking at its main manifestation, ie. *the city*

² Gay, p4

³ See Jaques Ellul The meaning of the City

Gene 4:12 (NIV) When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.' 13 Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.' 15 But the LORD said to him, 'Not so-, if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.' Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16 So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. 17 Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.

Judgment of God on Cain V12

'it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.'

Cains response

13 Cain said to the LORD, 'My punishment is more than I can bear. 14 Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.'

He is an outcast from home, family and God, struggling to meet his basic needs. He is cut off and living in fear of being put to death for his sin. My punishment is more than I can bear.

16 So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The Land of Nod? There is no such land, that is the point. Nod in Hebrew means to wander. Cain went away from the presence of the Lord. God's judgment is that he should be a vagrant and a wanderer. The sinner can do little else unless he or she repents.

We are always searching for a place to be secure and fulfilled but never finding it. We want to belong yet living in fear and mistrust of others. (Who am I? I must discover myself ?)

There is salvation but it is only to be found in repentance and in accepting the Judgment of God. When confronted by God Adam owned up to his sin. Cain refused to. He simply said, 'am I my brothers keeper?'

God had a solution for Cain as for his parents. The offspring of the woman will bruise the Head of Satan. Know that God has a solution Cain rejects it wants to work out his own salvation.

Here it is -

17 Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.

He bore Enoch, and he built a city and named it Enoch. Enoch means:- to begin again. He made his own new beginning. Expelled from Eden, the home of the family of man, the place where the land yielded to its full, the place of safety, the place where God and man met and talked. The place of worship. Cain would not trust God for redemption, he went and established a home, built the first city for his own comfort and protection. He did it in the face of God who had decreed that he must be a vagrant and wanderer.

- I will make a home for myself and I will do it in the face of God. (Building, building, always building - cubby houses?) Foxes have holes and the birds have nests (it is OK to live in a house. The problem is not living in a house - problem is finding security in a house and not in God.)

- ❑ I will be secure and not have to live in fear, I will build fortified cities. (High fence about
- ❑ my home and an alarm system! OK if our trust is in God.)
- ❑ Generate my own family - Enoch is born- a new beginning. I will be the head of the family,
- ❑ give it life and direction, be its God. My hope and security is in my family?
- ❑ I will take care of my own food supplies and not be dependent upon God. Cities
- ❑ manufacturing centres. Genetically modify everything and do a better job than God so that I
- ❑ can feed the world. (man having no need for God)
- ❑ I will have my own Eden with its pleasures and delights. Esoteric experience, drugs, illicit
- ❑ relationships. (Australia—hedonistic, Gambling, Our God's—sports people, models). (Be
- ❑ balanced, there is nothing wrong with riches unless we allow our riches to be our idols)
- ❑ I will create a world system apart from God.

The system of the world was born. Man's thing, not God's. This is the crux of the world system

Worldliness is first of all a system that excludes God and places man at the centre of the universe.

In the city system we understand the world. It is rebellious man, establishing himself, setting himself up in opposition to God. (With the help of the Principalities and Powers).

The nature of the world system -

'is not the real and good world that God has made, nor any other real world, but a fantasy world of sinful imagination, a nothingness which will destroy us if we love it simply because it is nothingness and offers nothing on which we may nourish ourselves.' ⁴

'the world' is a human construction. It represents a kind of false order that we construct for ourselves in the place of God's good creation. Indeed, the cosmos is something we must continually reconstruct and maintain for ourselves in the face of threats posed to its unreal continuities and coherences by the real reality of created order and particularly by the reality of creation's Creator.' ⁵

The World is a system that preys on the people of God

Gene 10:8 (NIV) Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, 'Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.' ¹⁰

The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar. Nimrod Mighty hunter before the Lord Built Cities. **Before the Lord?** in the face of God He was a hunter, he hunted men, to ensnare them and draw them away from God.

⁴ O'Donovan, p. 227.

⁵ Gay p 6.

The city is always the hunter.. It seduces and holds captive the children of Cod. The city is the bastion for warfare both within the world and especially against God's people and kingdom.

Nimrod's first city was Babylon and each of his cities were built in Shinar. Shinar is another name for Babylonia and it is a name with a certain evil nuance. (Hindley Street, Kings Cross.)

The Tower of Babel Story fits in here. It wonderfully describes the essence of man's rebellion and hence the nature of the world system. (next week).

We see the predatory nature of the city / Babylon / world, when we look at the story of the exile.

Dan. 1:1 (NRSV) In the third year of the reign of King Jehoi'akim of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 The Lord let King Jehoi'akim of Judah fall into his power, as well as **some of the vessels of the house of God**. These he **brought to the land of Shi'nar**, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his gods. 3 Then the king commanded Ash'penaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, 4 youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chalde'ans.

Taking the vessels of the house of God and placing them in the treasury of his gods was an indication that he believed that his gods had triumphed over **YHWH**. He took the royalty and nobility of Israel to train and so seduce them to the ways of his gods.

Zechariah also pick up the Shinar theme. Zechariah was a Prophet and Priest born in exile. He returned to Jerusalem after the decree of Cyrus the Persian (around 536 BC). On Feb 15th 519 BC he had a series of eight visions. This is one of them –

Zech 5:5 (NRSV) Then the angel who talked with me came forward and said to me, 'Look up and see what this is that is coming out.' 6 I said, 'What is it?' He said, 'This is a basket coming out.' And he said, 'This is their iniquity in all the land.' 7 Then a leaden cover was lifted, and there was a woman sitting in the basket! 8 And he said, 'This is Wickedness.' So he thrust her back into the basket, and pressed the leaden weight down on its mouth. 9 Then I looked up and saw two women coming forward. The wind was in their wings; they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and sky. 10 Then I said to the angel who talked with me, 'Where are they taking the basket?' 11 He said to me, 'To the land of Shi'nar, to build a house for it; and when this is prepared, they will set the basket down there on its base.'

Wickedness רשעה n.f. - an antonym of righteousness meaning denoting all moral, religious and civil evil. The whole world system that exists in Israel must be removed to a suitable place, ie. to Shinar, to Babylon the centre of the world system.

After we look at the story of Babel we will pick up the Babylon theme in Revelation and see exposed the city / world and its methods.

O'Donovan Oliver, Resurrection and Moral Order- An Outline for Evangelical Ethics (Eerdmans, 1986),
Gay Craig, M, The Way of the (Modem) World: Or, Why It's Tempting to live As If God Doesn't Exist (Eerdmans 1998)

WORLD / BABEL

As well as seeking to discover the nature of the World/City/Babylon system I would like to encourage the reading of the Scriptures as narrative. This is another approach to the Scriptures that is helpful for us in understanding and hearing the Word of God.

The story connects closely with the earlier chapters of Genesis as with the greater Biblical narrative. The Babel/Babylon is a theme that begins in Genesis and climaxes in the book of Revelation. The story follows the story of the flood. After the flood Noah and his progeny move to different lands and settle in their various language groups (10:1 -5). The question arises, how come there are different languages? While giving an answer to this question the text has much more to contribute than this.

First a little about the art of writing stories. This is a very carefully written and crafted story. art of writing stories - The story is constructed as a palistrophe or extended chiasmus.

Genesis 11:1-9 The Tower of Babel⁶

- A. 'The whole earth had one language' (v 1)
- B. 'settled there' (v 2)
- C. 'they said to each other' (v 3)
- D. 'Come let us make bricks' (v 3)
- E. let us build for ourselves' (v 4)
- F. 'a city and a tower'
- G. The LORD came down.' (V 5)
- F1. 'the city and the tower'
- E1. 'which mankind had built
- D1. 'come ... let us mix up' (v 7)
- C1. 'cannot understand each others language'
- B1. ' scattered them abroad from there' (v 8)
- A1. 'the language of the whole earth' (v 9)

Setting the Scene

Gen 11:1 Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.

An introduction and setting for the story. - One language, literally one lip.

Scene I-Human deeds-Migration

2 And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shi'nar and settled there.

Having read the previous chapters the bells ring. Migration

- Gen 1: 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it;

⁶ See Gordon J Whenham Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1- 15 (Word Inc.) p 235

Shi'nar - Alert, something is amiss. That name for Babylonia that has overtones of wickedness.

Scene II - Human deeds - Scheming

3 And they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.'

And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'

Even at a human level building a tower as high as the sky is an audacious thing to do. Particularly so if you understand the heavens (sky) to be the home of God. All is not well, they recall the flood; they want to avoid the judgments of God; They want to climb into heaven and stand in the place of God; they want to control and determine their own destinies; They want to be gods.

A bit more about the art of story telling - In Hebrew there is something like a secret code running through these verses created by the repetition of the consonants *B & L* or *P & M*. The consonants that spells out, mix up, *Babel*, both of these imply, *folly*.⁷

So before we are told the name of the place or even get the gist of the story we begin to hear the subliminal message that all of this is mix up, *Babel*, *folly*.

This then is the nature of the World and the thinking of those who are a part of the world system. When we are a part of the world system we want to stand in the place of God.

Recall —

Gen 3: 4 But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of A your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

We want to control and determine our own destinies - In our minds there is mix up, *Babel*, *folly*.

We think that we can avoid the judgments of God; That is why we go on rebelling.

And there is more - **let us make a name for ourselves;**

God promised to make a name for Abraham and later for David. Gen 12:1- 2, 2 Sam 7:8.

God said to the prophet Nathan

Elsewhere in the Scriptures it is only God who can make a name for himself. Is 63:11-12, Neh 9:9.

What is your name? a name that God has made for you? or a name that you have made for yourselves. God's purpose is to gather his family to himself and to make a name for them. Is 62: 62:1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. 2 The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. 3 You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Rev 2: 17 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

⁷ This is an over simplification of a deliberate yet complex language structure. See Wenham

Trying to make a name for yourself is the catch cry of the world. It is also a mix up, Babel, folly.

The reason given in the story for building and making a name for themselves is - **otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.**' The writer intends that we remember the creational mandate that God gave to Adam and Eve.

Gen 1: 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth ..'

Here at Babel they had no intention of doing what God commanded yet the very thing that they tried to prevent would come upon them as a judgment. They will be scattered abroad.

Scene 111- The Lord inspects the city and the tower

5 The LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built.

There is a great deal of irony here -

We now see the event from God's perspective. The great tower that reaches up to heaven is nothing really.

From the height of heaven it is a tiny ant hill.

The LORD came down to see the city and the tower

Isa. 40:22 (NRSV) It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in;

So God had to actually come down to see it.

This mix up this Babel, this folly of man.

6 And the LORD said, 'Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.

Scene IV- The Lord's actions

7 Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech.'

Obviously God in heaven knows what is going on. He doesn't really need to go down to see. God's going down is signal to alert us as we hear the story. When God goes down to Sodom he goes down to judge it. When God goes down to Babel he goes down to judge it.

Come, let us go down, and confuse (mix up) their language there, God is mimicking what the men have said and his answer contains a play on words. in verse 3 'come let us make bricks' (nilbenah) Here God says,—let us go down and mix up (confuse) (nabelah)

Scene V- The Lord's actions

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

If the nations can no longer communicate then they can no longer co-operate socially or commercially.

9 Therefore it was called Ba'bel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

The Babylonians call Babel the gate of the gods. The Hebrews call it, mix up, confused. Babel which was to be a monument to man's greatness has become a monument to man's powerlessness and folly.

What does it all mean? What is the point of this fascinating story?

It is the story of the judgment of God upon human pride. As a judgment story it sits alongside the previous stories of Genesis.

Gen 1-11 after the creation there is a series of stories of judgments, of God coming down.

- ❑ Judgment on Adam and Eve and on the serpent.
- ❑ The judgment that falls on Cain when he kills his brother. (vagrant and wanderer)
- ❑ Judgment on mankind in the story of Noah and the flood
- ❑ The judgment of God on Babel

As in the story of Cain, the secret of redemption lies in accepting the Judgment of God and obeying his word..

The story is a universal story in that it is the story of every person in rebellion against God. As such it is your story and my story and it reveals the way of the world. We all want to avoid the judgments of God. We all want to be like God and determine our own right and wrong. We all want to be independent and live apart from a God who requires obedience.

As we speak of living from the cross we know that God has come down to us in Jesus. He said I have not come to condemn the world but to save the world. As he went to the cross we also hear him say, 'Now is the judgment of the world, (Jn 12:31).

His coming judges us concerning our sin. If we accept the judgment of God, that we are sinners and deserve to die and then repent, we are taken into Christ who has borne our judgment and who is himself our life. If we reject God's verdict then we continue building our towers and making a name for ourselves. This can only ever be *mix up, Babel, folly and confusion* in our minds and in our lives.

At Pentecost then we see God acting to free humanity from folly and confusion and to bring them to unity by embracing them once again within *covenant*.. The miracle of Tongues at Pentecost is accompanied with a prophetic call to repent Acts 2:38. Face your Judge, confess your sin, be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. We then come to the *obedience of faith* (Rom 1:4) and are empowered by the Spirit to do what the law requires (Rom 8:1-4), and so live in covenant relationship with God.

There are two other important issues raised by the text that help us to understand the way of the world.

The first is that of -

Scattering and Unity.

In verse 4 we see that the people fear being scattered and take action against it.

4 Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'

The text strongly emphasises that God scatters them against their will

8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9 Therefore it was called Ba'bel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

2 things about scattering

- ❑ Here it is a punishment for their pride and arrogance. Make a name for ourselves - a tower that reaches up to the heavens.
- ❑ At the same time we see that it is God's purpose to scatter mankind

Gen 1: 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.'

Their fear of scattering is resistance to God's purpose for creation. The people do not want to spread abroad but want to stay in their safe mode. Thus the tower and the city are attempts at creating a self serving unity which does not accept the will of God. The extremities of this are seen in groups such as the Mafia. But we see such man made unity operating at every level of society and Church. Such unity is exclusive, creating in groups that are self serving.

It is clear that God's vision for the world is a vision of unity. It is his plan to sum up all things in Christ (Eph 1:22, 1 Cor 15:25ff). For this reason we are to *maintain* the *unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*. (Eph 4:3).

We can see then that there are two kinds of unity - the unity that God wills is for all humanity to live in covenant relationship with him. To rely on him, to obey him, to enjoy his presence. This unity of God is a scattered unity. See Gen 10:1-5. Here the families are scattered into the lands that God has allotted. Here they are to be his vice regents on the earth, While separated humanity is united by being in covenant relationship with God.

Eph 4: 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 [There is] one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

God's vision for humanity is that it will be a community as the God head is community.

We say that as the Triune God, God is three in one and one in three. The Trinity is neither confused nor divided.

The persons while discrete/separate (the Father is not the Son, or the Spirit, the Son is not the Spirit. Each person is separate but they are never divided.) The human community is to be like God so that it will be both scattered/separated but always one in God, in Christ.

The second kind of unity is unity of the people for the people. It is a unity that resists God. It is the unity of those who build their Babels; a unity of man for man without God; man attempting to be as God ruling in God's place, determining right and wrong and doing what is

right in his own eyes. This unity attempts to establish a cultural, human oneness without reference to the promises or the mandates or the threats of God. It pretends that God does not exist.

Walter Brueggemann⁸³ suggests that this unity of mankind always has a 'fortress mentality' It seeks to survive by its own resources. (I'm not into conspiracy theories yet note what is happening via the United Nations - World Bank). He mentions other characteristics of this man-made unity.

- ❑ It seeks to construct a world free from the dangers of the holy (Remember the story in Mark 5 where Jesus came to the country of the Gerasenes and a man possessed by evil spirits came wandering out from the tombs? Jesus cast out a legion of demons from a man and the demons went into a herd of pigs who rushed into the sea and drowned. The people were afraid and asked Jesus to leave. Mark 1: 15-17
- ❑ Why were they afraid? You would expect them to be overjoyed? Recall the haul of fishes - In Luke's version of the story we read [Luke 5: 8](#) *But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.'* Confronted by the holy we either fall down and worship but if the unity of our community is a unity of man designed to oppose and live without God then of course we cry out in fear and want to escape from the reality of the presence of God.
- ❑ It seeks to construct a world free and immune from the terrors of God in history. The book of Amos speaks of the judgments of God coming to mankind in earthquakes, plagues, storms. He of God who says, Amos 3:6 *Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does evil befall a city, unless the LORD has done it?* With our chemicals, sprays and genetic engineering we will soon conquer every kind of sickness and disease. We can breed crops that are resistant to blight and mildew. Soon we will conquer diseases like Aids and heart disease. (yesterday's Australian cloning now organs). Then we will control the weather, earthquakes. But see the book of Revelation.
- ❑ A human unity without God will always be oppressive and coercive.
Communism. Capitalism - Increasing legislation to tell us what you can do and cannot do.
Fantastic plastic
keeps track on where we are and what we buy.

- ❑ When we think of man-made unity we must not think that it is always anti-religious. The tower of Babel was undoubtedly a ziggurat. It had a religious purpose.

A church or denomination may have created a unity of its own which is against God.

If it does it will bear these same marks, it will be coercive and oppressive, a part of the world system.

The story then is also a warning against religion used by man to bring about unity that is apart from unity in the covenant of God; apart from the new Covenant instituted by Jesus. It is a warning against religion which wants to construct a 'sacred canopy', over everyone with the agenda of control and it will gather its experts, be self-sufficient and function without relying on God. (a 'one world religion' - denomination - a local congregation - Colin the African student who wanted to be a bishop for the status and power).

⁸³ Brueggemann W, *Interpretation Genesis: A Bible Commentary For Teaching And Preaching* (John Knox Press 1982), p. 100

So what is the nature of the unity that we pursue? Is it the unity of God; unity that allows scattering; unity that is based on the covenant of God? Or is it a unity that we create apart from God; a unity that fears scattering because it is not really about the things of God but seeks our own comfort, constructing fortresses that keep us together against the will of God.

The unity that we create and the cities and towers that we build can never succeed. **Psalm 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. See Ps 49: 13-19**

As God's vice regents we must be united yet be scattered so that the image and the glory of God may be seen in all the earth. **Hab 2:14.** The scattering of God is also for the proclamation of the gospel which brings healing and union with God to the nations. The world will be organized for God's purposes of joy, delight, freedom, worship and caring as we live in the unity of covenant as the people of God. Here then is God's vision for the future.

Micah 4:1 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, 2 and many nations shall come, and say:

'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **3 He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; 4 but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.'**

God with his people. Humanity at peace, hearing the law and the word of God, meditating and living in that word

TOWER OF BABEL—SPEAKING AND HEARING

The tower of Babel surely has something important say about speech and hearing.

Gen 11:7 Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' 9 Therefore it was called Ba'bel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth

We must go back to the creation story

Gen 1: 3 Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. 6 And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters 9 And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so.

Speech is powerful, 'it can be evocative and creative calling into being things that do not exist.'⁹

Our speech also has great power. It shapes and determines the quality of our personal relationships, our community and of the world in which we live. Our speech can bring life or death, blessing or curse.

James 3: 6 And the tongue is a fire, the [very] world of iniquity-, the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of [our] life, and is set on fire by hell. 9 With it we bless [our] Lord and Father,- and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 10 from the same mouth come [both] blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening [both] fresh and bitter [water]? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Neither [can] salt water produce fresh.

As husband and wives, parents and children, we can bless or curse each other. Bring life or death to our relationships. Our language may liberate the person we speak to or it may enslave them.

The words that Jesus spoke were wonderfully liberating -

Jn 4 Samaritan woman, Jn 8 Woman caught in adultery. Jn 21 Peter feed my sheep. Lk 5, The paralytic, 'your sins are forgiven.

However for those who did not want to change his speech was seen as subversive.

Luke 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, 'Who is this [man] who speaks blasphemies?

Speech may also bring us into bondage. We speak a word in anger, a vicious or untrue word, it lodges itself in the mind of the person hearing and may be destructive. Jesus said,

Matt 12: 35 'The good man out of [his] good treasure brings forth what is good- and the evil man out of [his] evil treasure brings forth what is evil. 36 'And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. 37 'For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.'

We have all encountered those who enslave and manipulate by their words.

An example of this seen in Christian circles - 'The Lord has given me a word for you?

He may have, so I will listen but then I ask myself, what's wrong with the Lord? Doesn't he like to talk to me? Often when the Lord speaks to me he will confirm that word through others and that is good.

⁹ Brueggeman p.102

Sometimes the person who says, 'the Lord told me this' is simply using *God words* to manipulate or enslave me.

Whose voice do I listen to? There is one word by which I must judge all others. The Scriptures. I can choose not to listen to the voice that enslaves and destroys but rather hear the voice of God.

Recall our earlier studies in Genesis - Satan the Usurper, by guile and deceit set out to divide the Kingdom of God.

He came with another Word,

Gen 3:1 did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?' 2 And the woman said to the serpent,

'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' 4 But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die. 5

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

This new/different word, contradicts God's word. It questions God's integrity, it slanders God. At the same time it is a word that appeals to human pride.

This then is always the issue. Will I hear and obey the Word of God and be faithful to his covenant or do I want to be as God; determine for myself what is right and wrong; Rule my own kingdom; Never obey anyone else?

God's Judgment at Babel

If we look at the Babel story again and translate v7 a little differently we will discover that the emphasis is not just on the confusion of the language but on something else.

Gen 11: 7 'Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'

The word translated understand is shamah (PI3t) to hear.

7 'Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not hear one another's speech.'

When I preach at a Vietnamese congregation I sit in the service and I do not *hear* their speech. All I hear is a noise. I do not *understand* their speech.

We often use *hear* in another different way.

Mum or dad call out to the children, 'didn't you *hear* me'. Of course you did, but you didn't do anything about it. To hear is to understand and to obey.

If we translate Genesis 11:7 as *understand* then we simply have a language problem.

If we translate the passage as *hear* then we have a deeper problem.

7 'Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not hear one another's speech.'

God's judgment is that they will not be able to hear, they will no longer be able to listen to each other.

So God says to Israel

Is 6: 10 'Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.'

Matt 13: 13 'Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 'And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says,

'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand-, And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 15

For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them.'

Hear O Israel the Lord your God is one Lord. The life and the vitality of the people of God depends on hearing the Word of God and doing it.

God's constant complaint is that his people will not hear him.

Ezek 12:2 'Son of man, you live in the midst of the rebellious house, who have eyes to see but do not see,

ears to hear but do not hear; for they are a rebellious house.

Jer 5: 21 'Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, Who have eyes, but see not-, Who have ears, but hear not.

Ps 115: 4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak,

They have eyes, but they cannot see', 6 They have ears , but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel-, They have feet, but they cannot walk-, They cannot make a sound with their throat. 8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them.

The problem is not just a language problem. The problem is that they, and we, will not hear the word of God. God's judgment then is that we are to be deaf to the living word and to each others words.

(See Romans 1:21ff for the principle of wrath. The fascinating story of the blind man in John 9 carries the same message. Those who think they see and hear, neither hear what the blind man is saying, nor do they see who Jesus is.)

The failure to hear and to speak are a consequence of our guilt and of God's wrath. Hearing and speaking become impossible when we are disobedient.

- ❑ We cannot hear each other when our minds filled with guilt,
- ❑ We are afraid to speak because we have breached God's covenant.
- ❑ We cannot talk to each other because we have been unloving, unfaithful and self centred in our relationships.
- ❑ We know that we are not trustworthy and so we cannot trust another.
- ❑ We cannot speak or hear as sinners for we only expect condemnation from those whom we have betrayed, and so we are insecure and filled with fear in all of our relationships.

Thus man who tries to reach up to heaven is silenced.

The Judgment of Babel, that man can no longer hear and speak becomes a universal curse on mankind.

What wife is there who has never said to her husband, but you do not listen to me. He say, and you do not listen to me. We have a crisis of hearing / listening and of speaking When we cannot listen to each other our relationships break down, communities break down, nations go to war. (English / Irish. Jews / Arabs.)

This is the nature of the world and those in it. We cannot truly hear, we cannot truly speak. Our hearing is distorted by our perverse and guilt ridden minds. Our speech is twisted, manipulative, untrue, angry and bitter. We curse and bring death instead of bless to bring joy and life to our relationships. In the world there is no trust, no faithfulness, no understanding of covenant relationship. Everything is contract; conditional, with every person, family, community and nation looking out for itself, doing that which is right in its own eyes, building its own city and tower in the face of God. There is no true communion.

Zephaniah tells us that the day will come when the effects of Babel will be reversed. Zeph 3:9 (NRSV) At that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure lip/speech, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord/ shoulder. There will be communication and communion once more as mankind serves God. 10 From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, my scattered ones, shall bring my offering.

Those scattered from Babel will come united in worship. (One Lord one faith one baptism)

11 On that day you shall not be put to shame because of all the deeds by which you have rebelled against me; for then I will remove from your midst your proudly exultant ones, and you shall no longer be haughty in my holy mountain.

Forgiveness for all our deeds, The New Covenant,

Ezek 18: 30 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

Ezek 36: 26 A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you-, and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. 28 You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers-, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 And I will deliver you from all your uncleanness;

There can be no new speech, no hearing apart from the gifts promised here by God. We will have a new heart. He will put his Spirit within us. He will deliver us from all of our uncleanness and he will be our God empowering us to obedience.

12 For I will leave in the midst of you a people humble and lowly. They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD-

Arrogant humanity living in the face of God; wanting to be like God; refusing to accept the judgment of God will be transformed to become a humble and lowly people.

Who are the humble and lowly? Those who have accepted Gods word that they are sinners. Those who fall before him seeking his forgiveness.

13 the remnant of Israel; they shall do no wrong and utter no lies, nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths. Then they will pasture and lie down, and no one shall make them afraid. 14 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O

daughter Jerusalem! 15 The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. 16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

Forgiven, their fear is removed; their hearing and speech restored.

1 Jn 4: 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. 19 We love, because he first loved us.

An amazing reversal. We fear God because we fear judgment. Now we rejoice and feel secure for

God is with us. His love has come to us in Christ.

17 The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory, he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing 18 as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

Instead of he will renew you in his love, we may read - he will rest in His love.

The warrior who has defeated all our enemies. The greatest battle of all time is the battle fought and won by Christ at the Cross. The love of God has triumphed over the evil of humanity. God can now rest in his love. The liberating love demonstrated at the cross has won the victory. His father heart now sings for joy because his children are free and have come to him.

19 Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. 20 At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you together, yea, I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,' says the LORD.

Of those scattered from Babel, those lost in the world polluted by Babylon, he declares

I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, (better translated as)

I will give you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth)

No more do we need to strive to make a name for ourselves but instead we to may *rest in his love*. 1John 3:1 See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God - and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. Forgiven, cleansed, out guilt purged, our fear of God dispelled by the Cross which demonstrates God's love for us we come now to Communion, to Fellowship with God, we speak and we hear with him and with each other. We live.

This promise becomes reality at Pentecost.

The counterpart to the confusion of tongues is generally seen to be the speaking in tongues at Pentecost.

Acts 2: 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one

Hearing them speak in his own language.

Here is testimony to the fact that God has done something to reverse the confusion of Babel. People of different nations miraculously hear in their own language as Peter is speaking (probably in Aramaic.)

As in the Babel story we find in Acts 2 that at Pentecost the emphasis is not only on tongues but on hearing/listening.

Acts 2:6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. 8 'And how is it that we each hear [them] in our own language to which we were born?

11 Cretans and Arabs- we hear them in our [own] tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: 'Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words.

22 'Men of Israel, listen to these words:

33 'Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

The miracle of Pentecost is that they heard the Word of God once more. When Peter spoke they all understood. They heard the Word of God; It was a word of forgiveness yet to be a word of grace it had to be first of all a word of condemnation, a word that called them to repent of their sin. It is as we accept God's judgment, guilty, and repent that we are given a voice to speak once more. Our first true word is the cry of the condemned sinner seeking mercy. This is the cry that God listens for. When he has heard us, only then can we hear his word of grace. 'I love you, your sins are forgiven'. The Spirit then fills our mouth to speak again. With all our being we cry out, Abba Father. We have come into communion once more; hearing and speaking, loved and loving.

On the day of Pentecost peoples from the diverse nations of the world came once more into covenant relationship with the Godhead through the work of the Son accomplished at the cross and by the power of the Spirit who effected regeneration, bringing them into new life. They were restored to Eden in that God and man could speak together again. And more than that, as they heard and spoke to God of their sin; as they heard God speak forgiveness to them, they were miraculously set free to speak to, and hear each other. They experienced new and wonderful fellowship. They met together, prayed together, worshipped together and shared all that they had with each other. (Acts 2:44f.) They served God with *one shoulder*. They were one in the presence of God; they were family.

In communion and fellowship with God and each other. We now speak and hear.

The good word of God continually calls us to live in such a way that our relationships are healed. It says, 'Love God with all of your heart husbands love your wives, wives submit to your husbands children obey your parents forgive one another love one another pray for one another'.

These are not just nice moralistic sayings but God commanding us into life.

This is not the way of the world but it is the way of the people and the kingdom of God so let us hear and let us obey so that we might live in God through Christ our Saviour with great joy.

THE WORLD - BABYLON THE GREAT

INTROD:- As we come to the Book of Revelation we find a detailed description of the city/world system. The great city is the Harlot Babylon. Here we discern the nature and way of the world.

Revelation 17

Rev. 17:1 (NASB) And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.

It is clear that a contrast is intended between the Harlot and the Bride of Chapter 21 and also with the woman of Chapter 12. The outcome of the final judgment is the destruction of evil and the establishment of the Bride, the New Jerusalem.

The term 'whore' is secular humanity in organized but godless community. We will be told that the harlot is Babylon the great city, V18. The harlot / city sits on MANY WATERS - Babylon of old is described this way Jer 51:13. Ancient Babylon, the city, is inland located on the river Euphrates. Here 'many waters' are many peoples V15. The harlot has power over the nations.

Some suggest that the harlot is Rome. Babylon is sometimes used by writers in early church days to stand for Rome but here in the Revelation it is symbolic of something greater than the city of Rome. It symbolizes man's pride and opposition to God. The city system grew out of man's rebellion and rejection of God's word and judgments. Babylon then is every city and no city. It is the great city which symbolizes man in community opposed to God.

Hendriksen writes

When we study the catalogue of goods found in Babylon (18:11f) it becomes evident that the symbol has reference to a great industrial and commercial metropolis. Babylon, therefore, must indicate the world as a centre of industry, commerce, art, culture etc. which by means of all these things seeks to entice and seduce the believer, that is, to the believer away from God. It symbolizes the concentration of the luxury, vice, and glamour of this world. It is the world viewed as the embodiment of the 'lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life' (1 John 2:16) Babylon thus viewed is past, present and future. Its form changes-, its essence remains.'

2 with whom the kings of the earth committed [acts of] immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality. -

Jeremiah provides the background.

Jer 51:7 Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, making all the earth drunken-, the nations drank of her wine, and so the nations went mad.

Kings and nations have been seduced away from God, enticed by the pleasures and wealth of the city. John could see all of this in Rome. It was filled with vanity, luxury and pleasure.

God's people are seen as his bride so unfaithfulness is often spoken of as adultery (Jer 3:9, Ezek 16:32). Morris says 'This is a vivid way of describing an unfaithfulness which is horrible. It shows us that sin is first of all sin against love.' It is sin against the God who loves us and is jealous for us as a husband is for his wife.

3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

A WILDERNESS This is the place of revelation, the place of God's leading, the place of safety, the place where one is safe from the city and where God provides for his people (1 2:6,14).

The Harlot is the city system, the world system. But John is taken to a desert place to see it. It is only here in detachment from the city, in the secret place with God, that God's people can see Babylon as she really is.

If we identify ourselves with the great city and pursue her goals and aims we will be blind to her essential nature.

and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.

This is the beast of Rev 13:1. The beast who comes up out of the sea. (The Antichrist, a political figure and his rule -Government directed against God). We have seen the woman sitting on 'many waters' and now she is borne by this beast, Government that is opposed to God. The harlot, the city, is closely linked to the beast, Antichrist and is supported by him and his system. The beast is scarlet as is his master the dragon (Satan 12:3).

HEADS AND HORNS represent power and authority.

4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,

Purple and scarlet - colours worn only by the wealthy as the dyes were very expensive. AND ADORNED WITH GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS.

A splendid picture. (contrast with the fine linen of the saints Rev 19:8)

HAVING IN HER HAND A GOLD CUP such a cup, ought surely to contain the best. The picture is from Jer 51:7 where Babylon has been a golden cup in the, hand of the Lord, intoxicating all the earth.' In other words the Golden cup she has, is in reality, the action of the Lord. it is his judgment on the nations, although here it is simply the evil of the nations. God has given the nations up to their sin because they have not acknowledged him.

a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality,

ABOMINATIONS [the Greek word is 'obscenities' it is the same word that is used in the term 'abomination of desolations' (or desecrating obscenity) Mark 13:14, Dan 9:27, 11:31,12:11.]

AND OF THE UNCLEAN THINGS OF HER IMMORALITY. (or filth of her fornication).

The term is used of immorality generally but specifically with reference to the demonic and the world of false gods.

What does the cup contain? Every vile thing that is used to draw man away from God and every good thing, that while not bad in itself, is used for evil and becomes a master or idol to man rather than an object for which to thank and praise God and use to serve him and our fellow man. (eg. good things that seduce men-literature, trade, jewels, art, sport etc. 1 Tim 4:3)

We see that the harlot is 'the dominant world system based on seduction for personal gain'. (Mounce p 308).

5 and upon her forehead a name [was] written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.'

ABOMINATIONS (obscenities) OF THE EARTH.' The character of the woman is shown by the name on her forehead. (The saints were marked on their forehead with a new name. The followers of the beast with his name or number). It is there for all to see yet not all understand her nature as her name is a 'mystery'. We understand mystery only by revelation. We know about Babylon. She is not only a harlot but the 'mother of harlots' she spawns others like herself and she gives birth to every obscenity.

6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly.

The harlot took pleasure in shedding the blood of the saints. Just as a drunkard rejoices over his wine so the woman rejoices over the death of the saints. The harlot, the city is responsible for the suffering and bloodshed of the Saints. Mounce p.307

AND WHEN I SAW HER I WONDERED GREATLY. Perhaps John marvels as he is invited to see the judgment of the harlot and is then shown her great splendour. He may marvel also at seeing the true nature of the Roman Empire, the current representative of The Great City.

7 And the angel said to me, 'Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

Woman and beast are one mystery. They belong together, the city and the political realm, to know the woman is to know the beast (the Antichrist). (think about that for a while).

8 'The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

We find the beast contrasted with God 'who is and who was and who is to come' (1:4) It reminds us also that the beast of Chap 13 who suffered a mortal wound but was healed. In 11:7 we have seen that the present tense is used to indicate that the beast is always coming up out of the abyss (the realm of Satan and evil). Similarly he is always going to perdition. In whatever form he or his empire might take his destiny is always the same.

9 'Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits,

This identifies her with Rome. The seven hills of Rome are often mentioned in ancient literature. This does not mean that Rome exhausts the meaning of the symbol. As we have seen, the great city /Babylon, is every city and no city. It is man organized apart from God. It has its embodiment in every age The harlot, Babylon always opposes the bride, the New Jerusalem. In the first century, Rome was a striking embodiment of what John means by Babylon. In Rome as nowhere else men could see the city of man bent on its own blasphemous way, opposing with all its might the things of God.' Morris.

10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while

The heads symbolize both 7 mountains and also 7 kings (or kingdoms as we have seen from Daniel that king and kingdom are inseparable).

This will be interpreted in one of two ways.

- ❑ Those who think that the king represents the kingdom then nominate the five as Old Babylonia, Assyria, New Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece-Macedonian empires. ONE IS . . . will be Rome and THE OTHER WHO HAS NOT YET COME is said to stand for all anti-Christian governments between the fall of Rome and the Antichrist.
- ❑ If the Kings are just kings then it is usual to look for these among the Roman Emperors. This is difficult as there were more than seven. Most start with Augustus, not Julius Caesar. Augustus is one, Tiberius the second, Caligula third, then Claudius followed by Nero the fifth. ONE IS, the identity of the sixth varies depending whether Galba, Otho and Vitellius are accepted as emperors. If so the sixth is Galba if not then Vespian. In this case THE OTHER WHO HAS NOT YET COME, will be Titus who is to have a short reign. Caird proposes another solution.
- ❑ Seven may be symbolic of the whole empire and not intended to be taken as a precise number. He then understands the kings to represent all of the Roman emperors.

11 'And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is [one] of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

- ❑ If we take the first view, king = kingdom, then the beast who is an eighth, Antichrist and his kingdom, is also one of the seven. That is he will arise in one of the ancient seats of empire or perhaps it means that he belongs to the seven in that he is one with them and succeeds them in world dominion yet he stands apart in that he ascends from the abyss as a full satanic embodiment of the beast.
- ❑ The second view, that actual kings are meant, then relies on the Nero redivivus myth for interpretation. The emperor on the throne would have to be Vespian, 'the other who has not yet come' would be Titus and the eighth who is one of the seven is taken to be a second Nero ie. Domitian. The further difficulty with this interpretation is that Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (177 a.d.) indicated that John wrote the Revelation during the reign of Domitian.

Domitian may have been a beast yet surely the beast being spoken of here is more horrifying than any emperor has ever been. He was, however surely one of the many antichrists but not the Antichrist.

12 'And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

(See Dan 7:7,24) Ladd suggests that the 'ten' may be symbolic of 'the totality of power of all nations on earth which are to be made subservient to Antichrist.'

Some still want to see these as ten emperors of Rome but the vision is explicit. They have not yet received a kingdom. The beast will give rise not only to an 'eighth' but also to ten others. Note these kings are not the same as

'the kings of the earth'" for the kings of the earth are pictured mourning over the destruction of the Great City (18:9) but these ten on the other hand are said to 'hate the whore' (V16). It is not clear whether they are earthly kings or demonic figures.

They are helpers of the Antichrist who is yet to come. If they hate the harlot it is evident that they are not ten heads of the European Common Market as some propound today for we would not expect them to mourn at the collapse of the Great City with all its trade.

We note, their AUTHORITY IS FOR ONE HOUR, a very limited time. They are not identified with the ten kings from the east who come to Har-Magedon (16:12) for they are 'horns,' and are somehow part of the beast.

13 'These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast.

They are willing collaborators, they are not men forced into serving the beast.

14 'These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him fare the] called and chosen and faithful.'

What a simple statement in the midst of such confusion.

15 And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. 16 'And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will bum her up with fire.

There is no cohesion in evil. It is the beast upon whom the woman sat and his cohorts who now destroy the woman, the harlot, the city system. That is, Antichrist - humanistic government, and it leader will destroy the city system that has ridden on its back. A kind of madness has taken hold of the political system. Satan and his minions are not kind masters.

17 'For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.

God causes them, the ten kings who conspire with the Antichrist, agree and to work together for the destruction of Babylon, the harlot, the great evil city system. Human or demonic, these kings and the beast will destroy the Great City. God will put it into their hearts to do so. They will set out to undo the world system with its focus on wealth and pleasure and immorality. Chapter 18 tells the story.

18 'And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.'

Matt 4: 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, 9 and he said to Him, 'All these things will I give *You*, if *You* fall down and worship me.' 10 Then Jesus said to him,

'Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only. "The temptation is the same for us every day. These chapters of Revelation are not just about future conflict but are relevant today.

When faced with the kingdoms of the world and their glory we to must reply. 'Begone Satan,' for his destiny and the destiny of those who follow him *is* perdition. Christ *is* King.

Revelation 18

INTROD:- The following passages should be read prior to the study. 'The fall of Tyre (Ezek 26-28.) The fall of Babylon (Is. 13,14, 1, Jer.50,51). There are many similarities in language between these passages and Rev 18. While these O.T. passages relate primarily to the downfall of the ancient cities of Tyre and Babylon yet it is evident from the language that more is intended (eg Isa. 1 3:4, nations gathered. 13:11. 1 will punish the world for its evil etc.)

Rev 18:1 (NASB) After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.

V1-3 Another angel not identified but having great authority and glory.

The picture is similar to that of -

Ezek 43:1 Then he brought me to the gate, the gate facing east. 2 And there, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east; the sound was like the sound of mighty waters-, and the earth shone with his glory. 3 The vision I saw was like the vision that I had seen when he came to destroy the city, and like the vision that I had seen by the river Che'bar; and I fell upon my face. 4 As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east, 5 the spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court-, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

The city will no longer be the home of civilization, no human being will set foot in her. In the OT the demons are said to dwell in the ruins of cities.

Her uncleanness is in contrast to the Holy City.

3 'For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed facts of] immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.'

A repeat of 14:8. Men seduced by signs, and others by force, have given themselves to worship the beast but most are seduced by Babylon the great city. The great whore seduces people away from God by enticing them with wealth and luxuries. By offering a comfortable and peaceful existence. This is true in every age. The **kings of the earth** have let the pleasures and treasures of this world dictate the course of society rather than truth and justice. They have committed **acts of immorality** with Babylon. They have 'become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.' The sensual city. We can think of her advertising, movie industry, magazines, night clubs etc.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues;

See Is. 48:20, 52:11, Jer 50:8 51:6,45, Zech 2:7. God's admonition to leave Babylon is to his people in all ages. It is the world centre of seduction in every age. To leave Babylon is to be separate from the sins of the great city. It is to shut ones ears to her enticements and instead to worship and, serve God. It is to acknowledge His sovereignty and our dependence upon Him. We come out of Babylon as we come into Christ. This is in contrast to the city which spew forth from man's rebellion and determination to begin anew without God.

Elsewhere the N.T. speaks in term of being separate from the world. The World in this sense and Babylon are synonymous. Rom 12:2, James 4:4, 1 Jn 2:15-17. As we proceed we need to be clear that the matter is not one of wealth and poverty but of the worship of the beast on who's back the harlot (city) sits (117:3), and the worship of God.

Wealth is not wrong but it is to be seen as a gift of God given to use in the service of God and ones fellow man. When we seek it as the source of our security rather than trust God or if our goal is wealth then it is also our idol. I Tim 6:17-19 gives instructions to the wealthy.

5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Roma 2:5 (NASB) But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

Jere 51:9 (NASB) We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed-, Forsake her and let us each go to his own country, For her judgment has reached to heaven And towers up to the very skies. It may appear that evil men triumph and the good suffer at their hand. There seems to be no justice but God does remember.

6 'Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back [to her] double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.

She will receive DOUBLE FOR HER DEEDS. Her own evil cup will be her doom.

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked-, for whatever a man sows , this he will also reap . 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

7 'To the degree that she glorified *herself and lived* sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 7 sit [as] a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.,

What you sow you reap

Is 14: 3 And it will be in the day when the Lord gives you rest from your pain and turmoil and harsh service in which you have been enslaved, 4 that you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon, and say, 'How the oppressor has ceased, [And how] fury has ceased! 5 'The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, The sceptre of rulers 6 Which used to strike the peoples in fury with unceasing strokes, Which subdued the nations in anger with unrestrained persecution. 9 'Sheol from beneath is excited over you to meet you when you come-, It arouses for you the spirits of the dead, all the leaders of the earth; It raises all the kings of the nations from their thrones. 10 'They will all respond and say to you, 'Even you have been made weak as we, You have become like us. 11 'Your pomp [and] the music of your harps Have been brought down to Sheol- Maggots are spread out [as your bed] beneath you, And worms are your covering.' 12 'How you have fallen from heaven, 0 star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 'But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds-, I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 'Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit

Jer 50:29 'Summon many against Babylon, All those who bend the bow: Encamp against her on every side, Let there be no escape. Repay her according to her work; According to all that

she has done, [so] do to her, For she has become arrogant against the Lord, Against the Holy One of Israel. 30 'Therefore her young men will fall in her streets, And all her men of war will be silenced in that day,' declares the Lord. 31 'Behold. I am against you, O arrogant one,' Declares the Lord God of hosts, 'For your day has come, The time when I shall punish you. 32 'And the arrogant one will stumble and fall With no one to raise him up; And I shall set fire to his cities, And it will devour all his environs.'

Ancient Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians in 539 BC. Both the city of Babylon and the Babylonian Empire came to an end.

The nations belong to God. There is no nation that is not answerable to God. Babylon is not just arrogant but she has total faith in her own resources and has seduced the nations into thinking that they can do without God and that the city, that is, man himself, with all his wisdom and skill is truly self sufficient. Godless man thinks that he is the Great I AM.

8 'For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

PESTILENCE the Greek term is 'death'. Death would end everything yet there are other plagues hence the word is often translated 'Pestilence' although this is not usual. and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong. This is not an arbitrary display of power however but a just judgment of God. The word 'strong' is very emphatic. It stands in contrast to Babylon the strong city in the next verse.

9 'And the kings of the earth, who committed [acts of] immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, *Babylon, the strong city!* For in one hour your judgment has come.'

Distinguish between 'The kings of the earth' and the ten kings of Chap 17 who join the beast in destroying the woman Babylon. These kings of the earth lived sensuously (deliciously) with her. They have been seduced by the wealth, glamour and power of the city but have not openly supported the demonic purposes of the beast in the same way as his ten horns/kings. The kings mourn because her power is gone. All that they have toiled for and counted dear has been destroyed, hence their cry. Note how wealth and power are related. The wealthy have the power and rule yet God is stronger and this is acknowledged by their cry 'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

11 'And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more, 12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every [kind of] citron wood and every article of ivory and every article [made] from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, 13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and [cargoes] of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.

Their mourning is not so much for the city but because no-one buys their cargoes any more. Their Gods are wealth, luxuries, pleasures. Suddenly they are bankrupt and bereft for their security and life lies in these their Gods. The cargoes include 'slaves and human lives' Literally 'bodies and souls of men'. The city has no respect for persons, they are dispensable. (Recent child sex slave trade between China and USA via Rome. Sex slaves in Sydney)

14 'And the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and [men] will no longer find them. 15 'The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, 16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; 17 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, 18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What [city] is like the great city?' 19 'And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

Ezek 27:5-24, Is 23, are models for this lament.

The kings mourn because her power is gone, the merchants and the seafarers because of her wealth is laid waste. They all **STOOD AT A DISTANCE** V10,17. No one stretched out a hand to help. The **great city has brought profit to many but affection to none.**

Caird. 'There was nothing sinful about the commodities that made up Rome's luxury trade, until the great whore used them to seduce mankind into utter materialism. Every object of worth which seafaring man had ever carried to Rome to grace the life of the imperial capital, whether in its natural state or enhanced by the craftsmanship of man, belonged to the order of God's creation which must be redeemed by the overthrow of Babylon, and would find its proper place in the new Jerusalem.'

20 'Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.'

This last phrase is difficult to translate. It is literally 'God has judged your judgment from her.' It may mean something like 'God has imposed on her the sentence she passed on you'. At last justice has been done. God's people had staked their lives on the truth of the word of God and now that faith is vindicated. They can rejoice.

21 And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, 'Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.

STRONG ANGEL, an unusual expression, yet appropriate as his task is to symbolize the destruction of the great city...by lifting up the great stone and casting it into the sea.

and will not be found any longer. occurs six times in V21-23. This is final). The symbol is found in Jer 51: 60 Jeremiah wrote in a scroll all the disasters that would come on Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon. 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: 'When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, 62 and say, 'O LORD, you yourself threatened to destroy this place so that neither human beings nor animals shall live in it, and it shall be desolate forever' 63 When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it, and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, 64 and say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disasters that I am bringing on her.'" This wicked world as the centre of seduction will perish forever.

22 'And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer, and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer, 23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer, and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer, for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your

sorcery. All that constitutes the city will cease to exist. The pleasure mad, arrogant world, with its seductive luxuries and pleasures, with its antichristian philosophy and culture and all of its fleshly lusts will end.

The world's musicians will be silent. (not that God is a member of the anti-organ church). In visions of heaven there is always singing and rejoicing, worship and praise. The beast has his own kind of music. Music that profanes that which is holy. Music that worships the creature and not the creator. The judgment of Tyre Ezek 26:13, likewise makes an end to man's joy and singing.

24 'And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.'

In Jer 51:49 God denounces Babylon as the murderer of his people. It is interesting that Jesus brings the same accusation against, not Babylon, but the earthly Jerusalem.

Matt 23:33 You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell? 34 Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, 35 so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36 Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation. 37 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Much of the language of this chapter is almost identical to that found in Ezekiel 27 & 28. In these chapters judgment is pronounced on another city using this same kind of language. The city however is not Babylon but Tyre. Tyre is a coastal city famous for its trade and wealth.

It declares 'I am perfect in beauty.' (26:3)

God says to Ezekiel,

28:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 'Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"In the pride of your heart you say, 'I am a god- I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas.' But you are a man and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god

Here in Rev 18 the City is again called Babylon but as we have seen the harlot Babylon is seated on 7 hills (17:9). Here the harlot is manifested in Rome. Again we see that the harlot of Revelation is bigger than any one city. It is symbolic of the entire city system, the heart of man's rebellion and defiance of God.

Morris says 'John is catching up all that the prophets have said as they announce the doom of Tyre or Babylon or Nineveh. But he is thinking not of the fall of one city or empire but of the collapse of civilization. Final judgment means the overthrow of all that opposes itself to God.'

THE ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET

Rev 17:18 And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth.' 18:1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. 2 And he called out with a mighty voice, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird-, 3 for all nations have drunk the wine of her impure passion, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich with the wealth of her wantonness.' 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;

Is 48: 17 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the LORD your God, who teaches you for your own good, who leads you in the way you should go. 18 O that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your prosperity would have been like a river, and your success like the waves of the sea-, 19 your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains-, their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me. 20 Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it forth to the end of the earth; say, 'The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob!' 21 They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split open the rock and the water gushed out. 22 'There is no peace,' says the LORD, 'for the wicked.'

Jer 51:5 Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD of hosts, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel. **6 Flee from the midst of Babylon, save your lives, each of you! Do not perish because of her guilt,** for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance,- he is repaying her what is due. 7 Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, making all the earth drunken- the nations drank of her wine, and so the nations went mad. **8 Suddenly Babylon has fallen and is shattered; wail for her! Bring balm for her wound; perhaps she may be healed. 9 We tried to heal Babylon, but she could not be healed. Forsake her, and let each of us go to our own country; for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies. 10 The LORD has brought forth our vindication; come, let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.**

God's admonition to leave Babylon is to his people in all ages. It is the world centre of seduction in every age. To leave Babylon is to return to God. It is to forsake and be separate from the sins of the great city/world system..

To flee from Babylon the great city does not mean that we runaway to the country? The city system is there also.

Hear what Paul Says -

Eph 2:1 And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among these we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

For us, to come out of the city is to belong to belong to Christ. It is to shut our ears to the enticements of Babylon the harlot and instead to worship and, serve God. It is to acknowledge His sovereignty and our dependence upon Him. It is to be raised up with Christ and made to sit in the heavenly places. It means that we see ourselves as citizens of heaven waiting for our Saviour to come again. (Phil 3:20). We do not belong to Babylon but to the New Jerusalem.

The question for us is, how am I to live as a Christian in the world without being of the world system.

We have often attempted to do this by withdrawing from the world and living in our Christian ghettos. Jesus said,

Matt 5:14 'You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

To be a light in the world is to be a light in the place where the darkness is and not be light hidden away in a corner.

(Think about church models - a light in the darkness - a fortress - a stream in the desert).

Last week I quoted from Hendriksen who says -

'When we study the catalogue of goods found in Babylon (18:11f) it becomes evident that the symbol has reference to a great industrial and commercial metropolis. Babylon, therefore, must indicate the world as a centre of industry, commerce, art, culture etc.

It is in this context that the light must shine.

In my congregation, Australasian Sales manager for a large company that exports goods to many nations? Can you do that and be a Christian? Rev 18 It is the merchants and the traders, sailors, transport people who mourn so loudly when Babylon falls You can be a Sales manager in the world system or a sales manager in Christ? You can be a in the world system or a in Christ.

The goods by which the great harlot seduces the kings and kingdoms of the earth, is there anything wrong with those things? No.

1 Tim 4:4 Everything that God has made is good and is to be received with thanks giving?

Fine clothing, pearls, spices, the works of the artisan or musician, unless they are perverse we can accept them as gifts of God, to be received with thanksgiving. Art, literature and music like most things is easily perverted to serve the god of this world and the lusts of human kind. they are then hideous. eg. Art. Philip Adams, 'Such affluent Suffering' *Weekend Australian Review* 18-19 March 2000

What of 1 John 2:15-16?

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, are not of God but of God.

If we leave the presence of God as Cain did to live as prodigals then we take the good gifts of God, the fine clothing, the artisans work, the pearls, our sexuality, and just about everything else and we make idols of them. Babylon the harlot ever dangles these things before us and displays them, not as gifts of God to be received with thanksgiving, but as objects of our lust and pride and we begin to worship the created and the creature rather than the creator. We are seduced by these things' we sleep with the great whore.

As Christians we may live in the world, the physical world, with great joy. It is the home that God has given us. We receive all his good gifts with thanksgiving.

As Christians we live in the world, the world of rebellious mankind, having been crucified with Christ to its system and god. In it we serve Christ and man with gladness and yet with caution and pain.

Secular authority & False Religion - John's Antichrist & The false Prophet.

In Rev 13 we read of two beasts. The first beast comes up out of the sea, (the raging mass of humanity). If this is the same beast as we have seen in chap 11 then it is the Antichrist. This beast has the characteristics of Rome and is political standing for the world system, the state and its leader.

(Hendriksen suggests that the beast is 'the persecuting power of Satan embodied in all the nations and governments of the world it is now Old Babylonia- then Assyria- Rome etc. but though the forms differ the essence remains the same-, worldly government directed against the Church.')

We need to exercise caution here so that we do not think that all human authority is evil. Remember what Paul has to say

13 1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment

Caird, another commentator says -

'in the war between God and Satan, between good and evil, the state is one of the defences established by God to contain the powers of evil within bounds, part of the order which God the creator has established in the midst of chaos. But when men worship the state, according to it the absolute loyalty and obedience that are due not to Caesar but to God, then the state goes over to the enemy. 'What Satan calls from the abyss is not government, but the abuse of government, the omni-competent state. It is misleading to say that the monster is Rome, for it is both more and less, more because Rome is only its latest embodiment-, and less, because Rome is also, even among all the corruptions of idolatry, 'God's agent of punishment, for retribution on the offender' (Rom. 13:1-7).' Caird.

The second beast of chapter 13 comes up out of the earth. This beast is the false prophet who causes the earth to worship the first beast. We have false religion and its leader in league with corrupt, godless political power. We then also need to discern the actions of the second beast, false religion, at work in today's world.

To make sense of this in today's world I want to spend some time thinking about - God and Modern politics -God and Technology - God and Economics - God and Modern Culture - God and Modern Heresy.

A little history. In the Old Testament the place of the priest was the temple. The priest was called and sanctified by God to minister to God by way of sacrifices and offering, prayer and praise on behalf of the nation. The task of the Prophet was to wait on God for his word and

then to declare his word to the nation. The place of the prophet was most often the court of the king.

When we come to think about modern politics - One of the first things that we notice is that there is no prophet in the court of the king. The priests are hiding in the temple somewhere and the nation thinks that it has no need of a prophet to remind them of God.

It was not this way in Israel -2 Sam 21: 21 During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years-, so David sought the face of the LORD.

2 Kings 13:4 Then Jehoahaz sought the LORD's favor, and the LORD listened to him, for he saw how severely the king of Aram was oppressing Israel.

2 Chron 22:9 Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart.

Up until the Enlightenment God was a part of everyday life and consulted on all major decisions. The Enlightenment or the Age of Rationalism or the Age of Reason was a period in history when philosophers emphasized the use of reason as the best method of learning truth. The period of the Age of Reason began in the 1600's and lasted until the late 1700's. Its leaders included names such as French philosophers-- Rene Descartes, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire—and the English philosopher John Locke. Enlightened people have no need of God.

In the recent Republican/Monarch debate - Republic, no prayers at the beginning of parliament?

In an important issue such as this we would not expect the PM call a national prayer meeting to seek the mind of God? **We have been conditioned by the world system not** to expect such things.

Earlier we said that Biblically, 'worldliness is human life devoid of God'. Craig Gay speaks of Practical atheism. ¹ We may say that we believe in God but when it comes to practical living we behave as though God does not exist? So in the republican/monarchy debate we may well find more Christians demonstrating on the streets than we find on their knees.

eg. The priest who prayed without believing and God answered. Not for us to be judgmental but rather to ask ourselves - am I a practical atheist?

If I am then of course when famine comes as it did in David's day then where do I turn for help?

When I am oppressed and threatened by a neighbouring country as Jehoahz was then there is no point in praying. I had better gather an army together in a hurry?

We play Politics on a grand scale but know little of the weapons of our warfare which are not carnal - 2 Cor 10:4. We discern the way of the world as we think of the cold war between the Russia and the West that went on for so many years. The arms race that's still going on today. If we have an A bomb then no one will throw A bombs at us? The thinking behind the space race is that whoever controls space control the world? As practical atheists we think that God cannot do it. If God Cannot do it then of course we must, it all depends on us.

It may be said that political life is a reflection of the quality of the culture generally. It provides a window into the souls of people.¹⁰ As we see what is happening in society we do well to look at our own hearts and minds.

What happens when things go wrong in my life? in your life? If we really believe in God then we will come to him with our concerns, our fears, our hopes and we will call upon him with peace in our hearts knowing that he is the loving Father. The option is to worry, be stressed out, take the whole burden and task upon our shoulders and probably have a break down. Should we have a national prayer meeting rather than a national Army? Is that Stupidity? God has his armies. Remember the story of Gideon (Judges 7). Remember what the young servant of Elisha saw when God opened his eyes (2Kings 6:17). The issue is not should we have an army or not. As in the Gideon story, the issue is, in whom do we trust?

Do I believe that God is Sovereign?

Do I believe that God is my deliverer?

The Psalmist could write -

Psalm 18:2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer - my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.

He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.³

I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death entangled me-, the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. 5 The cords of the grave coiled around me the snares of death confronted me- 6 In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears. 7 The earth trembled and quaked, and the foundations of the mountains shook-, they trembled because he was angry. 8 Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. 9 He parted the heavens and came down;

Modern politics has no place for God. More than that, it has no need for God. It declares that with our wisdom insight and technology we can provide all that humanity can ever need.

We have been seduced into thinking that the political process can and will solve the ills of society. If only my party gets into power / stays in power then every thing will be OK? If we think that Australia will be OK as long as we remain under a Monarch or our problems will be solved if we become a republic then we are practical atheists.

We have great faith that the political system can and will do what is needed to supply our needs and keep us living happily ever after.

As a consequence of this faith in the ability of the political system the Church has responded in two ways. The liberal Church has engaged in a social gospel movement. They have also taken up Liberation theology - This theology seeks to liberate the oppressed and the down trodden by political means. It seeks to bring about the kingdom of God, heaven on earth, by politics and human effort. Some advocate force if that is necessary. On the conservative side of Christianity we have something just as bad. The moral majority groups (TV recently USA). Trying by political means to change society. (Bombing abortion clinics).

¹⁰ Gay p30

As we behave in society so we behave in the Church?

The Politics are unbelievable - conferences/synods/Diocese - Local congregations - Power groups? Achieve their end; by political means. Art. John Cornwell, 'The last crusade' *Weekend Australian Focus* 18-19 March 2000 If our faith lies in the political system then the answer lies within us human beings. If our faith is in God then we hear the word of God. God's answer is Christ. In Christ we go about our lives differently. John 18:36 Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.'

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places].

Some of you may be political leaders? Can you be a politician or even a political being and not part of the world system which is Antichrist and Antigon? The answer is yes. So what does it mean to be a truly Christian political leader?

What does it mean to be a politically concerned and aware Christian person who is not caught up in the world system?

It means that like King David, you -

- know and accept that you are a creature and not God.
- You worship God with all your heart.
- You delight in the word of God and meditates on it day and night.
- You have learned to pray for your nation and for your world for you know that the answer to man's need and salvation lies not in your own hands nor in the hands of political process, but in the hands of God.

1 Tim 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.

Paul says

Gal 6.14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Note has been crucified Objective fact. When did that happen. At the cross. Subjectively for me at the moment in which I am born anew. Having been liberated from Babylon the great city is it my desire to linger there rather than live in Christ, in the New Jerusalem as many of the Israelites did at the end of the exile.

Is 48: 20 Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it forth to the end of the earth; say, 'The LORD has redeemed his servants.

POLITICS & TECHNOLOGY

Rom 12:1 1 urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

JB Phillips - Don't let the world squeeze you into its own mould.

Worldliness? more than smoking, drinking and dancing and living together before you are married. Worldliness is that system which says, we can live without God.

Politics has seduced society into thinking that it has the solution to all of our needs. We do not depend on God, we do not need God, there is no God.

We then set out to create utopia, heaven on earth. Hitler's perfect race, Communism, Capitalism, the goal is always the same.

Leslie Newbigen... the project of bringing heaven down to earth always results in bringing hell up from below. Human politics are well described in the following passages.

1 Samuel 8: 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to govern us.' Samuel prayed to the LORD, 7 and the LORD said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you-, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. 8 Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. 9 Now then, listen to their voice-, only-you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.' 10 So Samuel reported all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king, 11 He said, 'These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots-, 12 and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. 15 He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. 16 He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. 18 And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day.'

1 Sam 10: 17 Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Miz'pah 18 and said to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' 19 But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses; and you have said, 'No! but set a king over us.'

1 Kings 12: 3 ... all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehobo'am, 4 'Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke that he placed on us, and we will serve you.' 5 He said to them, 'Go away for three days, then come again to me.' So the people went away. 6 Then King Rehobo'am took counsel with the older men who had attended his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, 'How do you advise me to answer this people?' 7 They answered him, 'If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever.' (This is the role of the true King/ leader - came not to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for many).

12 So Jerobo'am and all the people came to Rehobo'am the third day, as the king had said, 'Come to me again the third day.' 13 The king answered the people harshly. He disregarded the advice that the older men had given him 14 and spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, 'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'

Division of Israel from Judah Tried to bring heaven down from above but they brought hell up from beneath.

When we put our trust in the man and man's world system then God cries out to us saying -

19 But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses-, and you have said, 'No! but set a king over us.'

In our rebellion and arrogance we say by our actions I will choose my own king -
Or I will be my own king.

Back to Genesis 11 at the story of Babel we noted a remarkable word.

Gen 11:4 Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.' 5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. 6 The LORD said, 'If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.'

Without God man needs some magic of his own if he is to build his own world, defend and feed himself and live happily ever after without God. This magic will be limited only by the imagination of man.

The magic that he creates we may call - Science & Technology.

Science has been given a God like status. Given time there is nothing that we cannot do.

But isn't science wonderful? (Kersbrook to Adelaide - horse and cart loaded with apples for market a two day round journey. First truck solid rubber tyres 10mph -16km/h) Now Sydney in two days by car, 2hrs flying Via the Internet we can access materials on the other side of the world instantly.

(In offering a critique Technology I don't want to be aligned with the silly stuff that some Christians go on about. When Russia sent the first astronaut into space some Christians wrote and objected that this was the realm of the angels and we had better not disrupt the angels?

Technology - OT style

1 Kings 10: 26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horses ; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. 27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. 28 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD. 2 Yet he too is wise and can bring disaster-, he does not take back his words. He will rise up against the house of the wicked, against those who help evildoers. 3 But the Egyptians are men and not God-, their horses are flesh and not spirit.

Has Israel forgotten the horses and chariots of Egypt? Horse and rider thrown into the sea. Our technology has advanced a little but it's purpose is to enable us to live without God.

End 17th century - Decartes

'Science is practical philosophy by means of which we might render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.'

Nature must not interrupt our football match or our tennis game. We will build a great stadium reaching up into the heavens with a sliding roof so that we can play while the thunder is rolling. Genetically engineered crops stop produce from going rotten (plastic tomatoes). We treat our chickens and meat animals with hormones grow faster produce more meet. We can produce crops that are disease free. In 1950 for the first time the semen of a bull was successfully frozen and better cattle were produced by artificial insemination.

In 1952 the first actual animal cloning took place when frogs were developed from asexual tadpole cells 1983 was the year when an embryo was transferred from one human mother to another woman for the first time. March 1997 the sheep dolly was cloned New Zealand a family of 10 sheep cloned from one sheep. Human genes being introduced into cattle. (The Weekend Australian, Review p7 Feb 19-20, 2000)

Human cloning is months away. This raises all sorts of moral and legal issues. If I clone myself the clone is my identical twin, by brother. Am I also its Father? If carry out the cloning Procedure myself I am then creator. Having created in my own image am I then god to my creation; a god like YAHWEH?

At last we have reached up to heaven. We sit in the seat of God. By our science and technology we have become the masters our destiny-, we now determine the evolution and the future of humanity. Unless God intervenes we will design our descendants and the world in which they will live.

To declare that I am creator is surely the ultimate blasphemy.

2 Thess 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God.

This is what the Lord said about his peoples technology

Micah 5: 10 'In that day,' declares the LORD, 'I will destroy your horses from among you and demolish your chariots - 11 I will destroy the cities of your land and tear down all your strongholds. 12 I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells. 13 I **will** destroy your carved images and your sacred stones from among you-, you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands. 14 I will uproot from among you your Asherah poles and demolish your cities. 15 I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed me .

10: 3 'My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me. 4 I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.

Micah answers God

6 With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. 9 Listen! The LORD is calling to the city-- and to fear your name is wisdom

- Is it OK to own a chariot? or a horse and cart or a motor car, and a refrigerator and a washing machine and a TV set.
- Is it OK to eat those plastic tomatoes?
- Is it OK to receive a heart transplant?
- Is it OK to receive a cloned heart?
- Is it OK to renew all of my organs as needed and cheat death?

What is the real issue? Where is my faith? In God or in Science? Will I hear the Word of God and accept the judgments of God and do the will of God.

As Christians it is matter of learning to think from God's perspective and not from the perspective of the world.

Our attempt to control nature is a denial of God. It is an attempt to dismiss and even defeat God, it is a subtle way of saying that man is God.

There are four things that most helpful for us to remember as God's people Living in today's world.

God is creator and the creation exists and is controlled by him.

Amos 4:6-9 Amos 4: 6 'But I gave you also cleanness of teeth in all your cities And lack of bread in all your places, Yet you have not returned to Me,' declares the Lord. 7 'And furthermore, I withheld the rain from you While [there were] still three months until harvest. Then I would send rain on one city And on another city I would not send rain-, One part would be rained on, While the part not rained on would dry up. 8 'So two or three cities would stagger to another city to drink water, But would not be satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,' declares the Lord. 9 'I smote you with scorching [wind] and mildew-, And the caterpillar was devouring Your many gardens and vineyards, fig trees and olive trees-, Yet you have not returned to Me,' declares the Lord

2. We are kingdom people and the age to come has broken in upon us - (people of the fourth dimension).

At the end 17th Cent. the Christian question of how we ought to live was replaced with questions about how can we construct society by our scientific method to be all that we want it to be. Galileo, Bacon, Descartes and Newton are given credit for science's habit of objectification. This is the basis of modern science:- It's concern is with the tangible world, with the things that you can touch and see and hear and smell. Science has been given a God like status. Unless a thing can be demonstrated, poked and prodded it does it exist? Paul reminds us that in Christ by the Spirit we know, experience and live in the world while being totally in touch with spiritual realities.

1 Cor 2:9 But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him'-- 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit-, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. 13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual 16 'For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ.

We are creating anew reality of our own. I max —A new way of seeing? A revelation of reality. This is the way to travel? (New technology—Sesorama—frightening pornographic possibilities)

3. The Triune God is a Relational God

Science is concerned with productivity?
God is concerned with people?

Matt 22:35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him [a question] testing Him, 36 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' 37 And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 'This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 'The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' 40 'On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'

In the world of science and technology things like Friendship, Loyalty, Mercy, Motherhood, Fatherhood have no place. This God of science is cold and impersonal.

Recent radio - motherhood - billions of Dollars of unpaid work - Billions of Dollars lost to industry? (Lets grow the little creatures in test tubes on farms managed by a few skilled workers)

4. God is Holy and True

Post modern thinkers tell us that truth is a human construction. There is no ultimate or absolute truth? Ethics are purely situational, determined by will of society. There is no purpose or meaning to life beyond that which we create for ourselves.

There are no satisfactory answers to the big three questions that every human being needs to know

	Post Modernist	Christian
Who am I	Biological machine	Child of the living God
Why am I here	I have to work that out	The chief end of man is to glorify God
Where am I going	Into oblivion	Into fellowship with the Godhead

- How then do I live in a technological world dominated by science?
- I do not need to become a hermit or live in past.
- But my life and skills and technology must always be used in the light of who I am
- Why I am here and where I am going.
- Who am I - A child of God
- Why am I here? - To serve and glorify God
- Where am I going - Further into the new creation to live in fellowship and love with God, the
- redeemed, and the hosts of heaven.
- How then do I live in a technological world dominated by science?

I live with the mind of Christ, not with the mind of the world. I am filled and led by the Holy Spirit of God and not the spirit of the age and so I live a holy life discerning truth from the Word of God and by listening to the Spirit who is the teacher.

How do I prepare my children and grandchildren to live in this world? The only way to keep them from seduction by the great harlot is to introduce them to Christ the true lover.

MONEY AND THE CULT OF SELF

Science is concerned with productivity: God is concerned with people.

Technology has made possible, mass production, marketing, consumption, better conditions, better education, greater knowledge, social welfare (mother state) and comparative wealth.

Who needs God?

Deut 8:11 (NIV) Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. 12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Modern Economics

The power of economics was never so strong as in our time. Now nothing can escape its influence. The life of the whole world moves beneath the sign of economism, and economic interests have put all things under their feet. (Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Fate of Man in the Modern World.*)

Money money, money makes the world go round...

Luke 12:15 (NIV) Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed-, a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.' 16 And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' 18

'Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy- eat, drink and be merry.'" 20 'But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' 21 'This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.'

Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions. What does it consist of?

What does it mean to be rich towards God?

Luke 12:22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat- or about your body, what you will wear. 23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn-, yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

Story in women's mag of young Italian - 2 jobs - married - purchased a store - 25 employees just the beginning - shot and killed in an armed robbery.

27 'Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink-, do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. **31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.** 32 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief **comes near and no moth destroys.** 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Life consists of a raven like trust in God!

Life is kingdom living

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Deuteronomy passage calls us to remember God's goodness. We read 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

The passage continues

Deut 8: 15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Remember - the stories of God's mighty hand upon you.

Money for Beaumonts

Know that - God gives you the ability to produce wealth!

Deut 8:18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

See Deut 28

Our work must be undertaken in faith knowing that it is God's intention and purpose to bless us.

The Puritan Richard Baxter

'If God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or to any other), if you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your Calling, and you refuse to be God's steward, and to accept His gifts and use them for Him when He requireth it: you may labour to be rich for God, though not for the flesh and sin.'

The Protestant work ethic developed with the idea that our prosperity the sign of God's election.

Baxter -diligent work in the world is the best remedy for anxiety about one's election, especially if this work reveals itself to be consonant with God's purposes by effectively advancing the common good.

This of course can lead to a gospel of prosperity

Never the less there is truth here. God delights to bless his people but to preach and follow a prosperity gospel may well indicate that the Church has been seduced by the wealth of the great harlot Babylon. A Christian living in the days of the Roman Emperor Domitian might also say that 'those who are godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution', so that their goods will be taken away and their jobs forfeited and they will experience true poverty and this is a sign of election?

Danger - Balance needed

Mark 10:17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 18 'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good-except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" 20

'Teacher,' he declared, 'all these I have kept since I was a boy.' 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.' 22

At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!' 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' 26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, 'Who then can be saved?' 27 Jesus looked at them and said,

'With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.'

Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?

James 1-9 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. 10 But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant, its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

John Wesley made the following comments (circa 1740)

I fear wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible in the nature of things for any period of revival of religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But, as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How, then, is it possible that Methodism, that is a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as the green bay trees, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal', consequently, they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away, Is there no way to prevent this - the continual decay of pure religion?

What does our obsession with money and with monetary values disclose beyond the fact that we are obsessed with controlling our own circumstances. In this we fail to trust God. We will not trust God because we want autonomy. We want to be independent from God. We want to be someone in our own right.

Paul was able to say

Phil 4:12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity-, in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

If I can say this, then my trust is not in my prosperity but in God by whose grace I prosper. My help is not in myself, or in things, but in the one who comes to me and strengthens me.

Psalms 121:1 I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from? 2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth- 3 He will not let your foot slip-- he who watches over you will not slumber-, 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand- 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life-, 8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

The world and the cult of Self

Technology and Money then support the cult of 'self'. Jesus calls us to a distinctively different way of living.

Mark 8:34 Jesus said to them, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'

If we read the verse carefully it is clear that Jesus was not asking us to give up something. He is not asking us to give away our money or our cars or our homes. He is not calling us to go and live in a monastery or to go without icecream and chocolate? He is calling his disciples to something much more radical? He calls all who follow him to deny self.

Jesus is not calling us to asceticism. You can be an ascetic, live in monastery fasting and praying and yet your life can totally self serving if your goal and desire is to save yourself by these activities.

Jesus called us all to deny ourself and not to try and save ourself.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer - German pastor in England at outbreak of WW 11 died in prison. He said, 'When Jesus calls a man, he bids him come and die'.

His dying was not the death he died in prison; his dying was his death to self; it was his return to Germany from America after war had broken out; it was his care for the German people; his opposition to Hitler, knowing that this would mean imprisonment and eventually physical death. He died to self and lived to God.

John Calvin

We are not our own; therefore neither our reason nor our will should predominate in our deliberations and actions.

We are not on our own-, therefore let us not think that our only purpose is to seek what is expedient for us according to the flesh.

We are not our own; therefore let us, as far as possible, forget ourselves and all things that are ours. On the contrary, we are God's, So therefore, let us live and die to him.

We are God's; therefore let his wisdom and will determine all our actions

We are God's; let every part of our lives be directed towards him as our only legitimate end.

(institutes III,7) Mark - INTERPRETATION p.156

Often we do not live this way, we are unknowingly caught up in the cult of self worship. We recognise that what Jesus is saying is quite contrary to what the world is saying to us. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves - in serving God and other people. The world calls us to affirm ourselves, defend ourselves, fight for ourselves and our rights. Jesus came with a different philosophy.

Mark 8: 35 'For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it-, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

35 ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν γὰθ θέλη τὴν Ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι ἀπολέσει αὐτήν

The word translated life (Ψυχὴν) has the following meanings
Ψυχὴ, ἡς self, inner life, one's inmost being; (physical) life; that which has life, living creature, person, human being.

So it is possible to translate -

Whoever wishes to	save his -	life	shall loose it
Whoever wishes to	save his -	self	shall loose it
Whoever wishes to	save his -	inner life	shall loose it

Whoever wishes to save his - person shall loose it -

When we belong to the world system this is what we are about. (self made men and women saving our own person).

The word translated - to loose (ἀπόλλυμι) is a very strong word. It means to destroy; kill, lose; midd. *be lost, perish, be ruined; die; pass away* ἀπόλλυμι τὴν ψυχὴν (an idiom, literally 'to suffer the destruction of one's life' or to have one's life destroyed') (Lowe & Nider)

Whoever wishes to save his - inmost being/life/person shall loose it Whoever wishes to save his -inmost being/life/person shall destroy it Whoever wishes to save his - inmost being/life/person shall perish

What is it to try and save our inmost being/life/person? It is important to know this because if we take this path it will destroy us.

The world calls us to self awareness, to self fulfilment, self satisfaction. We are surrounded by self help programs, meditation that leads to self discipline, self assertion courses that help

up to stand up for ourselves. We need personal goals and personal development, so that we can discover who we are and realize our full potential.

The road to self discovery offered by the world is the road to destruction for it leads us on an inward egocentric, journey.

I am not saying that all therapy and self help programs are useless. At times they may be both necessary and helpful but ultimately they will be so when they lead us beyond self to serve God and others. Jesus calls us out of ourselves to serve God and our fellow man.

We actually discover who we are when we discover Jesus. We find that in him we are the children of God. Like him we are servant sons and daughters of God.

The cult of self leads to extreme individualism.

(News clip re- James bond like weapons of WWII. - suicide pill). There is something of more importance than me as a person. I will die for my country if called upon to do so. In Western society we believe that individuality is a great liberation - We are free from tradition, free from family ties and obligations. Those things don't matter any more. By our technology we are free from the constraints of nature, we genetically manipulate our crops, by modern birth control methods we determine when children will be born, effective birth control has also freed our generation from sexual restraints.

The cult of self has elevated us to the position of judge of all things.

(Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel-, every man did what was right in his own eyes,)

We determine what will accept or reject in matters of faith and Scripture. 'I know the bible says that but there are many interpretations you know anyway I believe.'

If I believe, then of course, the matter is settled.

Augustine said, love God and do as you like. Modern society says, leave God out of it, just love and do as you like.

Bonhoeffer wrote

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.

Whoever I am, you know, O God, I am Yours.

This was his secret. This is where his great strength of character lay; it was in knowing that he was God's.

Mark 8: 35 'For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

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FALSE PROPHET - TRUE CITY

In Rev 13 we have seen a picture of the great dragon standing on the sea shore as **monstrous beasts arise**, one from the Sea and one from the land. The first beast is political- 7

'the deification of secular authority.' (Mounce: 246) (The Antichrist of John and the Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thess 2)

The second beast is a religious figure. The early Church understood this beast to refer in their day to the 'Imperial priesthood that assisted Rome in propagating the Imperial Cult' (Mounce: 255) This beast is then referred to as the False Prophet. (16:13, 19:20, 20:10).

This is the religious system of man which stands in contrast to the true worship of God

Throughout history we find the world's political powers working in league with false religion.

The Beast from The Land, The False Prophet, (Rev 13:10-18).

- ❑ This second beast exercises the authority of the first beast who in turn has received
- ❑ authority from the great Dragon (13- 4,12).
- ❑ He makes everyone worship the first beast (v. 12). (imperial cult serving Rome)
- ❑ He performs great signs and deceives those who dwell on earth (V13).
- ❑ He calls for men to make an image of the first beast and then makes it live (V14-15). (Caligular—a bust or statue of the Emperor set up in every city with the intention of putting one in the Jewish temple before his death. Elymas the false prophet and magician of Cyprus (Acts 13-6-8, 16-16) is widely reported in writing outside of the New Testament as having the ability to bring statues to life (*Clementine Recognitions* 3.47). See Mounce 257f. This makes little sense in today's world unless of course the image is a clone of the Antichrist made by men at his bidding??? The animated image then passed the death sentence upon all who refused to worship it.
- ❑ The image causes people to be marked with the name or number of the beast in order to buy and sell. This again emphasises the union of political and religious power.

Out task in this lecture is to think a little about this second beast and what it stands for in our world today.

When we think in terms of false religion our minds easily go to the recent mass killings by a cult group in Africa where over 1000 bodies have been found so far. We may think of the Church of Satan - the Mormons - Jehovah Witnesses - Christian Science etc. These perversions are fairly easy to recognise but the false prophet is often very subtle and false religion is not so easy to discern and that is why we need to beware.

The New Testament carries many warning and from them we may discern the nature of much false teaching. eg.

Matt 7: 15 'Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 'You will know them by their fruits....

Matt 16: 6 And Jesus said to them, 'Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'

In love with tradition and law rather than with God.

Gay, (1998: 280) says

Unfortunately, in our concern to protect the doctrinal integrity of the Christian faith, we Christians have shown a tendency to forget what doctrine itself was (and is) designed to protect: namely, the possibility of entering into a relationship with the living God in and through Christ by the power of the Spirit.

North American evangelicals, for example, have tended to become so preoccupied with theology, with a strictly 'propositional' conception of Christian truth that they have often lost sight of the essentially relational goal of all Christian propositions.

There is another warning in Colossians

Col 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ

The passage goes on to explain

2:16 Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. **17** These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. **18** Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, **19** and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God. **20** If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, **21** 'Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch'?

22 All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. **23** These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

Here we are warned against several types of wrong teaching. There is a Jewish legalism which carries over into the church regarding eating, drinking and the observance of days. Ascetic practices, self abasement as well as charismatic excesses, *worship of angels*, *dwelling on visions*, are mentioned.

Phil 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; **3** for we are the [true] circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

There are those who want to insist that circumcision and the observance of Jewish law is necessary for righteousness. The legalist insist on going back to law and in doing this they are really saying that the death of Christ is not sufficient. The cross is not adequate to bring us to glory.

As Western Christians we are not concerned today with circumcision and Jewish law but the tendency for us to revert to law is common (Read Galatians 3-5). However the relates not only to the issue of law. Any teaching that implies that the work of Christ at the cross is not adequate and that something more is needed is heresy. The false teaching then

takes many different forms. - I must speak in tongues to be saved - You must belong to this fellowship or denomination to be saved. (We would never say that but we imply it by our non acceptance of other Christian groups.) - You must have the same theology as me to be a Christian. All of these attitudes declare that the cross is not adequate. Something more is needed for salvation.

Tom Smail (Smail, Walker & Wright 1994-20ff) speaking from inside the Pentecostal fold shows how Pentecostalism has brought about a separation between the Cross and Pentecost. The cross is the first step, the second step is Pentecost and the baptism of the Spirit.

Smail, a reformed theologian come Pentecostal puts it this way

The Pentecostal reception of the Spirit is seen in some sense as the goal and end of the whole Christian enterprise. The work of Christ is indeed a necessary and indispensable preparation for it; we shall not get there without Jesus and the cross; but to enter into Pentecost is to pass beyond the cross into a new supernatural world in which centre stage is held not by the incarnate, crucified, and risen Lord, but by the Spirit and the dramatic manifestations of His triumphant power.

He says that this has had the following result -

Much preaching and teaching in the renewal nowadays-perhaps in contrast with its earlier beginnings-consist more of testimonies to and anecdotes about the present-day works of the Spirit than of expositions of the Word of Scripture. The attendant danger is that contemporary experience will be valued more highly than biblical truth, and that what God is doing by His Spirit will be less and less related to what He has once, for, all done for us in His Son (p 20) That is borne out when one comes across charismatic people whose whole talk is of words of knowledge, of deliverances from evil, being slain in the Spirit, of tingling hands and high emotions at great charismatic gatherings, till one is left wondering to what extent such preoccupations bring us nearer to the heart of the New Testament gospel and to what extent they distract and divert us from it. These may be extreme cases, but they do illustrate the dangers that beset us when our claims to experience of the Spirit are not related in the closest possible way to God's final and normative revelation of himself in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ (p 21).

He goes on to show that if we separate the cross and Pentecost then our theology of suffering is triumphalistic and anti-christian.

A worst case scenario might go like this -Jesus bore our sins and our sicknesses (Isaiah 53-4 NIV). The Spirit gives healing gifts. If you are not healed you do not have enough faith

An understanding of the cross radically changes the way that we think about suffering. Smail (p 30) says, When we expose this whole dark area to the light that comes from the cross and resurrection of Jesus, we can begin to see that God's purpose in such situations is not always to take *us out* of what is threatening to hurt or destroy us, but is sometimes rather to take us *through* it. Our ultimate victory comes not from escaping evil but from being given the ability to endure and bear it, the way that Jesus bore it on the cross, so that the death that was its ultimate destructive onslaught upon Him became the way to His own Easter victory and to the world's salvation.

When God's own self-giving love gets into the midst of a situation dominated by sin, suffering, and death, the way it did with Jesus on the cross, it acts creatively and transformingly on that situation. What is in itself totally destructive can become, by Christ's presence in it, salvific and redemptive. Christ does not rise on Easter day in *spite of* His sufferings and death, but rather *because of* them. The risen Jesus is still the wounded Jesus; in His resurrection He does not leave His passion behind Him; He bears the marks of it still in

His body and displays them as the trophies of His triumph. His suffering is the very stuff out of which He fashions His glory.

As evangelicals we have also tended to separate the Cross and Pentecost. Our error then is that having accepted that we are justified by faith we then get on in our own strength *to work for God* and do God's business quite apart from the gifts and empowering of the Holy Spirit. We need the Cross and Pentecost if we are to say with Paul,

1 Cor 2:1 When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Os Guinness (1993-27f) Looks at the present development of the Church Growth Movement and its megachurches. He speaks of the subordination of worship and discipleship to evangelism and all three to entertainment. He asks

Who after all is giving the increase? Who is responsible for the response?, the answer to these questions makes little difference. A church grows either way. But theologically, they mean the difference between church growth as true faith and church growth as a form of streamlined humanistic engineering. (27)

He continues

the church-growth movement carries two potential dangers. They can be summed up simply in the words 'no God' and 'no grandchildren.' In the first case, the problem results because the insights and tools of modernity can be so brilliant and effective that there no longer appears to be any need for God. In the second case, the problem arises because the tools of modernity are successful in one generation but cannot be sustained to the third generation. The success undermines the succession.

Dave Hunt, 1985-15 (*The seduction of Christianity*) shows how the Church has been seduced by eastern religious and even occult practices as well as by the gospel of Success and prosperity. (John Avanti Ministries) Hunt Quotes Robert Schuller, 'I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence, counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition. Christianity Today Oct 5th 1984:12

Walker, Wright and Smail (1994-80-83) warn of 'Word of Faith Theology' propounded by Kenyon, Copeland and Hagin, (Benny Hinn has backed away admitting that some of the teaching is wrong). Hagin claims that Christians can write their own ticket with God if they observe four principles of positive confession that he received from Jesus in a vision. The principles are, say it, do it, receive it, and tell it. These leaders claim that, 'Revelation Knowledge', a term coined by Kenyon, comes to them by supernatural experiences -conversations with Jesus, angels or spirits. All of this bears the marks of the gnostic heresies.

We could continue to look at other current teachings and need to be alert to what is being taught around us but this is sufficient to alert us that all is not well in the Church today.

Os Guinness (30-31) sums this up by saying - Two fundamental categories should shape all of our thinking and living as believers, especially our use of the world's gifts and benefits. One is the New Testament insistence that disciples of Christ are to be 'in the world, but not of it,' or-to put the emphasis on time rather than space-that we are *no longer* what we were before we came to Christ, but *not yet* what we will be when Christ returns.

The other critical category comes from the early church's application of this principle, based on the story of the exodus. Origen, in the third century *A.D.*, taught that Christians are free to 'plunder the Egyptians' but forbidden to 'set up a golden calf from the spoils. 'In/not of,' 'no longer/not yet,' 'free to utilize/forbidden to idolize'-each contrast expresses the critical tension with the world that we are required to maintain. This tension is simultaneously a sign of obedience and a source of strength, a leading distinctive and a leading dynamic. It is what makes Christians the world's 'resident aliens' (Augustine). It is what puts us in the challenging position of being 'against the world for the world' (The Hartford Declaration). ...

Peter Berger, a renowned analyst of modernity. He warns that whoever sups with the devil of modernity had better have a long spoon. 'The devilry of modernity has its own magic.' The believer 'who sups with it will find his spoon getting shorter and shorter-until that last supper in which he is left alone at the table, with no spoon at all and with an empty plate.' Our challenge, then, is to dine at the banquet of modernity-but with long spoons.

The other picture comes from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Twilight of the Idols*. In words that are more biblical than he intended, he wrote,

'There are more idols in the world than there are realities!' Our task, then, is to 'sound out idols,' to 'pose questions with a hammer,' to be iconoclasts, and see whether many of the things taken for granted in our time are in fact hollow, not real - mere 'idols of the age.'

There is another trap that we do well to avoid, we must not become heresy hunters. To hunt for heresy is great diversion. If we spend all of our time searching for the things that are wrong we have little time to get on with living in truth. The only real way to combat heresy is to proclaim and live in the truth of the gospel of Christ.

The world / city system is only a perverse and distorted reflection of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. In contrast to Eden, God no longer comes to his people in the cool of the day but now God dwells with them. Heaven has come to earth.

'Glorified persons are restored to their relationship with God and actually stand in a more direct relationship with him than before the Fall.' This (eternal) life on the new earth is nothing other than the full realization of the covenant. God, who from eternity bound himself to be our God. (Konig 1989:240)

Heb 12:21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear.' 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

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