

Supplemental Information on The Works of the Cross

by Kenneth L. Maguire

The bible is a progressive revelation, which continuously builds on what has gone before. It is God's sovereign plan for all life and it's relationship with the creator. The creator God is the Lord Jesus Christ who stepped out of the God Head, at the command of the Father, to create with his spoken word the universe and all of mankind, as well as all other forms of life. This fact is revealed in Colossians as follows:

Colossians 1:15-16

He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

The apostle Peter in his second epistle indicates that God (the Holy Spirit) has directed or dictated the writing of the entire bible.

2nd Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, as you read the bible, bare in mind that it is a progressive revelation and that all the writing was dictated by the Holy Spirit. When you study the bible, it is also important to know who is being addressed. The Old Testament, the four books of the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and Acts up through chapter twelve were all directed to the Jews with a few exceptions.

The many miracles and signs that the Lord Jesus Christ performed, during his earthly life, were for the purpose of convincing the Jews that he was the Son of God and their Messiah (King). Jesus Christ also told the Jews that he was fulfilling the covenant promises that God made to Abraham.

The Lord Jesus Christ and his disciples preached the Gospel of the Kingdom to the Jews telling them to repent and be baptized. This was a water baptism, because the Jews had to cleanse themselves to become holy priests and carry the message of salvation to the Gentiles.

However, as I indicated in chapter 8 from Christian Dichotomy (available at www.tricornpublications.com), the Jews rejected Jesus and his message and they convinced the Romans to crucify him. After the crucifixion and resurrection,

the Gospel of the Kingdom was no longer relevant, during the age of grace, as a means of conversion to Christianity for the whole world. However, after the rapture when the church (the Body of Christ) is taken up to heaven and the tribulation begins, the Lord Jesus Christ will again turn to Israel and the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to the whole world.

God then turned to his alternate plan, which was to convert Saul of Tarsus to accept Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Saul, before his conversion, was a dedicated Jewish pharisee who had persecuted the Jewish converts to Christianity. However, Jesus chose Saul to be his instrument to carry his message of salvation to the Gentiles. Jesus took Saul into the Sinai wilderness for three years to train him. During these three years the Lord Jesus Christ purged all of the Judaism out of Saul's mind and changed his name to Paul. The Lord told Paul that he would be his apostle to the Gentiles.

During this period, Paul also received by revelation from the ascended Lord Jesus Christ mysteries, which had never before been given to man, since the beginning of time. These mysteries had been kept secret in the mind of God, since before time began.

The greatest of these mysteries is the Gospel of Grace, as written in plain English in 1st Corinthians as follows:

1st Corinthians 15:1-4

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I past on to you as of first importance: *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

*The Gospel of Grace must be believed with all your heart and mind on the basis of faith, nothing more, in order to have salvation. The following verses from Romans and Ephesians further defines salvation through the grace of God.

Romans 16:25-26

Now to Him who is able to establish you by my gospel (1st Corinthians 15:1-4) and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you are saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.

Romans 11:5-6

So too, at the present time there is a remnant (believers in the Gospel) chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

God has done all the work by offering up his only son to be a sin offering, through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for all mankind from Adam through the rapture. The rapture is when the Lord Jesus Christ will appear in the clouds and call for his church, which includes all the dead and alive believers of the gospel. These believers are the Body of Christ.

However, if you try to perform any type of works, as a requirement for salvation, you will lose it. Water baptism is also works and it is not a requirement for salvation.

From Acts chapter 13 through Philemon, all mention of baptism refers to spiritual baptism by the Holy Spirit. The word baptism does not necessarily mean emersed into water. The following selections from 1st Corinthians bare this out:

1st Corinthians 12:13

For we (believers) were all *baptized by one Spirit (Holy Spirit) into one body, whether Jews or Greeks (Gentiles) slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink.

*There is no water in this baptism. The Holy Spirit totally indwells within us and places us in the Body of Christ.

1st Corinthians 3:16

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

1st Corinthians 6:19

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.

*God in this verse is speaking to all believers in Jesus Christ and his Gospel of Grace, which must be believed with all your heart and mind on the basis of faith, nothing more. The Holy Spirit has baptized us (believers) by in-dwelling within us.

The following verses from Ephesians indicate that believers in the Gospel of Grace have been saved.

Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the

gospel of your salvation (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). Having believed, you were marked in him (God) with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory.

As I stated earlier and now I repeat, unless you believe the Gospel of Grace on the basis of faith plus nothing else (includes works of any kind) you will not receive salvation. We are no longer under the law. We are under the grace of God. The following scripture verses indicate this fact:

Galatians 5:2-4

Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised (follow the law and perform works for salvation) Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Any act that we undertake for the purpose of obtaining salvation will lose it for us. For God the Father has done it all through the death, burial and resurrection of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. By this act we are all saved, if we believe in his gospel. To believe and have faith means we are taking God at his word.

When you confess to God in your prayers that you believe in the Gospel of Grace with all your heart and mind on the basis of faith plus nothing else, you will become a new person. You will be baptized by the Holy Spirit and sealed with the seal of God into the Body of Christ.

Once you are in the Body of Christ you will be moved by the Holy Spirit to lead a more righteous life. You will have a natural desire to obey God's commandments, without having the laws as a condemning judgment over you. God will motivate you to use the gifts he has given you to perform acts, not for salvation but as a result of salvation, for the righteous needs of his people (believers).

Gentile believers in Jesus Christ and his Gospel of Grace are heirs together with Israel and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. The believers are also heirs of God and co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. The following Scripture references indicate these relationships as heirs:

Ephesians 3:6

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:16-17

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

As believers and members of the Body of Christ our citizenship is actually in heaven and we are ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth. The following scripture references indicates this relationship:

Philippians 3:20-21

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

This transformation will occur at the rapture when we are translated up to join the Lord in the clouds.

2nd Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

It is God's wish, not by my will but by his word through the epistles of the apostle Paul, directed by the Holy Spirit, which reveals the mystery never before made known, since the beginning of time. That the Lord Jesus Christ took all of the sins of mankind from Adam through the end of the age on himself when he was crucified, buried and resurrected, so that all human beings are forgiven.

However, Jews and Gentiles of the old testament must have believed in God and followed his Law in order to be saved. Those Jews who the disciples ministered to must have followed the Gospel of the Kingdom in order to be saved. All Gentiles from Paul's time on through the rapture must be believers in Jesus Christ and his Gospel of Grace in order to have the forgiveness of sins and salvation.

The process of the forgiveness of sins for all believers, through the works of the cross, is beyond human comprehension and must be taken by faith alone. The energy used by God for this process must have been greater than all the hydrogen bombs on earth added together.

The apostle Paul was set apart from birth by God who through his grace revealed his son in Paul so that he could preach him among the Gentiles. All believers in Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Grace have eternal life by virtue of their faith. Through Paul's epistles and our faith, we have become heirs of the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ.

May God bless all of you and keep you in his grace and love.

---Ken Maguire

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