

# THE SON OF THE FATHER'S LOVE

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The great work of God in reconciliation was not accomplished by merely bringing into existence a new agreement between God and man. His motive was not just to fix a situation so that now both parties can get along. He set forth the work of the Cross to strategically bring us into a participation with Him. Without that participation, all that was accomplished by Christ crucified would have only been a work. And all that would be required of us would be to believe in the work God has done.

What we must come to understand is that, the work of the Cross is not ours simply based on our belief in the facts of what Jesus has done or even upon who He is. It is impossible for His death and resurrection to avail us anything except as it is grasped as our own death and resurrection. This requires participation with Jesus into these things. His life is not of any use to us outside of those realities, and without them becoming our realities, they are devoid of any real power to bring about change. The very foundation of the Christian faith is laid upon the groundwork that we are partakers with Him and of Him if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (cf. Heb. 3:14). For this reason, the reconciliation has been effected “in Christ” with the expectation that we act on it, embracing its reality by faith and functioning as those who have been reconciled.

### **A New Man, Not a New Race**

Now, I wish to move into a specific aspect of this truth in order to lay the groundwork for something to be shared later having to do with the a major difference between what we may term the “body of Adam” and the Body of Christ. To see this, we must examine a few verses from Romans five, as well as from I Corinthians 15. “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*”(Romans 5:12, 19).

Out from these verses we are made aware that both Adam and Christ stand as the Heads of two different humanities. Adam’s sin brought about the fall of the human race, but Christ’s obedience brought many into righteousness. Also consider I Corinthians 15:22, “*As in Adam all die but in Christ all are made alive.*” Since Adam was the originator of sin for the whole human race and is the one who fathered that race, that race takes his name. Now let us look at a few more verses.

“*But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification*” (Romans 5:15-16).

When comparing Adam and Christ in Romans five, Paul uses the phrase “not as” in relation to Jesus (cf. Rom. 15-16). This means that, though there are similarities, there are also differences. The dissimilarity with Jesus is that the human race does not take His name in the same manner as happened with Adam. What came forth from the fall of Adam was a fallen race of humanity whereby all carried in them his fallen tendencies. Contrariwise, what came out of Jesus’ death was one NEW MAN (cf. Eph. 2:15). The contrast I seek to make at this early stage is that a race of men came out of Adam’s fall, but only ONE MAN came out of Jesus’ resurrection. Because of oneness into THIS MAN, Jesus Christ is our Salvation and not merely the causality of it.

Let me explain further! I stated previously that all men of fallen mankind make up the race of Adam. In contrast, all those who are raised up with Christ are joined to ONE NEW MAN. Because of this, we do not just take Jesus’ name; we become partakers of Him. Only as we embrace oneness in a real way can we truly claim His name because the name is His exclusively and not ours except by union.

What is true concerning the Lord’s name is also true of His tendencies, nature, and attributes. In other words, the New Creation in Christ is not a new race of humanity, all gaining His tendencies toward patience, love, or peace, but is Christ Himself with us joined as the Body of His expression. Most believers – including me – have done a great disservice to the truth by calling the New Creation a new race.

This difference between Adam and Christ is set forth in I Corinthians 15:45-47, giving us even more clarity: *“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.”*

The first man, spoken of here as the fallen race of Adam, are *“of the earth, earthy”*. All the members of that race have gained the tendencies and fallen attributes of that race. It is as if each person independently has within themselves characteristics that were common to their father, fallen Adam. The original man, Adam, is long dead, but his progeny innately carry on a fallen nature just as he had but not his specific personal attributes. But look what it says of Christ! *“...the second man is the Lord from heaven.”* Do you see the difference that the wording here seeks to communicate? This second man IS CHRIST. It is not a race of risen people who all get a resurrection nature. In contrast to Adam’s race who were of the earth, earthy; they are not of the heavens, heavenly. No! It is just Christ. It is the Lord from heaven. And though it speaks only of Christ, it is understood that we are included in the context. How is this so? We are there, but there within the person of Christ. Re-read that verse carefully that you might note the distinction between the two.

While we will expand on this area as we proceed further, I must ask a question at this point. What is the significance of what I am setting forth here? It is incredibly important that we grasp this! To properly lay hold of this will change our approach as to how we seek the virtuous attributes that the Bible calls upon us to manifest, such as righteousness, holiness, patience, etc. In other words, the primary goal here is not to set forth high and lofty teachings but to convey practical information that can benefit even the youngest believer.

## **Gaining Attributes**

As mentioned in our opening paragraph, God and man are not just reconciled but reconciled as one, or more precisely, in One. Salvation is not accomplished simply by means of Jesus' person as the causality but "in" His person as well. Therefore the terms "oneness" and "in Christ" are synonymous. Not knowing the spiritual significance of these terms and the manner in which they should impact our lives, many Christians set about seeking to attain within themselves certain virtues such as holiness, righteousness, or love. It is as if they have not grasped the New Covenant way in which to approach this area of truth. They have a desire to be moral and spiritual, but they have not yet seen with clarity the dissimilarity between the two covenants. Natural morality comes by adherence to the law, but spiritual morality is Christ.

Now, we have already mentioned that all who are born again are "in Christ". The Son literally is that condition in which all that God wants and expects from us may flourish and come forth. Any other condition is not good ground – not His chosen ground. Sadly, scores of believers who are unaware of this fact set about to perfect their Christian walk by means of making changes within themselves. However, it must be said that there is no perfect life in the flesh, there is only Jesus' life by the exercise of faith (cf. Gal. 2:20). In reality, Jesus is the definition of a perfect relationship with God. People are mistaken to assume that a "perfect life" in the flesh is found in living a life that exhibits higher qualities and virtues. This is what Buddhists and many other religions seek! Contrary to almost all that some saints are taught, the goal is not to live an exemplary Christian life. The only perfect life is Christ; therefore the goal is to live in Christ and by Christ.

This means that Jesus is not to be understood as the Person who gives you the potential for these qualities and attributes but as a "Land" wherein only He can bring anything forth because He is everything. I use the term "Land" in relation to Jesus in the sense that God promised Israel a land in which they would not have to plant vineyards, build houses, etc. because the Land of Promise was sufficient in itself (cf. Deut. 6:1-11). It is the same with spiritual virtues. They are according to His personal disposition and character. Every attribute is exclusive to Him. While many may desire to possess these spiritual qualities, what we really need is not Jesus' qualities but Him as Life. For that to take place, we must be grounded in its source and wellspring, which is only found in discovering the reality of being in Christ.

It was to this end that I took the time to share about the difference between the race of Adam and the New Man which is Christ. As noted in the beginning of this booklet, we do not gain the Lord's personal disposition in the same manner that we gained Adam's nature. The Lord retains His own disposition but manifests "Himself" through His Body. (Note my use of quotation marks around Himself in the last sentence. He does not manifest His characteristics through His body but Himself.) The Body is simply a vehicle for manifestation. As members of His Body, we express His qualities but are not in possession of them (Him). Therefore, "if any man glory, let him glory in the Lord"; because Christ has been made unto us all these things and is the Life of the believer.

Though Peter tells us that we are "*partakers of the divine nature*" we are not capable of displaying the divine nature (cf. II Pet. 1:4). The best we can do is live in Christ, allowing Him to live in us. So then, instead of saying that we participate in His nature it is more correct to say that we participate with His nature or, to be specific, with Him. In this way Jesus becomes to us the very qualities that we might have sought to produce on our own. What He is in Himself, He becomes to us and in us, but it is all due to being rooted in Christ (cf. Col. 2:7).

### **Examining a Specific Attribute – Righteousness**

Now, at the risk of repeating certain things already said, I would like to pick a specific attribute that most Christians seek and present it in light of Christ being and fulfilling that thing or subject. For our purposes here, we will choose the subject of righteousness.

### **The Requirement for Righteousness**

Clearly in both the Old Covenant and in the New, God calls for righteousness on the part of His people. The difference between the two covenants is how one goes about laying hold of that righteousness.

*"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Romans 3:20-22).*

As seen in these passages, Old Covenant righteousness was to be attained by keeping the law, while in the New Covenant, it comes by faith. This is a very simplistic wording which needs further explanation. For example, Old Covenant righteousness was strictly based upon man's attempt to "shape himself up" by copying and keeping the requirements of the law. This

is what is referred to as “works”. However, the law cannot make us accepted as righteous before God simply because it cannot make us righteous (cf. Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:10). The Law can only demand righteousness.

## **Contrasting the Two Forms of Righteousness**

To help us better appreciate the disparity between the two covenants, let us give a few quick contrasts between the two forms of righteousness. The law calls for the highest righteousness man can achieve on his own, but the gospel insists on a righteousness that is not of us – that is, of our own innate and personal being – but only found by union into Christ. Through the law, we supposedly make ourselves righteous by doing the right thing, but true eternal righteousness that is consistent with Christ is made unto us by life. We cannot obey unto righteousness, but we can believe unto righteousness. Through obedience we may attempt to make ourselves more righteous, but through faith God enlists Christ as our righteousness.

In the New Covenant, we do not attain to our righteousness by keeping the law, but discover it to be innate within us and as a Person, Jesus Christ. Righteousness is not something that we can create or produce; it existed prior to and independently from anything in us. This virtue, as well as every other attribute that Christians seek to acquire, originates first in the eternal character. The fact and reality of the Christian’s righteousness is rooted in the very nature and being of Jesus. Therefore the only true righteousness held by man must be a righteousness that originates in and of God.

Within Himself, Jesus is the perfect expression of that which God desires concerning righteousness. He is the truth of righteousness, and every other attempt at righteousness falls helplessly short. The Living, revealed Jesus of the Word of God *“is the substance of things hoped for”* (Heb. 11:1). For the Body, the Lord Himself is the ground and cause of all attributes, for He is meant to exist as these things. We have a Person as our life and not random attributes that we have gained.

## **Jesus: God’s Revelation to Us of Righteousness**

How are we to properly evaluate the previous statements? How can their application become our possession? The first step is to move from man’s declaration concerning these things (this very writing) unto God’s own revelation of them to you. All who believe should seek with the intention of gaining a firm grasp that the Son stands as God’s revelation to us of human righteousness. Christ is God’s answer for the righteousness required in order to have an acceptable standing before God. If man is going to be righteous, that is how it will happen. Jesus Christ is the revelation to us of the meaning of righteousness, and any other trait. We must take Him as God’s assurance and pledge of how we are perceived by God in Christ.

## Old Covenant Approaches Applied in the New

In the face of these glorious realities, it seems that few discover the Lord in this New Covenant way. For example, you would think that the Old Covenant approach would be confined to those who lived prior to the coming of Christ, but the same principle of Old Covenant righteousness can be transferred to how a believer follows Christ. There are those in Christianity who, in an attempt to become more righteous, simply look to the Jesus of the Gospels as their example in an effort to emulate His actions.

Another approach that is utilized is to look to Jesus only as the One who gives the desirable attributes instead of perceiving Christ as the fulfillment of them. Any believer is mistaken to think of righteousness along these lines. Christ is not merely the instrument by which certain attributes are disseminated; He is very righteousness itself. Simply said, He is not the giver but the object given. God does not set about to create in us these higher virtues, affections, and attributes. He seeks only that Christ be made unto us these things in the power of the Spirit and that He be formed in us – He who “is” and is the true possessor of these things.

Let me state these things again but in a slightly different manner with the hope that it may bring them into sharper view. These various attributes should not be looked upon as godly habits that the Lord wishes us to obtain and grow in. Righteousness, as with all godly characteristics, are to be in accord with the nature of God. The Lord cannot by some godly power or supernatural work impart these virtues to us. We must become partakers of Christ. Righteousness, then, is laid bare in Christ, eventually manifesting through us as vessels, but not because God imparted to us virtuous powers.

## Obtaining Christ As These Things

In light of what has been delineated, how should these New Covenant realities affect our approach to righteousness or other characteristics, and in what way may they be obtained? Christ must become the focus of our search, not subjects and godly characteristics. This righteousness must be “*made unto us*” (I Cor. 1:30). What I mean is that if we are in union with Christ, then what He is (righteousness) must become what we possess as the truth of the thing. For example, Christ as righteousness becomes our answer for righteousness. All of these attributes are secured for us in the person of Jesus Christ. This kind of New Covenant righteousness is an impossibility to anyone who seeks to attain it outside of Christ. Our target for discovering these things is found in comprehending what it means to be in Christ. Such comprehension will eventually result in Christ overshadowing and filling up every truth so that He becomes the completion and execution of all subjects and teachings in those believers who find their existence in Him.

There is another ingredient that is required: we must embrace “Christ as righteousness” by faith. The combination of comprehending what it means to be in Christ along with our response of faith to it is what releases these things as substance. Beyond the truth of righteousness, He in His entire person must become the route and object of our faith. This means that our faith is in Christ as Him who is the substance of all attributes; therefore our faith in “Him” is counted to us for righteousness (cf. Rom. 4:3).

We are looked upon as righteous in accordance with a faith that takes Christ as God’s acceptable righteousness. As our faith embraces it as such: union with the One whom God counts as acceptable is the only foundation of right standing with Him. We must be clear as to our meaning here. The concept of “righteousness by faith” does not mean that your faith is traded off in place of any need for righteousness. No, your faith is directed toward a Seed who is and will be made unto you righteousness and effectively becomes your righteousness.

### **True Righteousness Liberates**

In closing this section on Christ as our righteousness, let me summarize. Since the introduction of the New Covenant, the requirement for righteousness and holiness is Christ, in whom we dwell, or as manifestations of Christ in us, but never as separate qualities we are to attain. Jesus is the actuality of holiness, righteousness, eternal life and all other godly attributes. True righteousness liberates because it is Life – His Life – and not theology. This means that theological concepts, though based on truth, can never bring freedom. It also means that the issues surrounding this subject are primarily related to life and death. If righteousness liberates, first and foremost it is because it is truly the Life – Jesus’ Life. But if His is the Life we need, then there must come an end to the life that can never attain to these things – our life. Our nature is sin-laden and can by no means become what Christ is in essence. What hope, then, is there for us? The Cross is the answer for this dilemma.

Even so, if you want to come to an end of sin, you must first come to an end of yourself. If you want to come to an end of striving for righteousness, you must initially come to an end of your life and let Christ the Life manifest Himself as those attributes. The end spoken of here takes place at the Cross. That death and Christ as our subsequent resurrection is the pillar of true redemption, true deliverance. This New Covenant view is not weak and impotent as some might suppose. It does have power, it does bring about effect and impact into our lives. Within this crucified way, we are delivered from the bondage of sin and death into the only liberty and freedom there is, and possessed only by the sons of God who have conformed to THE Son (cf. Rom. 8:21-22, 29).



## Finding Something Real – Death

What is it that precipitates this ability to allow Christ to manifest Himself in the realm of attributes? It is death, and specifically the death of the Cross. By His death and resurrection Jesus is our death to sin and our life in holiness (Rom. 6:11). When He came forth from the grave, He became the author of human holiness and its material essence.

Before we fully explore this subject of death, let me ask you a question: of the following two options, which is the most important? Is it that something in the Word is true because it has been revealed and then declared? Or that it should become true in fact and actuality because of how it impacts our understanding and our lives? Is merely knowing something revealed to us of God the issue, or would God prefer that known truth be embraced so that our lives might be ordered after it?

Take, for example, the subject of being dead with Christ. Many more believers seem to know the theology of that subject than those who have it as an absolute inward reality. However, God could never stand for anything less than a real and complete putting away of everything that is not the Living One. Therefore our goal should not be to get Jesus to remove negative attributes within our character. Rather it should be to discover the reality of what He declares to be the “new” as found in Christ. For this to take place will require a genuine and true embrace of God’s expectation behind setting forth Christ crucified. Let us examine these conclusions in light of the Scripture.

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away (life as known outside of union); behold, all things are become new (in Him)”* (II Cor. 5 :17).

The parentheses added to that verse are mine. Notice the phrase *“old things are passed away”*. When we live in accordance with Christ crucified and risen, the old life lived for God, which took place outside of union, passes away by means of the Cross. This does not speak of the passing away of old habits unto a new and better Christian life. It is a declaration of new life BY Christ as we embrace union with Him who is that Life.

As stated earlier, this biblical call for *“putting away”* should not be understood as simply the laying aside of certain negative qualities within ourselves, neither is it to be comprehended as the putting on of qualities that seem to exhibit what the Bible calls for most. No! We must be dead with Christ, for only then can and will we ACTUALLY “put on Christ” (cf. Rom. 13:14). We should cease to look to Christ as the One who abolished sin and accept that He abolished us as well (cf. Rom. 6:4).

The statement *“Ye are dead”* found in Colossians 3:3 is not just a mere word of revelation but a consequence. God does not seek only to reveal its fact to us but to release its impact. To give an extreme example, imagine a person who lives his whole existence in the weightlessness

of space. Someone from earth may come to him and give him an excellent explanation of gravity. The weightless man may have come to some understanding of the concept of gravity, though he has never had experienced it. His grasp of its features would simply become a mental exercise. Moreover, being able to explain it to others who are in the same state of weightlessness only strengthens him in the absolute conviction that he has mastered the reality of gravity. People may even come from afar to hear the weightless man speak on the subject of gravity. Now, when we apply these principles back to the theme of death with Christ, we can assume that God does not want us to grasp the concept of being dead with Christ, He wants us to succumb to its judgment that Christ may become to us the instrument of our spirituality. For many, the concept of death with Christ comes in the form of understanding, but the fact that they have ceased to exist except by Christ and in Christ does not impact them. They acknowledge the work of the Cross instead of experiencing the reality of the Cross.

This means that the true meaning of something becoming “real” to us must be for it to become as real to us as it is to the Lord and in the Lord. All that we have addressed so far is not theology to God; it is how He has made and understands things to be. By living in oneness in Jesus, we join with God in His understanding. This becomes the proof that it is real to us and in us. If we only embrace the theology of it, then it is not real in us but is only real to us. We have only gained the reality of the truths of oneness. The manner in which we are to live Christ is not found in a method ordered according to truths. The fact of the matter is that you cannot live Christ, only He lives. To receive a “method of death” is not true death, but is a means undertaken by “the living”.

### **“Our God Is a Consuming Fire”**

To understand death, it is helpful to understand why God is so unwavering on the subject. Hebrews 12:29 tells us that “our God is a consuming fire”. Though it is difficult for some to understand, “Our God” is never seen as anything greater than as a consuming fire. He, as fire, consumes what He comes into contact with. Either He is consuming dross so that gold may become more prominent, or He is consuming the sacrifice in order to bring it to an ascended form. The Cross is the highest example of this “consuming God” reality. This can be seen in the fact that the death and resurrection ordered by the Father is the death of all that is not Christ and the life of all that is united in oneness to Him.

As stated earlier, Jesus’ death on the Cross was not only a death to sin but was also our death. In fact, if comprehended properly, Jesus’ death on Calvary was the death of all that is not Him. All else was consumed. It is primarily by this actuality that we will come to know the true character and personality of “our God” as a consuming fire.

## The Reason for Wrath -- Love

We have spent much time in this writing setting forth the premise that Christ as the figurehead of the New Creation is unlike that of Adam in the old creation. The latter stands as the representative head of a fallen race of humanity that carries forth his tendencies into all that come by natural birth. In contrast, Christ came forth in resurrection as one New Man (cf. Col. 3:10). God chose Christ to be that man and us to be the Body of Him who is raised.

We have also previously taken the time to detail the fact that Jesus, as the only Man of resurrection, does not impart godly attributes to us but manifests Himself as those things through His Body. These attributes are exclusive to Him and are not imparted to others outside of Him.

Now we move into a region where we might explain why God is a consuming fire and how it has to do with the removal of everything that is not Christ or in Christ. Let us discover what are His reasons for being a consuming fire. Consider the state of affairs in Romans nine. There Paul sets forth the sovereignty of God, which he discusses in the context of the affirmation of His sovereign choice as to whom He honors and whom He destroys. *“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”* (Romans 9:14-15).

In that chapter we are given continuous examples of what God rejects and what He sets on high. For example, in Romans 9:7 He rejects the rest of the seed of Abraham for that which is called in the person of Isaac. *“Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”* Contrary to appearance, God’s choice here, along with all His choices, are not arbitrary but are very deliberate, as noted in the next verse. *“That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed”* (Rom. 9:8). That which is flesh is rejected, and only that which is counted as THE SEED is accepted. When understood in the context of the gospel, only Christ survives the Cross along with that which is joined in oneness. However, from that last sentence we are not to assume that we have survived. We are joined to the Life and Person Who survived. According to Ephesians 1:4, God has chosen you but only in Christ. That could be said another way: God has chosen only One, elected only One, raised only One and the rest are either rejected or are found in Him (cf. Phil. 3:9). Interestingly enough, that verse refers to being found in Christ in relation to righteousness, as will most of the rest of the passages quoted from this point forward.

However definitive those verses in Romans nine may seem, the next few are even more compelling. As you read them, notice how these verses whittle down the prospects even

further. Isaac, the chosen one of the verses before, is now reduced, even as was the seed of Abraham previously.

*“And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated”* (Rom. 9:10-11, 13).

It appears that every time a particular group begins to feel safe and secure, God reveals that what He designates as “the Seed” is even smaller than what we initially imagined. We eventually find that no “group” will remain except what comprises the New Man, Christ.

Though there is so much more to be expounded upon in this area of Romans nine and upon the subject of election, we need to stay with our immediate focus. In the scriptures we have presented from that chapter, it is clear that the writer has moved on from discussing Isaac as the “Seed” and now addresses the division between his twin sons, Jacob and Esau. It focuses on the fact that even before they were born and before they had done anything good or bad, God had already made up His mind. *“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil... As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”* This portion of the Bible has tormented and confused many believers for centuries, yet its meaning is quite simple. Here we find the explanation as to what it is that God hates and what it is that God loves: God loves His Son! God hates everything and all that is not His Son!

## **Explaining the Wrath of God**

You may ask how this clarifies why God is a consuming fire. Part of the key is found in the phrase, *“Esau have I hated”*. In fact, of those few words, the foremost word is *“hated”*. Many times in Scripture, the condition of “wrath” flows forth from hatred.

What is the opposite of hatred? It is love! God’s love is actually the cause of His hatred. His love for His Son is so great that the magnitude of His exaltation of that Son is beyond comprehension. The words in Colossians 1:16-19, though so incredible, fail to break through to our minds the comprehension of the absolute place that the Father has given to His Son:

*“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.”*

With God's esteem for His Son set to such a height, He burns in wrath against anything and all that would usurp, yea, exist apart from Jesus Christ. God has made the Son preeminent to such a degree that He has literally made Christ our peace, our hope, our way, truth, and life, our resurrection, our righteousness, our redemption, our everything. Jesus has become the Great I AM. God's judgment is against all that exists contrary to and outside of His Son. In contrast, God is pleased that in Christ all fullness should dwell (cf. Col. 1:19). If our nature is not Christ, then God is opposed to it. Even if we displayed right conduct in the manner of the Pharisees according to the law, we would still fall short of the glory of God, which is Christ in you (cf. Col. 1:27).

God is love. It is because of His love that He does hate and calls on us to hate (cf. Lk. 14:26; Rev. 2:6). In contrast to the wrath exhibited by the Father, Satan just simply hates; there is no love attached to it. His evil hatred needs no other factor in order to exist. Now, let us move on and view this theme of wrath in light of scriptures found in Romans 1:17-18.

### **The Wrath of God By Revelation**

*"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).*

*"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).*

Instead of quoting these two verses together, I have set them apart that we might compare and contrast them. Verse 17 centers upon a revelation from God. The word "reveal" is from a Greek word that means to unveil. This immediately brings to mind the truth of the veil being torn open, which opened the way into the Holy of Holies. In other words, verse 17 is introducing us to realms of the highest order. The subject is the righteousness of God, which we have already discussed at length. There we noted that righteousness is a trait exclusive to the disposition of God. According to this verse, it is not something we exercise but something that has to do with LIFE. We can only live by it. The – justified (or righteous) – LIVE by faith.

While there could be much more said here concerning this verse, we must press on in our search to understand the meaning of God as a consuming fire. To do so, we must now attend to the next verse. Even though verse 18 focuses on the wrath of God, observe how it, too, is a revelation from heaven itself. To understand it, we must enter through the veil once more to behold realities of the highest order.

To make these claims about God's wrath would seem strange to many people, but such is its nature. It cannot be understood in the natural realms of humankind. Contrary to human wrath, God's wrath is not displayed simply because He is upset, moody, or not getting His way. His is a holy wrath of which the prophets wrote extensively. Let us take a closer look at the

verse again so that we may see some particulars concerning it. *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”*

Observe how the mention of this wrath comes from heaven, not hell; from God, not Satan. Notice also that it is “against” something. God is angry, not with what it is but with what it is not. Three times in this small verse are words prefaced with the prefix “un”. His wrath is directed toward what is “un”! We may note that His anger is directed not toward the evil that people do but with the lack of something, i.e., unrighteousness and ungodliness.

## **God Loves Gold but Hates Dross**

Earlier in our study we noted that God as a consuming fire relates to the process of removing dross. Fire is applied to unrefined gold with the intent that the truly valuable mineral may emerge. Dross is an obstructing element both in silver and in gold. God loves gold but hates dross. This is an outlandish statement, so please allow me to define it according to the true meaning that I intend to communicate. It is obvious that God does not love the natural mineral called gold. He created it but has no need for it. To Him there is no difference between gold and bubble gum. However, in light of what we will be setting forth, we must be made aware that God loves His Son, and He hates that which is not of, out from and in union with the Son of His love (the accurate translation of Colossians 1:13). That being said, let us proceed with a more detailed explanation of the elements of gold, silver, dross, and the application of fire.

Of course, throughout the Bible gold has represented deity, and more specifically, Christ as the “gold” that is discovered in the midst of earth or dross. Silver is representative of redemption, which speaks of Christ as the price that was paid for us. This area of truth is rich with the revealing of Christ in various aspects, but we will confine ourselves to God’s wrath as a consuming fire. Having addressed the meaning of silver and gold, what then does dross and its being burned up represent?

In the Psalms we gain some insight into the significance when we read things like, *“Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies”* (Psalm 119:119). Here “the wicked of the earth” are designated to be dross, while we might understand that any mention of silver or gold would fall into the category of that which is highly valued by God – His Son.

This reference to putting away dross follows suit with our previous description in II Corinthians 5:17, where it speaks concerning old things passing away. Call to mind how that verse declared that the “new” of the New Covenant was that which was joined unto Christ, whereby He was made the fullness and fulfillment of all things. Therefore, the “old” that was consigned to passing away represented anything that continued to try to operate in

relationship with God on the basis of being outside of His Son. That kind of a relationship is impossible, and the Cross settled the issue by leaving only One Man. Notice the designation of being “in Him” when the Father expresses His love for His Son: *“This is my beloved Son IN WHOM I am well pleased”* (Matt. 3:17). The Son is the one accepted by the Father, and if we are to find acceptance from Him, it must take place “in” this Beloved One (cf. Eph. 1:6).

When we apply these things to the example of gold, silver, and their relation to dross, we come away with this realization: wrath towards dross actually speaks of love toward gold or silver. To be clearer, God’s wrath toward what is not Christ is primarily due to His great love for what is the Son. We are not to understand the application of fire to dross as some sort of mechanical process of judgment but as His wrath which expresses His extreme love for what is most desirable and valuable to Him – His Son. This is a true introduction to “our God”, who happens to be a consuming fire. When it comes to clearing the way for His Son, the Cross was a consuming fire, just as the altars were in olden times.

As we proceed, we notice that the writer in Proverbs adds a slightly different twist to the meaning of dross when he removes it from just being understood as “sinners” and places it before the throne as affecting the kingdom. *“Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer (refiner). Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness”* (Prov. 25:4-5). In the first sentence, the removal of dross is with the hope of bringing forth a proper vessel. In the second sentence, the removal of dross is done with the prospect of establishing the kingdom in righteousness. It is interesting that throughout our search, the scriptures we have used have made reference to “righteousness” time and again so that we might reflect back upon our earlier sharing concerning Christ as our righteousness and as the thing that is most valuable to God.

# Personal Notes



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