

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS

Messages for Both the Saved and the Unsaved

Part I

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish [*lit.*, ‘that are perishing’] foolishness; but unto us which are saved [*lit.*, ‘which are being saved’] it is the power of God...

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified...

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Cor. 1:18; 2:1, 2, 5-8).

In Scripture, there is a preaching of the cross to the *saved*, and there is a preaching of the cross to the *unsaved*. And the former is dealt with *far more extensively* in Scripture than the latter.

Salvation by grace through faith, having to do with the preaching of the cross to the *unsaved*, as seen for example in Eph. 2:8, 9, is *NOT the main message of Scripture*:

“For by grace are ye saved [*lit.*, ‘you have been saved’] through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (vv. 8, 9).

Rather, the main message of Scripture is seen *in what salvation by grace through faith allows and where it takes an individual*. Salvation by grace through faith, as seen in Eph. 2:8, 9 — a passing “from death unto life” (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) — takes an individual to that seen in Eph. 2:10, which is another way of expressing the preaching of the cross to the saved:

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (v. 10).

Twofold Nature of the Preaching of the Cross

No single book in Scripture deals principally with salvation by grace through faith, *NOT* John’s gospel (as taught by many), *NOT* any of the Pauline epistles, Hebrews, the general epistles, or any other book in Scripture, both Old and New Testaments.

Again, salvation by grace through faith, though usually dealt with extensively by man, is simply *NOT* the main message of Scripture.

ALL Scripture, after one fashion or another, deals *principally with the preaching of the cross to the saved*, not to the unsaved. *ALL* Scripture is in line with the manner in which the matter was originally set forth in the opening thirty-four verses of Genesis (1:1-2:3) — *showing the manner and time which God uses to restore a ruined creation (six days time, with a view to a subsequent seventh day rest, foreshadowing 6,000 years of restorative work, followed by 1,000 years of rest)*.

The first day’s restorative work can only foreshadow God’s beginning restorative activity for ruined man (salvation by grace through faith). And *God’s continued restorative work during the subsequent five days* can only foreshadow a continued restorative activity for man (things beyond salvation by grace through faith). And *ALL* is with a view to a *seventh-day rest*.

The preceding is not to undermine, in any way, the importance of the preaching of the cross to the unsaved, for a person can't get to the preaching of the cross to the saved apart from beginning with the preaching of the cross to the unsaved. Rather, attention is simply being called to the manner in which God has structured His Word relative to these two aspects of the preaching of the cross.

To illustrate from Genesis chapters one and two, it is to say that a person *CAN'T* begin with activity foreshadowed by day two in Genesis chapter one. He has to *FIRST* go through that foreshadowed by activity on day one. This is where he *MUST* begin, but he is *NOT* to remain in that foreshadowed by activity on day one. Rather, he is to *MOVE ON to that foreshadowed by activity on the subsequent five days, with a view to that foreshadowed by activity on the seventh day.*

Note relative to the preceding that Jude sought to write an epistle dealing with salvation by grace through faith — “the common salvation” (v. 3a). But the Spirit of God would not allow him to write an epistle of this nature. Rather Jude was moved to write *on things beyond salvation by grace through faith.* Jude was moved to write an epistle exhorting believers to “earnestly contend for the faith” (v. 3b). And “the faith” is *an expression peculiarly related to the Word of the Kingdom, part and parcel with the preaching of the cross to the saved* (I Tim. 5:11-16; II Tim. 4:7, 8).

And this same thing can be seen in any other New Testament epistle, or any book throughout both Testaments. The message of salvation by grace through faith can be found in practically any epistle or book, but it is *NEVER seen as the main message.*

The Preaching in View in I Cor. 1:18; 2:1-8

I Corinthians 1:18 refers to the preaching of the cross in relation to two classes of individuals — *those who are perishing, and those who are being saved* (see textual translation changes in brackets at the beginning of this article).

The writer, Paul, places himself among those presently being saved. He, and those referenced with him, had been saved (past [Gen. 1:2b-5; Eph. 2:8, 9]), they were being saved (present [Gen.

1:6ff; Eph. 2:10]), and this was with a view to salvation, a seventh day rest (future [Gen. 2:1-3; Heb. 4:4-9]).

They had been saved through the simple preaching of the gospel of grace; *they were now being saved* through the preaching of the gospel of glory. And both have to do with the preaching of the cross, with a view to *salvation being realized* on the seventh day, in the Messianic Era.

Contextually, *those perishing* in the first part of the verse *CANNOT* possibly be a reference to unsaved individuals. The subject at hand is *the preaching of the cross to the saved, NOT to the unsaved*. Those perishing can only refer to Christians who are not moving beyond that foreshadowed by activity on day one in Genesis chapter one into that foreshadowed by activity on days two through six, or beyond that seen in Eph. 2:8, 9 into that seen in Eph. 2:10.

Then, that seen in I Cor. 2:1ff simply continues from chapter one, though from the wording and a statement in I Cor. 15:3, 4, a broader coverage of the preaching of the gospel is evidently now seen.

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3, 4).

When Paul first went to Corinth, he could only have found a city filled with *unsaved Gentiles*. And a preaching of the cross to *the unsaved* had to occur first, which is seen in I Cor. 15:3 — “Christ died for our sins.” Salvation through this initial aspect of the preaching of the cross is via death and shed blood. *It has existed this way since man’s sin in Eden in Genesis chapter three, and no change can ever occur.*

Then I Cor. 15:4 carries matters beyond that seen in verse three, moving into a continued preaching of the cross, a preaching of the cross to the saved, to those having “passed from death unto life” through the previous preaching of the cross to the unsaved.

Note the basic, overall type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve and ending at the conclusion of the book, in chapter forty, or, in another respect, continuing to and ending in the Book of Joshua.

Death and shed blood occurred while the Israelites were still in Egypt, a type of the world (death and shed blood of paschal lambs, and the proper application of this blood [on the door posts and lintel]).

This foreshadows Christ's death and shed blood at Calvary, with a view to an unsaved individual still in the world (death and shed blood of the Paschal Lamb, and the proper application of His blood [by faith]).

This would be one aspect of that seen in I Cor. 2:3, the initial part of the preaching of the cross. But, as seen from verse eighteen in the previous chapter, or from the initial framework set forth at the beginning of Scripture, or in numerous places in Scripture which could be referenced, an individual is *NOT* to remain at this initial point. And this is succinctly stated in the continuing verse in I Cor. 15:4, pointing *to burial, then resurrection*.

Note the type once again in Exodus, moving beyond the thought of death, shed blood, and a proper application of the blood while still in Egypt. This is followed by the march toward the Red Sea and the Red Sea passage (with all involved therein), the march to Sinai (with all involved therein), and the march to the land (with all involved therein).

All of this is fraught with typical significance and meaning.

In one respect it has to do with the unsaved during present time, and with Christians during both present and future time, taking Christians into the Messianic Era.

In another respect, it has to do with Israel's future, beginning with their national conversion, and moving from there into events taking the nation into the Messianic Era.

Whether for the saved or the unsaved, matters begin at the cross, with crucifixion and death.

For the unsaved, activity surrounding the cross is *the only thing in view*. There is a vicarious death, allowing the unsaved person, once saved, to be seen in two respects — *as both "dead" and as having "passed from death unto life"* (Eph. 2:5-7; Col. 2:20; 3:1-10).

And from the preceding point, with the person now a Christian and seen as *dead* (vicariously), *a burial is to occur*. And this burial is with a view to *resurrection*, both during the present time and on

the third day, the third 1,000-year period, yet future.

Note the type in Exodus. A vicarious death occurred while in Egypt through the death and shed blood of paschal lambs. Then the dead were buried in the Red Sea passage and raised as they came up out of the Sea on the eastern banks.

At this point they were out of Egypt and separated from the things of Egypt. The old man, connected with death, was to be left in the tomb, beneath the waters of the Sea; and the new man was now to walk in newness of life, with a view to a theocracy in a new land out ahead.

The theocracy can be seen brought into existence at the end of the Book of Exodus; and the Israelites' entrance into the land, in possession of the theocracy, can be seen realized in the Book of Joshua.

ALL of this, typical of Israel yet future, is also typical of unsaved and saved man today. *Death* occurs at the cross, the *dead* are to be buried (the waters of baptism), and the person is to be raised from the waters, with that associated with *death* left beneath the waters, in the tomb.

And *ALL* of this, exactly as in the type, is with a view to a removal from the world, walking in newness of life, and a kingdom out ahead to be realized in another land (a heavenly land rather than an earthly land, as with Israel).

ALL of this has to do with the preaching of the cross. And one can easily see that *matters DON'T move very far in Scripture if this preaching DOESN'T move beyond a preaching of the cross to the unsaved.*

Part II

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish [*lit.*, ‘that are perishing’] foolishness; but unto us which are saved [*lit.*, ‘which are being saved’] it is the power of God...

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified...

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Cor. 1:18; 2:1, 2, 5-8).

Commentators invariably associate that seen in I Cor. 2:1-8 with *the preaching of the gospel of grace to the unsaved*. And, undoubtedly, the main thing facilitating this type understanding of these verses is a failure to see any continuing aspect to the gospel message, *i.e.*, *a preaching of the cross to the saved as well*.

Among most Christians today (years past as well), if the gospel message is mentioned — proclaiming the gospel — *only one message invariably comes to mind*, which has to do with a message proclaimed to the unsaved, not to the saved.

But, the manner in which the word “gospel” is used throughout the New Testament is quite different. Referencing all usages of this word in the New Testament (the Greek word *euaggelion*, “gospel,” “good news,” appears about eighty times), a person will find that over four-fifths (closer to nine-tenths) of the different times that

this word appears, contextually, the word refers to “good news” *OTHER THAN the gospel of grace.*

But, despite this, Christians continue to see the usage of this word *only one way in Scripture*, having to do with *only one message — a message to the unsaved.*

Individuals seeing and understanding things in the preceding manner can only have major problems with the text from I Cor. 2:1-8, particularly the last four verses (vv. 5-8), for *NOTHING in any one of these last four verses can have anything to do with the preaching of the gospel message to the unsaved. ONLY material pertaining to the saved can be in view throughout, which can only present major problems when trying to relate these verses to the gospel of grace.*

And, this is no small thing, for individuals improperly understanding this passage, attempting to proclaim the simple gospel of grace from these verses, *can only corrupt one facet of the gospel message and destroy the other.*

With the preceding in mind, note a number of different things about I Cor. 2:5-8:

A Mystery (v. 7)

That in view in these verses is referred to as “a mystery,” having to do with God’s “power” and “wisdom,” seen in verses five through seven: “the power of God” and “wisdom among them that are perfect [‘mature’].”

And understanding how the word “mystery” is used in the New Testament will form a base for a correct understanding of this passage.

1) Usage of “Mystery” in the N.T.

The word “mystery” is used twenty-seven times in the New Testament.

It is used one time in each of the three synoptic gospels, for the same event — *the mysteries of the kingdom* (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).

It is used twenty times in the Pauline epistles.

Paul used the word numerous times to reference *the gospel*

which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col. 1:26-28).

He used the word to reference *Israel's blindness*, awaiting the fulness of the Gentiles, to be followed by Israel's salvation (Rom. 11:25, 26).

And, among several other usages, Paul used the word to reference *the coming resurrection of Christians and the corresponding removal of the living at the end of the present dispensation* (I Cor. 15:51ff).

The word is not used in Hebrews or the general epistles, but it is used four times in the Book of Revelation. It is used of *the seven stars* (1:20), of *God* (10:7), and of *the Woman and the Beast* (17:5, 7).

2) Definition of "a Mystery"

"A mystery" in the New Testament does not have to do with something completely new, something not dealt with at all or unknown in the Old Testament (a common misconception which is often taught concerning the meaning of the word). This, of course, couldn't be true, for *there can be NOTHING in the New that cannot be found after some form in the Old*.

If there were something in the New that could not be found after some fashion in the Old, note what this would do relative to *perfection in the Word made flesh* (John 1:1, 2, 14) before a single word of the New had been penned.

Rather, "a mystery" in the New Testament has to do with *an opening up and unveiling of something previously introduced and dealt with in the Old Testament*. "A mystery" has to do with *additional revelation, commentary, on that already existing in the Old Testament, allowing the Old Testament revelation to be fully opened up and revealed* (e.g., note that a *full revelation of the Son* in the Book of Revelation, which is the announced subject matter of the book in the opening verse [1:1], allows the "mystery of God" [Rev. 10:7] to be correspondingly fully opened up as well, for Christ is God manifested in the flesh).

3) Paul's Gospel

Note in the preceding definition and coverage of the word "mystery" in the New Testament that the word is used in connection with *Paul's gospel* a number of times. And, comparing

Scripture with Scripture, it is clear that the gospel which Paul had been called to proclaim had to do with *the preaching of the cross to the saved*, not to the unsaved (cf. Rom. 2:16; 16:25; II Cor. 4:3, 4; Eph. 3:1-6).

The word “mystery,” associated with Paul’s gospel, is *NEVER used in the New Testament in connection with the gospel of grace, only with the gospel of glory*.

Also, in this respect, note “unto our glory,” and “the Lord of glory” in I Cor. 2:7, 8).

The Princes of this World (vv. 6, 8)

A great deal of controversy exists among commentators over the identity of “the princes” referenced in I Cor. 2:6, 8. The Greek word translated “princes” in the passage is *archon*, used of both *men on earth* and *angels in Satan’s kingdom* (Matt. 9:23, 34; John 3:1; Eph. 2:2). This same word was used by the Septuagint translators (Greek O.T.) in Dan. 10:13, 20, 21, verses referring to *ruling angels in the heavens*.

Then there is the related Greek word *arche*, meaning “beginning” (e.g., John 1:1), but sometimes used in the same sense as *archon*. Both words mean “beginning,” and both words are used relative to “rulers,” “principalities,” with *archon* used more so than *arche* in this respect.

The way *arche* is used in both the Books of Ephesians and Colossians though would be an exception to the preceding. The word is used in Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12 and in Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15, principally of *angels in Satan’s kingdom* in both books (human rulers are included with angelic rulers in Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16; 2:10). Then the word is used relative to *rulers among men* in Titus 3:1.

But, how is *archon* used in I Cor. 2:6, 8? Does the word refer to *rulers among men here on earth*? Or, does it refer to *rulers in Satan’s kingdom in the heavens*?

Understanding two things — *the subject at hand* and *what these rulers were failing to see in I Cor. 2:5-8* — forms the crux of the matter; and, to properly understand the passage, *these two things MUST be understood*.

As previously seen, the subject at hand has to do with different things surrounding the preaching of the cross to the saved, not to the unsaved; and these rulers had failed to see and understand the full ramifications of Christ's crucifixion.

That is to say, they saw no more than most Christians see today — nothing beyond a simple preaching of the gospel of grace, the preaching of the cross to the unsaved. Had they seen what lay beyond the preceding — *the preaching of the cross to the saved, along with the ramifications of this preaching — they would have done everything in their power to prevent the crucifixion* (I Cor. 2:8).

Why? The answer is not only very simple but the answer will also identify “the princes of this world” in verses six and eight.

Earthly rulers *COULDN'T POSSIBLY* be in view, for *they have absolutely NOTHING to do with the subject matter at hand. But Satan and his angels have EVERYTHING to do with it.*

Results of the simple gospel of grace are of no danger to Satan and his angels. An unsaved person being saved through the preaching of the cross *DOES NOT* place that person in a position to one day replace one of the angels ruling under Satan. And these ruling angels would have known, from Old Testament Scripture, the ramifications of Christ's finished work at Calvary in this respect.

The text (v. 8) clearly indicates that the preceding was not something which they tried to prevent. In fact, from events which transpired, Satan's angels, ruling through the Roman rulers of that day (Dan. 10:12-21), evidently either caused or looked favorably on the crucifixion being carried out by the Romans on behalf of the Jews.

(Angels act under *fixed laws in God's kingdom*, with their actions becoming the Lord's actions [e.g., actions of angels and the Lord in Gen. 18, 19].

And, within Satan's kingdom, “angels” form *the gods of the nations* [cf. II Chron. 32:13-15; Ps. 96:5], with *rulers in the Gentile nations conducting affairs under them [under their gods]*. And it is evident from I Cor. 2:8 that *a form of this same fixed-law government exists in Satan's kingdom between angelic rulers in the heavens and human rulers on the earth.*

The manner in which the government of the earth has been established — patterned after God's government of the universe — would leave *both heavenly and earthly rulers EQUALLY RESPONSIBLE for the actions of earthly rulers, occupying positions of power under the heavenly rulers, as seen in I Cor. 2:8.*)

What Satan and his angels didn't see and understand, *which they would have tried to prevent at all costs had they known*, was the same thing which angels outside of Satan's kingdom also didn't know, inquiring about the matter as seen in I Peter 1:12 (the saving of the soul [vv. 9-12]).

What they didn't know had to do with a present and future salvation, having to do with *the preaching of the cross to the saved*. This present aspect of salvation had to do with *bringing man into a position where he could replace angels ruling under Satan*, and the future salvation had to do with *this present salvation being realized*.

And it is plain to see how this would affect these angels and why *they would have done everything within their power to prevent Christ's crucifixion had they known these things*.

The opening up of these things from the Old Testament, to both men and angels (Eph. 3:1-11), awaited the Apostle Paul, with this revelation given through him. *And it was this message that he carried throughout the Gentile world (Col. 1:20-23).*

Part III

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

For whosoever will save his life [‘soul’] shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life [‘soul’] for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:24-26).

In the preceding verses, the word “life” appears twice in verse twenty-five and the word “soul” appears twice in verse twenty-six. Both words are translations of the Greek word *psuche*, meaning either “soul” or “life.” But, to avoid confusion, *psuche* should be translated and understood *in a consistent manner in both verses*, as either “soul” or “life.”

Within *man’s triune being* (body, soul, and spirit [I Thess. 5:23]), *the eternal salvation* which he either already has or can have through faith in Christ has to do, during present time, with *his “spirit” alone*, not with his “soul” or “body” (John 3:6).

Salvation in Scripture is seen inseparably associated with *the complete gospel message, the complete preaching of the cross, the complete man* (spirit, soul, and body) comprising past, present, and future aspects of all.

We have been saved (past, having to do with “the spirit”), *we are being saved* (present, having to do with “the soul”), and *we are about to be saved* (future, having to do with the realization of the salvation of “the soul,” along with “the body”).

(For additional information on this subject, refer to the author’s book, *Salvation of the Soul*.)

Note that the text (Matt. 16:24-26) can only be dealing with *saved individuals*. The unsaved *CANNOT possibly be in view*. Spiritual values are involved, and spiritually the unsaved are dead (Eph.

2:1, 5). “Life” *MUST* first be imparted. They *MUST* first pass “from death unto life” (John 5:24).

No unsaved person could ever be told to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Christ.

He could do the first part (deny self), though doing this *could only have to do with the natural man, the man of flesh, and could NEVER result in spiritual values, his salvation, etc.* But he couldn’t possibly do the second part (take up his cross), for he has no cross to take up. He, apart from Christ, is *alienated from the cross*. And he couldn’t do the third part either (follow Christ), for *the spiritual part of the man is dead, separated from Christ*.

On the other hand, this verse relates *EXACTLY* what a saved person is supposed to do — *MUST DO, IF...* — with the next two verses providing commentary on the matter.

He is to *deny himself*, which has to do with the soul (the seat of the person’s emotions, feelings, desires). He is to deny the fleshly impulses of the soul, keep them in check, in subjection to the man of spirit (*cf.* Gen. 16:9; 21:9, 10; Gal. 4:22-31; 5:17-21).

Then he is to *take up his cross*. Saved man, unlike unsaved man, has a cross, for he has been “crucified with Christ.” The cross is *the instrument of death*, and saved man taking up his cross can only be seen as synonymous with *dying to self, then living unto God in resurrection power (pertaining to the third day, the third thousandth year) as he follows Christ* (Gal. 2:20; 5:24).

And, relative to the preceding, the Christian can only go in *ONE OF TWO DIRECTIONS*, as seen in verse twenty-five. He can do as commanded in verse twenty-four and *realize present and future aspects of the salvation of his soul*; or, he can fail to do as commanded in verse twenty-four and *fail to realize present and future aspects of the salvation of his soul*.

There is *NO MIDDLE GROUND* on the preceding, and there are *NO EXCEPTIONS*. *ALL CHRISTIANS* are included; *NONE* are excluded.

Now, note the context on both sides of Matt. 16:24-26 to see how *the whole of the matter has to do with not only the preaching of the cross to the saved but where this takes Christians in the end who follow or do not follow the Lord’s instructions*.

Context, Preceding Matt. 16:24-26

“He [Jesus] saith unto them [His disciples], But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven...

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt. 16:15-17, 21-23).

There are two contrasting scenes in the preceding verses, both having to do with Peter.

In the first (vv. 15-17), Peter, responding to the Lord’s question, was blessed, with his response *associated with information received from the Father in heaven*.

In the second (vv. 21-23), exactly the opposite occurred. Peter’s response was *associated with Satanic activity here on earth*. And, because it was so far removed from God’s plans and purposes for man, Jesus told Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan” (*lit.*, “Get opposite me, Satan,” *i.e.*, “Get away from me, for your opposition to the work that I am about to perform is of Satan, not of the Father” [cf. John 8:28-47]).

1) *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona*

When Jesus and His disciples came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked them, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matt. 16:13). They responded with different names and thoughts, ranging from the ancient Prophets to John the Baptist (v. 14). Then Jesus, re-asking the question, made it very personal: “But whom say ye that I am?” (v. 15).

Then Simon Peter spoke up and gave the best response possible: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). And Jesus acknowledged the veracity and completeness of Peter's response by saying, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (v. 17).

Simon Peter, with that succinct statement, spoke volumes. *Everything* was there regarding the proper identity of both Jesus on earth and the Father in heaven.

Jesus was declared to be "*the Christ, the One Who would rule and reign, the Son of the living God.*"

Only "Sons" can rule in God's kingdom. But Jesus was declared to be a *particular, specific Son*. He was declared to be "*the Son*" of the *One true and "living God,"* completely separate from sonship and/or rulership associated with "the gods of the [Gentile] nations" (II Chron. 32:13-15; Ps. 96:5).

Matthew 16:15-17 presents *the positive side* of the matter, and seeing why, of course, is evident. Now, note *the negative side* of the matter in the continuing verses in Matthew's gospel.

2) *Get thee behind me, Satan*

Following Peter's statement concerning Jesus' true identity and Jesus' response regarding this statement, Peter, evidently because of the nature of that which he had stated about Jesus' identity, remained foremost among the disciples when Jesus called attention to building His "Church" and "the keys of the kingdom of the heavens" (vv. 18, 19).

(For information on Matt. 16:19, refer to the author's pamphlet, "Keys of the Kingdom.")

Then, *Jesus seemingly moved in a direction away from Peter's previous statement by charging His disciples "that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ"* (v. 20). But this charge was not directing them away from that which Peter had just stated at all. Rather, this charge had to do with directing their attention to *that which He must now do in order to fully achieve the goal seen in Peter's previous statement* (v. 21).

Though the offer of the kingdom of the heavens remained open to Israel, as previously seen regarding something similar (Matt. 12, 13), *matters moved centrally away from this offer to statements concerning Calvary and the Church*. And the events of Calvary are inseparably connected with the reason that the Church was brought into existence.

Note that *far more exists concerning the events of Calvary than just a preaching of the cross to the unsaved*. The events of Calvary also allow for a continued aspect to the overall salvation message, seen in the continuing verses of this chapter in Matthew's gospel (vv. 24-26).

This is why, according to Heb. 12:2, that Christ, "for the joy that was set before him [*the day when He would rule and reign* (Matt. 25:21, 23)] endured the cross, despising the shame," *which is EXACTLY what Christians MUST DO as well if they are to have a part with Christ in that coming day* (cf. John 12:24; II Tim. 2:4-12).

This is what Peter, opposing Christ's impending work at Calvary, did not understand. And this accounts for *Christ's sharp rebuke* following Peter's previous statement concerning Jesus' identity.

Context, Following Matt. 16:24-26

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Verily I say unto you. There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

And was transfigured before them..." (Matt. 16:27-17:2a).

Then, following Matt. 16:24-26, *the direction toward which all things in Scripture move is dealt with*. The continuing text takes one to the time of Christ's return. And, for Christians, "*rewards*" will be forthcoming at this time, something which will have previously been determined at the judgment seat (v. 27).

(The Greek word translated "reward" is *misthos*, and translating this word as "reward" could leave a wrong understanding of what is in view. *Misthos* has to do with *payment or wages for services rendered*,

one completely commensurate with the other.

Thus, *there could be both positive and negative ramifications to the matter* — much work, much payment; little work, little payment; no work, no payment.)

And, continuing with the text, “rewards,” *payment for services rendered*, is then seen to have to do with *the coming kingdom*.

Jesus declared that some of the individuals present, listening to Him, *would not die until they had seen “the Son of man coming in his kingdom”* (v. 28). And this is *EXACTLY* what three of them saw six days later, foreshadowing 6,000 years, when Jesus took Peter, James, and John “up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them...” (Matt. 17:1ff).

They didn’t see something like the Son of man coming in His kingdom (i.e., a foreview of that coming day). They were moved ahead in time, 2,000 years, and *saw EXACTLY what the text states*.

As well, note that Moses and Elijah appeared [will appear] with Christ in His “glory,” talking with Him, speaking of “his decease which he should accomplish [or future, ‘did accomplish’] at Jerusalem” (Matt. 17:3; Mark. 9:4; Luke 9:30, 31). And, *seen in connection with the coming kingdom, the subject matter dealt with by Jesus, Moses, and Elijah is in PERFECT KEEPING with the overall scope of Christ’s finished work at Calvary*.

(For additional information on Moses and Elijah accompanying Christ at the time of His return, “with his mighty angels” [II Thess. 1:7], refer to the author’s book, *Coming in His Kingdom*.)

And that’s what the dual aspect of the preaching of the cross is about, *necessitating Christ’s finished work at Calvary for THE COMPLETE MESSAGE*.

The initial part of the message has to do with “the unsaved,” bringing a person into a position where he can realize that which lies beyond.

And the continuing part of the message, having to do with “the saved,” has to do with man ultimately realizing the reason, purpose for his salvation.

And ALL has to do with the coming kingdom.

Part IV

“So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [*i.e.*, ‘Gentile,’ *cf.* vv. 13, 14].

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith [Hab. 2:4]” (Rom. 1:15-17).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish [*lit.*, ‘that are perishing’] foolishness; but unto us which are saved [*lit.*, ‘which are being saved’] it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18).

The gospel which Paul desired to proclaim to the Christians in Rome (Rom. 1:15) is referred to as “the gospel of Christ” in verse sixteen and is associated with *a continuing act of faith* in verse seventeen.

“The gospel of Christ” in this passage is a reference to the same message Paul called “my gospel” (Rom. 2:16; 16:25), which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Eph. 3:1-6; Col. 1:20-23). And calling attention to this message, regardless of the terminology used, is simply another way of referring to “the preaching of the cross” in I Cor. 1:18.

Two Types of Christians in Romans

The first chapter of Romans divides itself into two fairly equal parts, dealing with *two types of Christians, in relation to one central subject*.

The first half of the chapter (vv. 1-17) has to do with *faithful Christians in relation to the gospel message, the good news* — though not that facet of the good news pertaining to the grace of God, but that facet of the good news pertaining to *the coming Glory of Christ*.

And the last half of the chapter (vv. 18-32) has to do with *unfaithful Christians in relation to the same gospel message, the same good news.*

1) *The Type Christians Seen in vv. 1-17*

The Christians described in the opening part of the chapter are, as Paul described himself, “not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”; or, using an explanation of that being referenced in the words “gospel” and “Christ” in the verse, a person could say that Christians of this nature are “not ashamed of the good news of the One Who will rule and reign.”

There is really *nothing* about salvation by grace through faith in these first seventeen verses. The verses, among related issues, have to do with “the seed of David” (v. 3), declared to be “the Son of God with power [‘sonship’ has to do with *rulership*]” (v. 4), with “obedience to *the faith* [‘the faith,’ an expression peculiarly related to *the Word of the Kingdom*]” (v. 5), with the faith of Christians in Rome being “spoken of throughout the whole world” (v. 8), and with Paul’s expressed desire to go to and proclaim this good news to the Christians in Rome, for a stated purpose — “that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles” (vv. 10, 13; cf. vv. 15, 16).

2) *The Type Christians Seen in vv. 18-32*

Then, with verse seventeen as a closing statement for the opening part of the chapter, the other type Christians are presented. And the type Christians presented in this section, rather than exercising faith and looking forward to the salvation in view in verse sixteen, had, instead, through their unfaithfulness, been led into various types of disobedience and will suffer “the wrath of God.”

Exactly the opposite of that seen in the previous section is seen in this section. And that becomes increasingly evident as one continues studying this section.

First of all, note the subject matter at hand. *The gospel of grace (having to do with the unsaved and one’s eternal salvation) is not the message Paul called attention to various ways in the opening seventeen*

verses. This has already been shown but will become more evident through progressive material in this article.

Then, to further illustrate that Christians alone can be in view throughout chapter one, note the words “knowledge” and “knowing” in verses twenty-eight and thirty-two.

Both of these words are translations of the Greek word *epignosis* (the verb form of this word is used in v. 32 [*epiginosko*], meaning the same as the noun form in v. 28).

In the Greek text there is the regular word for knowledge (*gnosis*); and there is an intensified form of *gnosis*, formed through the preposition *epi* (meaning, “upon”) being prefixed to the word (*epi-gnosis*, which has to do with a knowledge of something beyond a regular knowledge, *i.e.*, some facet of a *mature knowledge concerning the matter at hand*).

And, according to I Cor. 2:14, the natural man (which is all that the unsaved person possesses) can’t even come into possession of a type knowledge described by *gnosis* (the Greek word used in this verse). The reason, of course, is because he is spiritually dead. He simply cannot understand spiritual things.

But the individuals in the latter part of Romans chapter one came into possession of a knowledge of that in view described by *epignosis*. How did they do this if unsaved? They didn’t, for, according to I Cor. 2:14, if unsaved, they couldn’t have even come into possession of a type knowledge of that in view described by the word *gnosis*, much less *epignosis*.

And, aside from the preceding, it wouldn’t make any sense whatsoever to see the first seventeen verses correctly (a message [vv. 15, 16] having to do with *faith* [vv. 8, 16, 17], in relation to *fruit-bearing* [v. 13]), and then attempt to see the latter part of the chapter (vv. 18-32) dealing with the unsaved. Scripture is simply not structured in such a fashion.

(Note that not every unfaithful Christian would fit into the category of those committing the sins mentioned in vv. 18-32, though many would [an ever-increasing number in the world today].

The division between these two types of Christians is on the basis of an exercise of faith. *One exercises faith, the other does not.*

And, there is *no middle ground in this realm*. Christians either find themselves among those described in the first part of the chapter or among those described in the latter part of the chapter, regardless of whether or not they are guilty of the sins named in the chapter.

“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” [Matt. 12:30; *cf.* Luke 11:23].)

The Power of God unto Salvation

“The gospel of Christ” in Rom. 1:16 and “the preaching of the cross” in I Cor. 1:18 — again, two ways of saying the same thing — are associated with *GOD’S POWER in relation to salvation*. As clearly stated in both verses, quoting from Rom. 1:16, this message is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”

Apart from “the gospel of Christ,” “the preaching of the cross,” *NOTHING ELSE* has anything to do with, or can effect in any way, salvation for fallen man. Christ’s finished work on the cross *ALONE* allows God to exercise His power in this respect.

And this exercise of power could only extend to any facet of the overall gospel message, connected with any part of God’s work regarding man’s salvation, initially foreshadowed in Scripture by His restorative work throughout all six days in Genesis chapter one.

In Matt. 28:18-20, prefacing a command to go into all the world and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing and teaching them (vv. 19, 20), Christ stated, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (v. 18).

The complete statement (vv. 18-20), with Christians in view, contrary to the manner in which it is usually handled, has to do with the same message seen in Rom. 1:16 and I Cor. 1:18. And this would be *in complete keeping with the manner in which the overall salvation message is presented throughout Scripture*.

(As previously seen in this article, the overall salvation message presented throughout Scripture is centrally *a message to the saved rather than to the unsaved* [*ref.* Part I], with the preaching of the cross covering both [messages to both the saved and the unsaved], though the emphasis in Scripture *ALWAYS* centers on the preaching of the cross as it relates to the saved rather than to the unsaved.)

“ALL POWER” given to Christ in Matt. 28:18 can only encompass a proclamation of *THE COMPLETE GOSPEL MESSAGE* surrounding “the cross,” messages to both the saved and the unsaved. *Christ is the Saviour, the One through Whom God effects salvation, regardless of where a person begins with the message, whether to the saved or to the unsaved.*

Christ is the One Who performed a finished work on the cross, a work having to do with both the saved and the unsaved. He is the One in possession of “all power,” seen in connection with the preaching of the cross to the saved in Matt. 28:18-20, which could only, as well, be seen in a broader respect — a prior preaching of the cross to the unsaved, effecting a passing “from death unto life,” allowing a continued preaching of the cross, as seen in verses nineteen and twenty.

There is simply *NO SUCH THING* as salvation being effected at any point in ruined man’s restoration — whether to the saved or to the unsaved — apart from the finished work of the Son on the cross and the power which He possesses, associated with this finished work.

This is seen as “the power of God” in Rom. 1:16 and I Cor. 1:18, but note the identity of the Son in relation to God. The Son is God manifested in the flesh. Thus, the Son’s power and His finished work on the cross is, as well, God’s power and His finished work on the cross.

One simply cannot be separated from the Other, as the written Word cannot be separated from the Word made flesh, or from God (John 1:1, 2, 14).

God’s actions are *ALWAYS* in connection with His power, which are *ALWAYS* in complete accord with His revealed Word. God simply *WILL NOT* act, exercise His power, in a manner contrary to that which He has revealed in His Word.

The Spirit of God, performing a restorative work in ruined man — whether saved or unsaved man — does this work *ON ONE BASIS ALONE THROUGH ONE POWER ALONE*. The Spirit of God does this work *on the basis of Christ’s finished work on the cross, the One in possession of “all power.”*

This is *the why* of verses such as Acts 4:12:

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

There is *NO SALVATION outside of Christ, for there is NO WORK of the cross OR POWER outside of Christ. ANY AND ALL work regarding salvation CAN ONLY have to do with Christ, His finished work on the cross, and His power.*

And *the Spirit of God, effecting a work in man regarding salvation — whether saved or unsaved man — does that work SOLELY in connection with the finished work of God’s Son on the cross, exercising the Son’s power.*

If an unsaved person thinks that he can circumnavigate Christ’s finished work and His power regarding salvation, *that person had better think again.*

Or, if a saved person thinks that he can circumnavigate Christ’s finished work and His power regarding an on-going work of salvation, *that person had better think again as well.*