

G R A C E

... it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace ... Hebrews 13:9

Issue 164 February 2010

The Marks of a New Covenant Ministry—Part Two A Study in 2 Corinthians 3

John G. Reisinger

In our last article, we looked at the first five verses of 2 Corinthians 3. We noted there that Paul had used the contrast between life and death to describe the difference between his ministry and that of his opponents. Unlike those who opposed him, Paul did not need “letters of recommendation” to prove either his apostleship or the truth of his message. The Corinthian believers themselves were evidence of the truth and power of the gospel he preached. Paul expressed assurance of success in preaching, stressing that he was not competent in himself, but was more than competent through Christ.

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. (2 Cor. 3:4, 5, NIV)

In verse 6, Paul emphasizes that this competence concerns not his preaching in general, but his preaching the New Covenant in particular. This success lies, not in Paul’s ability, but in the nature and power of the New Covenant that he preached.

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REFORMED EVANGELISM: CALLING PEOPLE TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST BY DECLARING HIM AS PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING Part 3

Andrew Smith

In this series of articles, we have been identifying what Reformed Evangelism (RE) is. In the first two articles, we considered the first primary heading of this series of articles—Declaring Christ as Prophet. We answered two important questions under this first heading: 1) “How do we declare Christ as Prophet in our evangelism?”, and 2) “How do we identify with Christ as prophets in our evangelism?” The answer to the first question pointed to the importance of showing Christ as the ultimate representa-

tive of God—the very self revelation of God Himself. We concluded that this was important because Jesus the Prophet reveals the character and holiness of God not only in what He *said*, but in the way He *lived*. We must make this clear to people in our basic communication of the Gospel message. The answer to the second question was summarily given in two important affirmations. First, we affirmed that identifying with Christ as a “prophet” *means we embrace our role as proph-* Smith—Continued on page 6

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He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (NIV)

In one verse, Paul provides a condensed statement of New Covenant theology. He first asserts that he and Timothy are competent “as ministers of a new covenant,” and then he immediately explains why that is true. New Covenant preaching will succeed because of the nature of the New Covenant. This means that the competence claimed by Paul and Timothy belongs to all who preach the New Covenant. As we saw in our last article, any success in our ministry is entirely due to the power of the New Covenant and has nothing to do with our preaching ability or our faith.

Paul then contrasts the two covenants as letter and Spirit. The Old Covenant, the letter, was a killing covenant. The New Covenant, the Spirit, is a life-giving covenant. *The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.* Please note that Paul is not comparing a so-called *spirit* of the law with a *letter* of the law. Such a distinction may or may not be useful in some instances, but it is not what Paul means in this text. Paul uses the word *letter* here as a synonym for law, not as a component or aspect of the law. It is not the letter of the law that condemns us; it is the law itself that condemns us. Likewise, it is not the spirit of the law that gives us life; only the gospel can do that. Even if there were such a thing as the spirit of the law, it could not give life. Law in no sense can impart grace. The New Covenant is not the spirit of the Old Covenant (the law); it is a *new* covenant based on grace and the finished work of Christ. The Old Covenant, made at Sinai, has become obsolete and has been replaced by a new and better covenant. The New Covenant is exactly what its name implies. It is a **new covenant**. It is literally new and different in nature,

character, and substance from the **Old Covenant that it replaces.** I am aware that this will not fit Covenant Theology’s view that the Old and New Covenants are really two different administrations of one single covenant. Their view, however, is supported neither by the evidence of 2 Corinthians 3 nor of other salient passages in the New Testament.

Hebrews 8:6, summarizing the entire book of Hebrews, contains three clear comparisons between the New and Old Covenants that show why the Old Covenant of law had to end and be replaced by a new and better covenant based on grace. There is nothing explicit or implicit in Hebrews 8:6, the entire eighth chapter of Hebrews, or the entire book of Hebrews, that indicates *two administrations of one covenant*. That idea is logically deduced from theological dogmas that have no textual basis in Scripture. Scripture is clear: there are two *different* covenants; one is a killing covenant and the other is a life-giving covenant. The new life-giving covenant replaces and does away with the old killing covenant. Look carefully at Hebrews 8:6, with numbers added to mark the three comparisons.

But now hath he obtained (1) a more excellent ministry, by how much also (2) he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon (3) better promises. (KJV)

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THE CASE OF NAAMAN

Part V

Dr. Phillip W. McMillin

And the Syrians had gone out on raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." (2 Kings 5:2, 3, NKJV)

I want to continue our study of the providence of God in dealing with Naaman, the leper. We need to be on intimate terms with both the Old and the New Testaments. Sometimes we may struggle with the deep doctrines of the Apostles, the things hard to be understood. But if we know the glorious accounts of God's dealings in the Old Testament, the arm of the Lord is often clearly revealed there and gives us an easily understood lesson.

Previously we studied the man Naaman and the things revealed about him. If you remember, his name meant *loveliness* or *pleasantness* or *one of noble countenance*. We learned that he was great; he had a good reputation in the greatest nation on earth in that day. He was a man called for early when problems arose; he was looked to for difficult solutions.

Naaman was honorable or accepted by Ben-Hadad the King, and all his people. He was above reproach, a man who deserved to be commander in chief. And this honor was not cheap; God himself gave it to him. Naaman was valorous too, meaning wise, full of integrity and trustworthy.

Every honor but the throne of the King had been bestowed on Naaman. But, but- he was a leper. Someone said, "The lowest slave in Assyria would not have traded skins with Naaman." He had leprosy, the most

dreaded disease of the times. White leprosy; the Jews called it "being smitten from heaven."

God the Holy Spirit deals with pride in every man and God will have his way with his own. God's Word states: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,..." (Ps 110:3 KJV) and God has the exact horse to draw every elect sinner's chariot to the bar of God.

Naaman was indeed "smitten from heaven;" the hand of providence lay heavy upon Naaman and he would come to see that while that hand of affliction is harsh judgment in some, it is overflowing mercy in others.

For Naaman the Syrian's chariot horse was leprosy and surely it would bring him into the presence of the God of all Salvation.

In verse 2 we see that the Syrians had gone out. It was common among despotic rulers of ancient kingdoms to allow their armies to amuse themselves in times of calm by making bandit raids into surrounding nations to plunder, pillage and take slaves. No trains of supply went with armies.

Companies of soldiers might make lightning raids into areas and be in and out before the citizens knew they were around. Trained soldiers got into trouble when things were slow, so raiding was used also as a form of occupational therapy. "I can't stand all this sitting around; let's make a raid." The armies of Alexander the Great, Attila the Hun and the Roman Legions all practiced this. At this time, the host of Syria may have had up to one million soldiers.

Many raids were made by many companies in many areas with no carefully developed battle plans. It was often a haphazard attack carried out at a whim.

But there was one company among the many that God singled out for an especial raid.

"Had brought back ..." God has already told us that these bandito companies went out separately. If they had gone together it would say the host of Syria went out. We know they raided in different areas at different times, or again, it would have been the army going out to war and we would have an account of the battle and who won and so on.

These little sorties tried the defenses here and there, determined the mood of the people in the area they raided, (fear or resistance), and brought back both news and plunder.

Even in our Revolutionary and Civil Wars, the armies were often poorly provisioned, half starved, short of weapons and medicines. Raids on enemy areas supplied powder, firearms, food and even clothing.

Among these ancient heathen armies, the Kings made little attempt at supply. It was expected that the army would supply itself by raids. It was a common occurrence, according to historians.

But one of these companies went to a certain place. We are not told that they brought back jewels and gold and silver and spices and foodstuffs. I surmise that they wound up raiding a destitute area.

They brought back a little maiden. God had plans of bringing this maiden to Naaman's house. He did not care for Naaman to have riches; He wanted this girl in Naaman's house. She was to be a little prophetess from God, to show Naaman the way to a meeting place with God. God would meet with

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New Covenant Theology rests on the three key points set forth in this text. The writer first compares the high-priestly ministry of Christ with that of Aaron (chapter 7) and declares that the ministry of Christ is “*more excellent.*” The second comparison grows out of the first, based on the principle stated in Hebrews 7:12, a change in priesthood necessitates a change in law because different kinds of priesthoods rest on different regulations. Christ’s ministry is *better* than Aaron’s ministry because the covenant that regulates Christ’s ministry is *better* than the covenant that regulated Aaron’s ministry. Aaron’s ministry fulfilled exactly what God ordained it to do, namely, kill all hope in self and works for salvation and push sinners to faith alone in the gospel preached to Abraham, a promise of a coming Messiah. The third comparison shows why the New Covenant that regulates Christ’s ministry is superior. The new and better covenant is based on *better promises*. The Old Covenant was a covenant of works. It was conditional: “If you obey, then...” It was a “do or die” covenant, an “obey and live, disobey and die” covenant. Since none could obey well enough (the law made nothing perfect – Heb. 7:19), all who lived under the Old Covenant were guilty and condemned. God deliberately designed the Old Covenant, spelled out on the Tables of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments, to be a “ministry of death” (2 Cor. 3:7). In contrast, the New Covenant is a gracious covenant. It is unconditional: “It is finished, only believe.” It is a “done, so believe” covenant. Christ established this New Covenant through the power of his indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Thus, both the foundation and the result of the New Covenant is life. These three things—a (1) **better ministry**, regulated by a (2) **better covenant**, established on (3) **better promises**—mark the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Cov-

enant it replaces. It simply is not possible to make that mean, “*Christ has a better ministry because it is regulated by a better administration of the same covenant.*”

The author of Hebrews describes the regulation (the law) as weak and useless, not because of some inherent flaw, but with respect to the topic under discussion—the hope of drawing near to God (Heb. 7:18, 19). Aaron’s ministry failed to bring sinners into the Most Holy Place because it was not designed to do so. The Old Covenant restricted (or regulated) access to the Most Holy Place to one person (the High Priest) one day out of the year—the Day of Atonement. The New Covenant opens (or regulates) access to the Most Holy Place to everyone in the covenant, any time of the day, any day of the year. Our Lord enables his New Covenant people to come without fear into the Most Holy Place, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, because they wear a coat of perfect righteousness provided for them by their Savior’s atoning-once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:1-22).

Aaron’s administration of the law (his ministry) was not designed to accomplish the same thing. We see this on several fronts. First, Aaron could not provide the coat of righteousness that the covenant terms (the Ten Commandments), resting in the Ark, justly demanded. Second, he could not bring a sacrifice that could pay for sins against those covenant terms (he had to offer sacrifices for his own sins first, then for the sins of the people – Heb. 7:27, 28). He could offer no sacrifice that was able to propitiate God. His ministry could only temporarily cover sin; it could not actually pay for sin and cleanse the conscience from sin. The annual sacrifice on the Day of Atonement could not propitiate God, or satisfy his offended character, but only cover sins for **one year**. Aaron’s sacrifice of a goat was an “I owe

you” note. The proof of the failure of Aaron’s ministry to propitiate God was the need next year of another Day of Atonement. Follow carefully the argument laid out in Hebrews 10:1-5.

Aaron did not fail in his ministry because he was not godly or because he lacked faith and sincerity. The problem was the covenant terms, the Ten Commandments, written on the tables of the covenant in the Ark of the Covenant. Until those terms, which demanded sinless perfection, were perfectly fulfilled, the veil closing Israelites out of the Most Holy Place would remain in place. Aaron could bring neither the perfect sinless life that the law covenant in the Ark righteously demanded to earn God’s acceptance, nor the sacrifice that could pay for the sins against the covenant terms written on the stone tables of the covenant in the Ark of Covenant. Remember, the covenant was conditional: “**if** you obey, **then...**” (Ex. 19:5).

Jesus was the only human who fully satisfied the terms of that Old Covenant. He was born under that law covenant and earned the righteousness it promised. He died under the curse of that law covenant when, as a substitute for his people, he paid for sins committed against that covenant. He was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and lives at the Father’s right hand to make intercession for those for whom he died, his elect people. The moment he gave up the ghost, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, signifying that the covenant terms in the Ark were met. His atoning work established the New Covenant. The regulatory “if” was forever removed and the message was no longer “stay away,” but “come and welcome.” Our Lord’s ministry prevails where Aaron’s failed because of the different natures of the respective covenants off of which they ministered. Aaron ministered off of a legal

COVENANT SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES

Steve West

This article takes it for granted that concepts can be analyzed in multiple, beneficial ways. One area where New Covenant Theology has spent significant time is in exploring the relationship between the Old and New Covenants in terms of continuity and discontinuity. In my judgment there is still much more to be said in those terms, and much more fruitful exploration yet to be done. This article will not press for a greater understanding of continuity and discontinuity, however. Rather, it will focus on general similarities and dissimilarities between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. What follows is by no means exhaustive in either breadth or depth. It is simply an initial survey, tracing out some of the differences between the covenants. Perhaps approaching the relationship between the covenants from different angles will help to reinforce, clarify, and foster greater understanding of separate yet related issues.

1. The Location of Law

Without specifying the *content* of the covenant law (which would be in the domain of continuity/discontinuity), a major difference between the Old and New Covenants is the *location* of God's laws. For Moses and the nation of Israel, God's law was written down on tablets of stone. It was something that was completely external to them. It was not located in the heart; it was located in the law books.

This does not mean, by any sense of the imagination, that God's laws were not loved, followed, and internalized by anyone in the nation of Israel. Surely those who had faith in God delighted to do his will, as revealed in his holy law. They looked

to the law for wisdom and guidance, and to find out what pleased the Lord. Witness, for example, Psalm 119! Yes, there were many individuals under the Old Covenant who digested God's Word until it was a part of them. But there were also many who were under the Old Covenant law who hated the law, rebelled against it, and rejected the God who gave it. They were still guilty under the Old Covenant law—and some were even executed for their rebellion—but the law was completely external to them. There were undoubtedly others who, like many today, kept the law in an external manner because it was in their best interests, but did not love the law or love God. Many today would break the law if there were no police officers or courts to enforce it. For them, even if they keep the letter of our society's laws, they do not have those laws in their hearts.

By contrast, in the New Covenant, God's laws are internalized. They are written on the mind and on the heart (Jer. 31:33). Nobody in the New Covenant people of God hates God's laws. Obedience is not perfect, and sinful rebellion persists, but there is a heart commitment to follow the Word of the Lord. In the Old Covenant there might be no correlation whatsoever between what was in an individual's heart and what the covenant law said: but in the New Covenant, what the covenant law says is not just outside, it is inside. For the Old Covenant the location of the law was external for all and internal for some; for the New Covenant, it is internal for all.

2. Community and Regeneration

Another major difference between the Covenants is that of membership in the covenant community. Under the

Old Covenant, there was a mixture of regenerate and unregenerate membership. Everyone in the Old Covenant was elected by God, but this election was not necessarily to eternal salvation. There was an "elect of the elect" who were saved eternally, but not everyone elected and included into the Old Covenant was elected and included in the number of those who will belong to God in glory for all of eternity. In other words, while every member of the Old Covenant community was elected by God to belong to that community, not everyone in that community was elected to eternal life. Both regenerate and unregenerate individuals were part of God's Old Covenant community.

Now, with full understanding that this next point will represent a contested view of ecclesiology, it seems clear to me that everyone in the New Covenant community is regenerated. Jeremiah 31:34 states: "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." In the New Covenant community you do not need to teach *anyone* to know the Lord (i.e., have a personal relationship with him) because *they all know him*. Whether they are the lowliest or the highest in the entire community, they all know God. Their wickedness and sins are all forgiven. God promises in Jeremiah that when he inaugurates the New Covenant community, its total membership will be regenerate. There is not a single person who is elected to belong to the New Covenant community who will not be in the New Heavens and New Earth with God in the age to come.

3. (Trans-) Socio, Political, Ethnic, Geographic, Cultural

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et/evangelists. And secondly, we affirmed that identifying with Christ as a “prophet” means we are consumed with taking the time to teach others about Christ through relationships.

In this final article we want to consider the other two headings for this series of articles. First, we will look at what it means to declare Christ as priest. We will answer two important questions under this heading. We will first ask, “How do we declare Christ as Priest in our evangelism?” This will be followed by another question, “How do we identify with Christ as priests in our evangelism?” The final heading will deal with declaring Christ as King. Under this final section we will answer two more questions. The first question will ask, “How do we declare Christ as King in our evangelism?” And the second question will be, “How do we identify with Christ’s kingship in our evangelism?” As with the first section, the final two sections will follow the pattern revealing the precedence of theology over methodology, which is fundamentally characteristic of RE.

DECLARING CHRIST AS PRIEST

Theology: How Do We Declare

Christ as Priest in Our Evangelism?

In this series of articles we have been identifying what Reformed Evangelism (RE) is. In the first two articles we saw the importance of declaring Christ as Prophet in our evangelism. As I stated, this involves not only showing that Christ is the greatest of all Prophets, being the final revelation of God, yea, the very self-revelation of God, but also a purposeful intent to become “prophets” ourselves as citizens of the New Covenant era.

Jesus Christ also fulfills the role of the Old Testament priestly office. As has already been shown, the duty of a prophet was to serve as *God’s representative* to His people. A priest, on the other hand, was duty bound to serve as the *people’s representative* before God. The author of Hebrews shows that the essential duty of the priest, being appointed by God Himself (Heb. 5:4), was to make the people acceptable in the presence of God. This was done through the offering of gifts and sacrifices (5:1), and general intercession (prayers) for the people.

Obviously, the sacrifice of animals, and thus the shedding of blood, served to temporarily cover sin until the “Priest of all priests,” our Great

High Priest Jesus Christ, came to offer Himself (Heb. 4:14; 10:4-10). When this “Apostle and High Priest” (Heb. 3:1) came, He offered one final sacrifice for sins. In fact, this is what makes Him superior to the other priests who offered sacrifices continually (Heb. 7:27). This final sacrifice would forgive sin forever (Heb. 9:26). In addition, Christ the Priest is superior because He is holy and blameless (Heb. 7:26). The priests in the Old Testament were all sinners; Christ was sinless. Furthermore, Christ’s superiority as Priest is manifested in the fact that He serves not only as the Final Priest, but the Final Sacrifice *itself* (Ps. 40:6-8). The author of Hebrews and many other portions of the New Testament show this with overwhelming evidence (Mk. 10:45; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:6-8; I Cor. 5:7; 15:3; Eph. 5:2). Thus, it is clear that Jesus Christ is the High Priest *par excellence*.

Where does the Old Testament affirm that all of the priests in the nation of Israel prefigured this “Priest of priests”? Both the Psalmist (Ps. 110:4; cf. Heb. 5:8-10) and Zechariah the prophet speak of the coming of this Final Priest and King (Zechariah 6:11-13). This Priest’s work would make

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Hathach

J. R. Miller, *Miller’s Year Book—a Year’s Daily Readings*

Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews, and he asked Hathach to show it to Esther. He also asked Hathach to explain it to her and to urge her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai’s message. Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai ...” (Esther 4:8-10)

We are apt to overlook the *minor actors* in Scripture stories—in our absorbed interest in the promi-

nent ones. Yet oftentimes these *lesser people* are just as important in their own place, and their service is just as essential to the final success of the whole—as the greater ones.

The *little girl* in the story of Naaman the leper, is scarcely seen among the splendors of the Syrian court; but without her part, we would never have had the story at all.

The *young lad* with the basket, is hardly thought of

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The Old Covenant was made with one ethnicity, the *nation* of Israel. Yes, there were provisions for foreigners to join the Old Covenant community, but this involved a switch in national allegiance. Foreigners who wanted to join the Old Covenant community—in order to fully appreciate the blessings of the Covenant—would physically have to relocate into the boundaries of the Promised Land. They would submit to Israel's government. They would go to Jerusalem to worship. There was an entire social and cultural package that defined and shaped the Old Covenant community.

One of the glories of the New Covenant community is that it is trans-cultural, trans-linguistic, trans-political, trans-geographic, etc. Members of the New Covenant community live under different types of government. Some live under despots, communists, monarchs, and democracies. The members of the New Covenant community speak different languages, live in different countries, and have completely different cultures. They are included in the New Covenant community *as* Canadians, or *as* Malawians, or *as* Chinese believers. There is not one unique, physical spot on the earth where the true people of God are found, or one specific set of geographic/political boundaries where pure worship is offered in the prescribed way. There is a glorious diver-

sity, a diversity which finds wonderful expression in the song to the Lamb in Revelation 5.

The New Covenant people of God are embedded across the entire globe. They are from every tribe, nation, tongue, and ethnicity. Under the Mosaic law there was no “mosaic,” but under the New Covenant, the entire community is a mosaic of different people groups and sociological categories. According to the “new man” passage in the book of Ephesians (2:11-22, esp. 14-16), the New Covenant community, the true Church, is a truly new creation, where Jew and Gentile (everyone fits into one of those groups!) are brought together in mutual equality and blessing. The Church is *not* the community where the saved Gentiles join the saved Jews—on the contrary, the Church is a brand new community where Jews and Gentiles are completely equal and brought to God through Christ *together as one at the same time and in the same way*.

4. Permanency

The last difference to canvass in this article is the permanency of the Old and New Covenants. This last point is not expected to be even remotely controversial. I do not know how Paul could have been plainer in regards to the impermanency of the Old Covenant and the permanency of the New in II Corinthians 3:7-18. In

fact, this passage is a virtual treasure house of similarities and dissimilarities between the Old and New Covenants! Some differences include fading glory and lasting glory; condemnation and righteousness; death and life; fear and boldness; barriers and freedom. But the main area I wish to highlight is that the Old Covenant in total was not meant to be permanent. Surely Galatians and Hebrews make this point too! In Paul's own words in II Corinthians, the Old Covenant ministry had a glory that was “fading away” but the New Covenant ministry has the glory “of that which lasts.” For this we should be very thankful; at every turn, with every similarity and dissimilarity, the New Covenant is simply much better than the Old.

As always, much more could be said. This article contains a somewhat arbitrary list, which could be greatly expanded. The issue of covenant signs could easily be brought into the discussion. Typology would be another beneficial avenue for investigation. But these start to touch on issues related more particularly to continuity and discontinuity—they begin to demand more specific answers about content and details, rather than dealing with broad and general categories. As we try to grow in our understanding of God's truth, I believe there is a place for both approaches. Ω

when we read the account of the miracle; but they were his loaves with which the Master fed all those hungry thousands that day on the green grass.

The *smallest links in a chain*—are oftentimes quite as important as the greatest links.

Hathach was one of these *obscure characters*. But his part was by no means unimportant. Without his being a trustworthy messenger, Mordecai's communication with Esther would have been impossible.

If we cannot do brave things like *Esther*, nor give wise counsels like *Mordecai*—we may at least be useful, as Hathach was, in faithful service. And perhaps our lowly part may some day prove to have been as essential—as the great deeds which all men praise. We may at least *help* some others in doing the great things that they are set to do in this world.

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Smith—Continued from page 6

other people “priests” who could enter the presence of God (Heb. 6:19-20; I Pet. 2:9). In the Old Testament, the High Priest was only allowed to enter the “holy of holies” once a year, but when Christ sacrificed Himself the veil of the temple was torn in two paving the way for us to enter the presence of God on behalf of the sacrifice of Christ (Lk. 23:45).

So practically, what does it mean to declare Christ as Priest? We declare Christ as priest in our evangelism when we make it clear that Christ alone is able to appease the wrath of God against man for breaking His law. The point of Christ serving as the Final Priest lies in the heinous nature of sin. God’s holiness cannot allow for the acceptance of sinners into His fellowship without the shedding of blood. But animal blood never ultimately satisfies God’s justice. God is just, therefore if God were to accept anyone, sin had to be punished finally—in a way that would appease God’s anger with sinners forever. God—as Judge—must have His wrath satisfied. But how could God’s justice be satisfied? Not just any sacrifice would do. A sacrifice in the Old Testament had to be spotless, but in order for man to finally be accepted before God there must be a human sacrifice. Man breached God’s law, not animals. Thus, all men must be punished to appease God’s wrath unless one could find a spotless man to serve as a substitute. God’s justice will not leave sin unpunished and He will not punish sin except in the type of nature that sinned, which was human. So God had to become like us—human. This is why Jesus came—to serve as a spotless sacrifice in the place of sinners—just like the animals in the Old Testament served temporarily (Heb. 7:26-27). He was the perfect substitute. He had to pass the test of being spotless, which He did (Gal. 4:4-5). Thus, His perfect life qualified

Him to serve as the only sacrifice to take away sins forever. An emphasis on Christ’s priestly role as substitute helps clarify the first thing we are to reveal to sinners—showing them that they have broken God’s law. Thus, logically speaking, we must get them “lost” before we get them “saved.”

We must somehow make it clear to sinners that Jesus is the only way (Jn. 14:6). Our message must be boldly exclusive. We cannot capitulate to postmodernism in our message. This means we must give the meta-narrative (larger picture of redemption), in addition to the narrative (smaller picture of redemption).¹ For example, it is not good enough to say, “Jesus came to deliver sinners.” We must tell them that this Jesus is the Creator of heaven and earth Himself. We come full circle, then, back to the fact that RE centers upon a clear message of the Gospel. And this message will make it clear that Jesus Christ is the only legitimate sacrifice. One must come to the one true and living God through Him. Salvation does not come through works, other religions, or a mental acknowledgement that a man named Jesus existed. It’s based on a clear, thorough, an accurate presentation of Christ as our substitute.

To declare Christ as Priest is to show a sinner that they have offended a holy God, a God in whose image they were created. And only Jesus, God’s own Son, can restore that image perfectly back within us. He is the only One who can make us what we were created to be from the beginning. As Wells puts it, “What He suffers, the ‘many’ ought to have suffered. His death is a death in their place. In dying He honors the law they defied. The punishment that they deserved falls on Him instead. His pain

¹ D.A. Carson, *The Worldview Clash* (<http://www.facingthechallenge.org/carson.php>). This article is very insightful as to how one ministers the Gospel in a postmodern culture.

is the result of their guilt.”²

Methodology: How Do We Identify with Christ as Priests in Our Evangelism?

We must also imitate Christ as “priests” in evangelism (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). There are two practical ways our identity as “priests” can be demonstrated as it relates to RE. *First, we identify with Christ as priests in our evangelism through living lives of holiness.* Our good works are considered as sacrifices that are well pleasing to God as we come in the name of Christ (Heb. 13:15-16). Paul alludes to this same concept when he encourages believers to offer their whole lives as “living sacrifices” to God (Rom. 12:1). Thus, we call people to repentance and faith in Christ not only by *verbally* telling them to repent from sin and place faith in Christ (*our duty as prophets*), but also by *living out* our repentance from sin and faith in Christ (*our duty as priests*). We show people that we have come to Christ, and that we have taken His yoke upon us with joy (Mt. 11:28-29). We delight in doing the will of God; we delight in obedience (Ps. 1:1-2). In fact, we do not view obedience as burdensome. Instead, we view His yoke as easy and His burden as light” (Mt. 11:30). We evangelize when we show others that we now desire, with our whole being, to obey God’s commands because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:33; Ez. 36:26-27).

Second, we identify with Christ as Priest in our evangelism through prayer. An important function of priests in the Old Testament was prayer. Paul understood the importance of prayer as another means God has established to call the elect to Himself (2 Thess. 3:1-2). There are several things to take note of in Paul’s words. First, if Paul had the gall to ask for prayers, he certainly was a man of

² Wells, 43.

Divine Differences

Submitted by Stacy Meadows

Law

A Dividing Veil (Ex. 26:33)
 Blots out the sinner (Ex. 32:33)
 Curses the offender Gal. 3:10
 Commands: “Do and live” (Deut. 8:1)
 Stops every mouth (Rom. 3:19)
 Favor to the good (Prov. 12:2)
 Graven in stones (2 Cor. 3:3)
 He added no more (Deut. 5:22)
 Judgment (Rom. 5:18)
 Keep all (James 2:10)
 Love demanded (Deut. 6:5)
 Moves the sinner to sin (Rom. 7:8)
 Nearness impossible (Ex. 20:21)
 Obey to earn blessing (Dt. 28:1, 2)
 Prodigal stoned to death (Dt. 21:20, 21)
 Sanctification demanded (Lev. 11:44)
 3,000 slain (Ex 32:28)
 Voice of consternation (Heb. 12:18-21)
 When Moses’ face shown, the people feared
 (Ex. 34:30)
 Glory of righteousness (2 Cor. 3:7)
 Zeal inspired – no salvation (Phil. 3:6)

Grace

A Rent Veil (Heb. 10:19–22)
 Blots out the sin (Col. 2:14)
 Covers the offender (Rom. 4:7)
 Done for the sinner (John 19:30)
 Every mouth opened (Rom. 10:9)
 Favor to the bad (Eph. 1:6-7)
 Graven on the heart (2 Cor. 3:3)
 Hath spoken by His Son (Heb. 1:2)
 Justification (Rom. 3:24)
 Kept (1 Pet. 1:5)
 Love exhibited (John 3:16)
 Moves the sin from the sinner (Mt. 1:21)
 Nearness guaranteed (Eph. 2:13)
 Obey because blessed (1John 4:19)
 Prodigal robed and kissed (Luke 15:22, 23)
 Sanctification provided (1 Cor. 1:30)
 3,000 saved (Acts 2:41)
 Voice of covenant and blessing (Heb. 12:22)
 When Christ’s face shown, the people were attracted
 (Mark 9:15)
 Excelling glory of grace (2 Cor. 3:8-11)
 Zeal imparted because saved (Tit. 2:14)

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The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Heb 7:23-25, ESV

Smith—Continued from page 8

prayer Himself. In fact, many of his other letters bear this out in an abundant way (ex. Col. 1:9 ff.). Second, he asks them to specifically pray that God would protect him so he could continue to preach the Gospel. Third, he is concerned that not all men have faith. All of this means that we should pray for the spreading of the Gospel everywhere. This means we should pray for other ministers of the Gospel, unsaved family members, co-workers, friends, neighbors, etc., and all sinners—particularly the ones we know personally. We, in effect, follow the example of our Great High Priest through our prayers (Jn. 17:1-26). Again, the method of prayer in RE flows from its theology (God is sovereign). Furthermore, just as Christ's prophetic office continues, so too does His priestly office (Heb. 7:25). We must intercede on behalf of sinners who have yet to come to Christ.

DECLARING CHRIST AS KING

Theology: How Do We Declare Christ as King in Our Evangelism?

Due to the fact that there is much overlap between the concepts of Christ as Priest and King (Zech. 6:13),

not much will be said in this final section. However, Christ fulfills the office of king as well, therefore in our evangelism we must present to unbelievers that Christ is presently ruling and reigning supreme as King. In the Old Testament, the king had authority over the nation of Israel. As the "King of kings," Jesus Christ fulfills this role by ruling in two distinct, yet not separate, ways. *First*, theologians speak of his rule over all creation (Is. 40:17; Acts 14:15-17). We can call this His *physical kingdom*. In short, God does "whatever He pleases" (Ps. 115:3) among the nations, and in the individual lives of those that make up the nations. In the words of R.C. Sproul, "There is not one maverick molecule in the entire universe." *Second*, theologians also speak of His rule over the church (Eph. 1:20-22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19). We can call this His *spiritual kingdom*. His spiritual kingdom is composed of those in the invisible church (Rom. 14:17). This is the "kingdom" Christ spoke about in Jn. 18:36—a kingdom not of this world. Though "not of this world," this kingdom is visible in this world in varying degrees. It is real. And one "really" sees it in the life of the church.

The Old Testament foretold Christ as the "King of kings" (Dan. 7:14; Ps. 110:1). He is the Final King. Paul also affirmed that Christ's kingdom was established through His death, burial, resurrection, and glorious ascension (Phil. 2:9-11). And just as Christ's prophetic and priestly roles continue, so does His kingly role. As stated above He will reign forever, His kingdom will never end.

Methodology: How Do We Identify with Christ's kingship in Our Evangelism?

Allow me to mention two ways that we identify with Christ's kingship in our evangelism. *First*, we identify with Christ's kingly rule when we live a life of subjection to Christ our King. This is where our "priestly" role overlaps with our "kingly" role. We do not become kings and queens in Christ's kingdom by seeking places of prominence. Rather, we show unbelievers that Christ is ruling when we serve one another in the church through the power of love (John 13:34-35; Col. 3:14). This relates to our "priestly" role in living lives of holiness. We must show people that we are in His kingdom. We can say that

LETTERS

November 2009

Dear Mrs. Moseley

I last wrote to you to request some back copies to pass to friends. Now I am asking for ten copies of the November 2009 issue all at once sent to me for passing out.

This has been the most helpful issue I can remember for me. I liked all the men's work, but the *Thoughts on Continuity and Discontinuity* was just so very clear and helpful right now. Thank John again and again for getting such a work done. Some of the quotes I recognize because Charles taught them the first time John wrote them! But I was just amazed that the Lord has had John so well prepared to help with this issue using all the years of his study.

Love,

Jackie S

Dear Pastor Reisinger,

May the Lord richly bless you, as you continue your ministry teaching of the depths of the Word of God, in addition to the new-born babes in Christ. We praise God for you!

Enclosed please find a check for the next year for the subscription of Sound of Grace.

God bless you and yours,

In His Grace,

Greg B

we are in His kingdom, but we prove this by adhering to His kingdom injunctions, which is summarized in love for God and love for others (Mt. 22:34-40). Our repentance from sin must be continual, and our faith in Christ must be continual. In effect, this first way relates to Christ's *spiritual kingdom*.

Second, we identify with Christ's kingly rule when we suffer for His glory, and rest comfortably in His sovereign plan for our lives. In other words, we show the reality of a sovereign God when we trust in His providential care for us. This will be an extremely effective way to evangelize the lost. Sinners ought to see that God's grace is sufficient in every area of our lives. Just as a man who finds a treasure in a field, and sells all He has, so too must believers be willing to lose and give all for his greatest treasure—God (Mt. 13:44). John Piper puts it best, "Loss and suffering, joyfully accepted for the kingdom of God, show the supremacy of God's worth more clearly in the world than all worship and prayer."³ Somehow, we must show sinners the value of the Gospel. We must show them that, at the end of the day, Christ is real, and He is our greatest treasure. It would be wrong to view Christ's suffering on the cross as removing all potential suffering in the lives of His elect. To the contrary, Christians often live more difficult lives from a human standpoint. Christ did not suffer to remove all of our suffering. He suffered death for our sake, so that we could have the power to suffer for Him (and others) in this world because of our firm hope. This relates, in essence, to Christ's physical kingdom. Again, Piper says:

The death of Christ for the sin of my selfishness is not meant to help me escape the suffering of love but to enable it. Because He took my guilt and my punishment and reconciled me

to God as my Father, I do not need to cling to the comforts of earth in order to be content. I am free to let things go for the sake of making the supremacy of God's worth known.⁴

Thus, we fulfill our role as "kings" by being good managers of our own holiness, and by demonstrating joy in every circumstance of our lives. By doing this we show forth the reality of Christ's Kingly rule. We do not do this as those who have no hope. Rather, we do this to prove to others the reality of our hope. We show that Christ is real by the manner in which we conduct ourselves as His representatives—citizens of His glorious kingdom.

CONCLUSION

Declaring Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King is the essence of RE. We do this by becoming "prophets," and thus speaking forth the truth. We fulfill this by becoming "priests" and genuinely caring for others as a priest would. And we also do this by recognizing His kingship in a manner that leaves the world in awe of a sovereign God. As you can see, RE involves the whole person and the whole church proclaiming the whole message about Christ. It is comprehensively declaring Him as Prophet, Priest and King as we ourselves imitate His offices to a lost and dying world. May we prayerfully and persistently shout the Gospel forth in both word and deed so that the nations will be glad. May the beat of our heart be the spirit of Psalm 67:3-4,

*Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy;
For You will judge the peoples with uprightness
And guide the nations on the earth.
Selah. (NASB, Updated Edition) Ω*

³ Piper, 71.

⁴ Piper, 77.

Merry Christmas 2009

Dear John and your wonderful Mate,

. . . Thou shalt call His Name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." and ". . . Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matt. 1:21, 23)

Few acknowledge that God was with us for 33+ years. I like what Gary Shepard noted—it makes me want to search God's Word even more:

What man does cannot change what God has done.

What man thinks cannot change what God has said.

What man determines cannot change what God has decreed.

What man wills cannot change what God has wrought.

The Lord of hosts hath purposed; and who shall disannul it? (Isa. 14:27)

I pray you will have a wonderful Christmas season—contemplating all He is and does for us—all year!

Blessings

Adeline K

Do you think that you deserve forgiveness? If you do, you are not a Christian.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Reisinger—Continued from page 4

covenant of works and could never meet its terms. Christ lived and died under the old covenant. He endured every curse that covenant threatened and earned every blessing it promised. He fulfilled it and then established the New Covenant based on his holy life and his sacrificial death. Our Lord now ministers off of this new and better covenant. The New Covenant is based on sovereign grace alone.

In 2 Corinthians 3:7, Paul sets forth four significant points about the ministry of the Old Covenant. (1) It brought death, (2) it was engraved on stone tablets, (3) it came with glory and (4) the glory was fading.

Now if [1] the ministry that brought death, which was [2] engraved in letters on stone, [3] came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its [4] glory, fading though it was.... (2 Cor 3:7, NIV, numbers added)

It would have been a shock for a Jew who did not believe that Jesus was Messiah to hear Paul's statement that the Old Covenant brings death. Such a Jew believed that the law was the source of life. To say that the holy

law of God brought both condemnation (v.9) and death (v. 7) would have been to utter blasphemy and to deserve being stoned to death. Many Jews, in spite of their nation's wicked history and their own personal sins, believed that they were acceptable to God by virtue of their birth into God's chosen nation. These Jews confused the blessing of being given the law covenant with the blessings that were to result from actually obeying its terms (see Deut. 4:1-13 and Romans 2:17-29). This confusion led some Jews to believe that God loved them *just because they were Jews*, regardless of how they lived. These Jews would have hated any inference that the *all* of "all have sinned" included Jews (Rom. 3:9). To lump Jews in with Gentiles and declare, "there is none righteous, no not one," was a message that these Jews would have passionately disputed.

The second descriptive statement of the Old Covenant is that it was *engraved on stone*. This can be referring only to the Ten Commandments engraved on stone tablets (Exod. 34:27-29; Deut. 9:9-11). In Deuteronomy 4:13, Moses specifically calls the Ten Commandments, "the covenant."

And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. (KJV)

Notice the KJV adds the word *even* for emphasis. The Ten Commandments, or the words of the covenant, are the summary document of the Old Covenant. The Book of the Covenant will be added (Exod. 24:8) and finally the entire Mosaic administration, including the feasts (2 Kings 23:21), will be considered part of the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant is the Mosaic law in its entirety. Covenant Theology rejects the idea of the Ten Commandments as a covenant document. They believe that the Ten Commandments are trans-covenantal and thus cannot have an historical end. If Covenant Theology were to admit that the Ten Commandments were a covenant document, then they would also have to admit that the commandments, as a unit and a covenant document, have a historical beginning, when the covenant begins at Sinai, and a historical end, when the covenant ends at the death and resurrection of Christ. This admission would be contrary to the systematic theology of Covenant Theology. With-

LETTERS

11/24/09

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to be put on your subscription list to receive *Sound of Grace*. I was given a copy and was enlightened by the words written to get a better understanding of the life I should live for God and his son Jesus.

Enclosed is a check for a subscription.

Thanks you,

Karen O

12/31/09

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your continuing service to our Lord Jesus and His people in your efforts to promote the biblical emphasis on the priority of the New

Covenant for the Church; the New Testament people of God.

Yours in Christ,

Mike and Patti R

12/31/09

Dear Friends

Please renew my subscription for another year and accept my gift to aid the ministry of *Sound of Grace*. The books and the DVDs of John's teaching have been such a blessing. You will be in my prayers as we begin another year.

Yours in Christ,

David M

in the scheme of Covenant Theology, everything else in the Old Covenant ended because it was fulfilled, but the Ten Commandments, “commonly called the moral law,” are excised out of the Old Covenant and become trans-covenantal.

Covenant Theology wants the Old Covenant to be done away with (because Scripture clearly states that this is the case), but wants the Ten Commandments, now described as “the law of the covenant,” to remain in force as the “unchanging moral law of God.” In other words, the “Old Covenant” ends, but “the law (meaning the Ten Commandments) of the covenant” remains and is brought into the New Covenant, becoming “the law of the New Covenant.” This is double talk. The Ten Commandments are not the “law of the Old Covenant,” the Ten Commandments are the *covenant terms* written on the tables of the covenant. The Ten Commandments are not the “**law**” of the old covenant, they ARE the Old Covenant! To say the Old Covenant is done away but the Ten Commandments still carry the same authority today as they did when given at Sinai is like saying, “the Old Covenant is done away, but the words of the covenant written on the stone tables of the covenant are still in effect.” You cannot separate the Ten Commandments from the Old Covenant. They are the core document of the Old Covenant that was done way in Christ.¹ Furthermore, Covenant Theology’s view posits an entity entitled the eternal, unchanging moral law of God as the foundation of both the Old and New Covenants. This means that both covenants (or administrations, in Covenant Theology terms) have the same law and are

¹ For a defense of the view that the Ten Commandments are the law of the Old Covenant, and a response, see pages 140-153 of *In Defense of Jesus, the New Lawgiver*; by John G. Reisinger, Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media (2008).

founded on the same thing, a position denied by the author of Hebrews who states that the New Covenant change of priesthood necessities a change of law (Heb. 7:12) and that the New Covenant is founded on better promises than is the Old (Heb.8:6).

Paul’s third description of the Old Covenant is that *it came with glory*. Paul views both covenants as glorious revelations of God. However, his point in comparing them is to show the greater degree of glory in the New Covenant. His referent is Exodus 34:27-35. One of the primary reasons that the New Covenant is more glorious is that it is permanent whereas the Old Covenant was temporary. The author of Hebrews calls the New Covenant “the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20). The Old Covenant ended when Christ fulfilled it. The New Covenant will never end, because it provides everything a sinner needs for both time and eternity. Just as there will never be another Day of Atonement, so there will never be another covenant that replaces or in any way changes this everlasting covenant.

I think Paul also wants to emphasize that although the Old Covenant was inferior and had to be replaced, it still was a good, holy, and just covenant given by God. It served a necessary function in God’s purposes of redemption. God designed it to be a ministry of condemnation and death, and when that purpose was accomplished, its ministry was ended. The law covenant took us into the grave, but could not get us out. Notice again in verse 8 the phrase “the ministry of the Spirit.” That cannot possibly mean “the ministry of the spirit of the law.”

In verses 8-10, Paul gladly admits the giving of law covenant was accompanied with a display of God’s glory. However, when that glory is compared with “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” in the New Covenant (2 Cor. 4:6), it is as if the old had no glory at all. One may find

a candle very useful in the dark of night, but when the full brightness of the sun begins to shine, the candle appears to be without any light. John says, “The law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). John cannot possibly mean there was neither grace nor truth in the Hebrew Scriptures. Noah “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” and the Scriptures written before Christ came are just as true as are those written after he came. Like Paul, John is making a comparison. When we compare the revelation of the grace of God made known through Christ with the revelation of grace made before Christ, it is as if there were no grace before Christ came. Notice how Paul structures his argument:

If the ministry that brings death is glorious

will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

If the ministry that condemns men is glorious,

how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.

The New Covenant is glorious, not only because it is permanent, but also because it **brings righteousness** (v. 9). The New Covenant robes human beings in spotless robes that make them perfectly acceptable to stand in God’s presence without fear—“robed in righteousness not my own, faultless I stand before the throne.” All that the Old Covenant could produce was guilt and condemnation. The New Covenant produces righteousness and justification. Paul delights to extol this aspect of the gospel. Romans 1:17 is an amazing statement. Paul gives his reason for being so proud and confident of the gospel, “for therein (*i.e. in the gospel*) is the righteousness of

McMillin—Continued from page 3

Naaman in Samaria and this young girl was to be the catalyst to set the events in motion.

This was not just any girl. There were thousands of girls in Samaria. Do not forget that Jehoram was King in the place of Ahab his father and walked in all his father's sins and idolatrous practices and Israel followed him. God must get a band, a company, to a home where parents had taught the little girl about Elisha, God's great prophet, and yes, of Elisha's great God.

This band must go to a certain home where God was known and carry off a little maiden who knew God!

Think of the parents; deprived of their child, fearing for her welfare among heathen people, not knowing where she was or what had happened. If ever such times come, we must remember that the band came to our home to take our child because our God sent them. Faith? How much do we have? We know from history that the men of these bands hoped for riches and beautiful women for concubines when they went on raids. Judges 5:28-30 tells of such a raid: "The mother of Sisera looked through the window, and cried out through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?' Her wisest ladies answered her, yes, she answered herself, are they not finding and dividing the spoil: to every man a girl or two; for

Sisera, plunder of dyed garments, plunder of garments embroidered and dyed, two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?" (NKJV)

I think these men of Naaman's army brought back little. God sent them for one purpose, to bring this young girl to Naaman's house. I think they got little on their raid and a lot of sympathy when they got back. Probably men said, "Where did you raid? We don't want to go there!"

But they did bring back the one thing God sent them for; a certain maiden who knew the God of Israel.

"She waited on ..." The center reference in some Bibles translate it as, "was before or stood before." Remember this.

Now if we believed in blind fate, we could suppose this girl became a servant to Naaman's wife by chance. Could not she have wound up in a thousand other houses or as a child bride, as so often happened then? The answer of course is "No." God had a certain company go to a certain place, bring a certain girl to a certain home, for a certain purpose. She was to get Naaman started down the road to meet the Lord his God!

Think of the parents at home worrying. But God is gracious. He brought their child to the home of an honorable man, the husband of one wife and she became that great woman's personal chamber servant, not a garden maid or kitchen maid or a chambermaid. She became the personal servant of the second lady of

the land. Where did Joseph's affliction take him? It took him to a prison cell, from which he would come forth second leader in all of Egypt. This little maid stood before Naaman's wife. She was the favorite. She slept beside her bed, ate the same food, had her ear at all times. No one dared touch this little maid. Only if born to Naaman could she have been more at home. Naaman's wife was practically her mother!

"Then she said ..." If she had been a kitchen maid, how soon would she have spoken in the ear of Naaman? Not soon, I suppose.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid Him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36, NKJV)

When God made the nations of the earth, He determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings. (Acts 17:26)

When He divided the earth for the sons of Adam, He set the people's boundaries. He did it according to the numbers of the children of Israel. (Deuteronomy 32:8)

When God would deliver his people from wicked Haman, he would put Mordecai at the king's gate and Esther

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We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. (2 Cor. 3:18)

would wear a crown. (cf. Esther)

If God would build a nation in Egypt, He would take Joseph from the hand of death and give him a King's authority. (cf. Genesis 37-50)

I pray we will learn in this study to note, meditate on, take courage in and hope all our life long in the eternal decrees of the God who measures out the rains and determines the fall of the leaf.

Everything in time and eternity is fixed in the will of the God whom the little girl in our study knew. Israel's king might tear his robes in despair, but the girl would send the leper to the prophet of her God; great was her faith.

I write and speak by the appointment of God. As Psalm 121:8 states and I paraphrase: 'The Lord preserves my going out and my coming in from this time forth and even forever more.' My times and my days are in his hand.

Our little messenger came to help poor Naaman because God sent her. He may send out bands of Syrians to pillage and to destroy, but one of those bands will go to a certain tribe in Israel, to a certain city, to a certain household to take a single captive, a young girl of great faith.

One might ask me how I know she was great in faith. I know she was humble, kind and had a godly spirit and I know it because of two words

in verse 3: "If only." She might have hated her master because of her servitude, because she was carried away from home and parents to a strange land. Some would have wished for the leprosy to grow worse, to disfigure more, cause banishment and death. But when she looked on Naaman she pitied him, wished for his healing. She knew that though Naaman feared neither a nation nor their armies, that he feared this disease. He knew its loathsome nature, the banishment from society that would come, the shame of the living death and the horrible end of the leper. She knew these things and she cared.

She knew where help could be found. She knew of the land where God revealed himself, knew of the great prophet whom God used to bring miracles and she knew of the mercy of God. She looked on her master, the slaver who held her captive, and she loved him. Her words tell us that; "...if only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."

This little girl teaches us of grace and faith. There was no pride in her message, just a simple telling out of where the God who heals and the prophet through whom He worked could be found. There was no self in the message, no pride, just a simple directive. If only he was where God's prophet works in Samaria. He would heal him.

We too are born with a deadly dis-

ease, for we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity. Just as Naaman will find that healing cannot be bought from the hand of God's prophet, we must come to see that we cannot barter with God. His salvation comes to us in free grant from God's prophet, the Anointed of God. Neither silver nor gold can purchase our redemption, for we are heirs to a blood-bought redemption.

The little maid revealed that her master needed healing, revealed who could help him and told where the prophet was. Truth always reveals the helpless, the helper and where help can be found. She said:

1. My master is the leper.
2. The prophet of God heals.
3. He is in Samaria.

The gospel message is just as direct.

1. You are the sinner.
2. God's great prophet heals.
3. You will find him at the cross.

We proclaim the most straight forward of messages. It is in the simplicity of the thing preached by which God has determined to save souls. The jailer springs in alarmed and cries, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer is so simple. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Christ is that prophet! Let the thirsty come and take of the water of life freely. Ω

Jesus is hungry but feeds others;
He grows weary but offers others rest;
He is the King Messiah but pays tribute;
He is called the devil but casts out demons;
He dies the death of a sinner but comes to save His people from their sins;
He is sold for thirty pieces of silver but gives His life a ransom for many;
He will not turn stones to bread for Himself but gives His own body as bread for people.

D.A. Carson

Reisinger—Continued from page 15

God is revealed". After reading the Gospels, we might expect Paul to write, "the love of God is revealed in the gospel." The gospel certainly reveals the amazing love of God, but Paul's concern in Romans is with the vindication of the character of God. The gospel makes it possible for God to be both just and the justifier of the ungodly. We must always remember that Christ is first offered to God as a sacrifice before he is offered to sinners as Savior.

The consciences of sinners can never be satisfied until they are sure God is satisfied with them. They must believe that his just anger is turned away and they are robed in a coat of perfect righteousness. At Calvary's cross, our Lord picked up all of the "I owe you" notes recorded on thousands of Days of Atonement. The shed blood of millions of lambs and goats could not pay for one sin. It took the blood of the Son of God to satisfy a holy God and open up the "new and living way" into the Most Holy Place.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. (Heb. 10:19-23, NIV)

What a glorious invitation! The King of Kings invites us into his presence twenty-four hours of any and every day. Even godly Aaron had no such invitation. When we come into his presence, we are not filled with fear nor do we wonder if he will turn us away. We come "boldly to a throne of grace" and we come with needy petitions believing that this great King is both able and willing to grant them. The hymn writer caught it beautifully.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in Thy great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

The holy, meek, unspotted Lamb,
Who from the Father's bosom came,
Who died for me, e'en me to atone,
Now for my Lord and God I own.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which, at the mercy seat of God,
Forever doth for sinners plead,
For me, e'en for my soul, was shed.

When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
Ev'n then this shall be all my plea,
Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

This spotless robe the same appears,
When ruined nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new.

Jesus, the endless praise to Thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me—
For me a full atonement made,
An everlasting ransom paid.

O let the dead now hear Thy voice;
Now bid Thy banished ones rejoice;
Their beauty this, their glorious dress,
Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness.²

New Covenant ministry, which brings life, surpasses Old Covenant ministry, which brings death, on three counts: It is founded on better promises (that is, it is grounded in the power of Messiah's indestructible life); it brings guilty sinners into God's presence; and it comes with an everlasting glory. In our next article, we will look further at the concept of glory, especially the fading glory on Moses' face (2 Cor. 3:7). The significance of this is often overlooked or misunderstood. Ω

² Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, 1739.

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Jack Jeffery will speak on “**Seeing the New Testament through New Covenant eyes: Two Test Texts – The Point of the Parentheses in Romans 2:13-15 and 1 Corinthians 9:21**”.

Blake White will have two messages on “**The Law of Christ.**” This text is thrown around without being carefully defined. This is an exceedingly important subject for new covenant people.

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Scripture says, “Iron Sharpens Iron” (Prov. 27:17). This year’s schedule looks like there will be some big grindstones at work on some long knives.

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