

The Sign Of The Covenant Part 1: Signs and Faith

By Peter Martin
August 4, 2024

“Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.” And he said, “Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?”
-Genesis 15:5-8

In the last paper, we talked about the covenant that God established with Abram in Genesis 15 and looked at the reality that it was actually this covenant that is built on faith and not covenant of law that God made with Moses and the nation of Israel that Jesus came to fulfill. We as believers in Jesus are not bound to the laws and ordinances of the Mosaic Law, but instead we are established in our relationship with God based on His faithfulness towards us and our trust in Him. This gives us the right, just as Abraham before us, to be declared “righteous” (justified, or guiltless) before a just and holy God by faith and not by our works. We then express our faithfulness towards God by pursuing holiness in Him.

However, even after Abram enters into his covenant with God, and is promised a lineage that will possess the land of Canaan, he asks God to give him a sign of the covenant that he might be confident in the promise of God. This request might seem odd to us, since Abram’s faith was already commended by God, “and he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” Even so, God condescends to Abram’s request and by doing so He helps us understand the purpose of signs and seals for covenants, both in our relationship with Christ as well as our relationships with one another.

A Wicked And Adulterous Generation

“Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’ “and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. “A wicked and adulterous

generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” And He left them and departed.”

-Matthew 16:1-4

Before we talk about how and why God answered Abram the way that He did in Genesis 15, we first have to talk about the heart behind asking God for a sign. The above passage might seem to contradict God’s response to Abram in the Old Testament, since here Jesus is also asked for a sign, and instead of giving the Pharisees and Sadducees one, He instead rebukes them. This is also not an isolated incident in the Scriptures. Jesus rebukes the lack of faith in people (Luke 8:25), He refuses to perform miracles in His hometown due to their lack of faith (Mark 6:4-13), and in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, Abraham refuses the rich man’s request to have Lazarus rise from the dead in order to warn his wayward brothers by saying:

“They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.”

-Luke 16:29-31

I believe this last example actually explains this mystery for us. In the above passage, the men in question weren’t denied all signs, merely superfluous signs. Looking again at Jesus’ statement, He also acknowledges this same truth when He talks about the signs of the weather:

He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’ “and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

-Matthew 16:2-3

Jesus’ rebuke of these men was not that they asked for a sign, but instead that they were unfaithful to the signs that they had already been given. If someone is given over to doubt, it isn’t that they can’t believe, it is instead that they won’t believe. For such a person, no amount of signs would actually be sufficient to convince them of the truth. For the Christian, faith is not believing blindly in what we should, it is instead the correctly proportioned response to the evidence that we have been provided. The reason why Jesus called the Pharisees and the Sadducees a “wicked and adulterous generation” is because they had already received enough information to believe in Jesus. It is this reality that reveals for us two important, often misunderstood, truths

about faith. First, it reveals that unbelief is not the result of a lack of information, and the second is that having faith does not mean that you will be free from all doubt.

The Hard Heart

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

-2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

There is an interesting lie that we tell ourselves in the modern west, and that is that we are rational people led by our profound desire for truth above all else. The fact of the matter is that we are not primarily motivated by truth, but desire. And, since our desires tend to run contrary to truth and goodness, it is far easier for us to believe something that is untrue, rather than change our convictions or our lifestyles. To put it another way, the natural man is not convinced primarily by what is shown to be true, but instead what we want to be true.

It is because of this, that throughout the Scriptures we are shown people who are exposed to incredible miracles, and yet respond in baffling ways. One prime example of this, is Pharaoh in the book of Exodus:

“And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.”

-Exodus 9:34-35

Pharaoh is exposed to incredible miracles in the form of the ten plagues of Egypt. But, even though each of these plagues is more incredible than the last, and Pharaoh has to literally beg Moses to pray for God to rescind each plague, the hardness of his heart increases with each passing miracle. And in order for him to maintain his disbelief in God, he slips into an increasingly unhinged personality, towards the end of the story he has clearly slipped into madness. The more obvious a reality is, the more that you have to deny reality in order to avoid the truth. But, in order to deny reality, you have to deny the basis of sanity itself.

For this reason, out of a sort of mercy, God allows for man to plausibly deny Him by limiting signs and wonders and by sending *“strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.”* Many today think this is cruel of God. We think that if God were to pour out miracles

in our nation, then many would come to Him in fear and trembling. But the Scriptures teach us a different lesson. The truth of the gospel is shown to man in nature and the Scriptures, if someone is unwilling to hear the speech of God in the revelations that God has already given to them, then they would also be blind to a miraculous sign. If God were to give miracles to our nation, in the way that He gave miracles to ancient Egypt or Israel, they would not convert, but instead be driven to madness in order to avoid the obvious truth of God.

There is an even stranger instance in the Bible that shows us this reality from a different angle. In the book of Isaiah, God offers a sign to the king of Israel to assure Him of God's protection, but the king refuses:

“Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!” Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

-Isaiah 7:10-14

The king's response is wrapped in pious language, but the reality of his heart is revealed to us by God. It wasn't his reverence for God that made him deny a sign, but instead his hard heart. He had already made up his mind on what he wanted to do, and he was actually afraid that a sign from God might cause him to question his convictions. So, in order to protect his delusion, he actually refuses a sign from God. This king is animated by the same spirit of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. As the spiritual leaders of Israel, they already had their mind made up of what kind of Messiah they were expecting, and Jesus didn't fit the mold they had made for Him. Instead of repenting of their vain imagination, they instead sought to kill the Son of God so that they could hold fast to their delusions.

If we think that this reality doesn't apply to us, then we are not keen observers of our own souls.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.”

-Jeremiah 17:9-10

Verses like this used to terrify me. As someone who has always had an overinflated view of my own intelligence, I tend to believe innately that I know better than everyone else. This arrogance causes me to be skeptical of others, but trust emphatically in my own intuition. But passages like this reveal the truth of my own hard heart, and my tendency to deceive myself with convenient illusions. It is only by finding the joys of humility and recognizing this tendency that I can open myself to rebuke and correct my thoughts. This context is one of the ways to understand Jesus statement in the gospels:

...“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. “Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

-Matthew 18:3-4

When we come to Christ, we must come in humility. We have to be willing to reject our convictions and our preconceived notions. We have to acknowledge our propensity to be deceived and led astray by our lustful desires. It is only in this childlike humility, this willing submission to God's correction that we have hope of gaining true wisdom and understanding. This doesn't mean that the Christian is immune to the temptation of self-deception, but it does mean that if we strive to maintain this humility in our hearts, we can fight the tendencies of our own hard hearts. Those who don't learn to do this are incapable of being convinced of the truth, even if someone rose from the dead to tell them their error, they would sooner try to kill that person again than change their minds.

Faith and Doubt

“Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

-Mark 9:23-24

The other mistake we can make is thinking that true faith will be devoid of doubt. But the above passage describes the reality that even the most faithful wrestle with. All faith, no matter how sincere, will be challenged by internal doubts. Though we might perceive this man's answer as a lack of faith, this is actually the true and honest confession of faith. Even though he is wrestling with doubts, he is committed to trusting in Jesus and submitting himself to Him. This is why, even with his doubts, he boldly speaks to Jesus and even asks for help in dealing with his unbelief.

If we don't understand this though, we will give in to toxic positivity. This is where we refuse to acknowledge any negative thoughts, including doubts, because we want so desperately to be free from struggles and doubts. But this too is an example of

self-deception. Someone who does this is not dealing with the reality of their own heart. They think that they can will themselves into a more positive outlook by merely declaring it to be so. This is, unfortunately, not how God has designed us.

“Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.”

-Psalm 51:6

God designed us to be able to recognize and learn wisdom, but in order to grow in our understanding of reality, we must begin with honesty not deception. It may have sounded more pious for Abram to pretend that his faith was absolute and that he needed no sign in order to move forward in his covenant with God, but this wouldn't have been the truth. It was in his honest confession of overall trust in God's character, but with lingering doubts, that he desired a sign from God in order to calm his fears with a demonstration of faithfulness. Without this honesty, the fears of Abram would not have gotten better, but worse.

“When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah”

-Psalm 32:3-5

King David expressed this reality in the above passage. We're not really sure what life experience David was going through when he wrote this Psalm, (many believe it was his failure with Bathsheba) but regardless of what it was, David tried to find internal peace by lying to himself. Instead of confessing his sin, instead of acknowledging his actions and his internal emotions, he “hid” them from God. However, this didn't make him better but worse. His attempts to hide things from God only made him more insecure and anxious. The resulting pressure began to steal away his vitality and depress him.

As a counselor I see this phenomenon all the time. Christians feel uncomfortable admitting to feelings of doubt, worry, wrath, despair, and many other things. Because they feel deep shame, they harbor their emotions within themselves and hope that if they fake it sincerely enough, the reality they desire will manifest itself. Unfortunately, this is not the reality they experience. Instead, the deep emotions that they are struggling with go underground and start driving their behavior subconsciously. On top of this, all that effort of suppression begins to dry up their vitality, much like David and they experience depression on top of their pent up emotional reality.

However, this does not validate the modern conception of “my truth”. In our modern culture, the problem is less suppression of bad emotions, but instead a tendency to over-share, and even feed negative emotions in an attempt to be authentic.

*“A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.”
-Proverbs 29:11*

As always, the great difficulty of Christianity is finding the balance between two extremes. Holding back our emotions results in toxic positivity, but venting our emotions leads to an increase of negative emotions and it also tends to increase self-centeredness and alienate you from support and compassion. When you vent emotions, it has the effect of temporarily relieving pent up aggression, but it also “feeds” the emotion and gives it more power over time. As an example, if I am angry at my wife and I go and vent my frustrations to a friend, in the moment I will feel relief, but my overall frustration with my wife and my marriage have increased. If I do this enough, over time my anger will be overwhelming, and those around me who want to support me will be driven away by my cynical attitude and constant venting. So what is the balance?

Sowing Emotions

*“Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping,
Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his
sheaves with him.”
-Psalm 126:5-6*

The key is not to suppress your emotions, nor to vent them, but instead to “sow” them. Just as a farmer does not resent the seed, but instead desires for it to grow it into something else, the heart of the believer should be to express our honest emotions in order to develop our souls in the goodness of God. This is why Abram receives an answer for God in his doubts. His heart was not to “vent” his doubts, but instead to “sow” them with an earnest expectation that his doubts could be relieved and his faith might take root and strengthen in his ongoing relationship with God.

This type of “sowing” is seen throughout the Scriptures. In various Psalms you see men expressing despair, (Psalm 42, 88) anxiety, (Psalm 27) wrath, (Psalm 58) and every other emotion. God, in His mercy, has preserved these expressions in order to bring comfort and instruction to His people in that we might express the same sentiments before the throne of grace and experience the same growth, correction, and comfort of those faithful believers that came before us.

The Mediators of The Covenant

*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

-Isaiah 55:8-9

But all of this begs the question, how is it that God, in all His perfection, can sympathize with the weakness of His people? In order for genuine sympathy to occur, there has to be commonality of experience. Without this commonality, there won't be sympathy, but judgment. So for instance, in 1973, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote a damning expose of the Soviet terror in his book “The Gulag Archipelago”. In it, he describes how much of the Soviet atrocities were justified in the consciences of the Russians by the failure of the imprisoned Russians to speak out, and by the false confessions that they made.

Since all of this terror could have been stopped, if even a small percentage of these people would have refused to make false confessions and spoke out publicly against the false convictions, it would be easy for one who has never experienced torture to condemn without mercy the cowardice of these men and women. Anticipating this, Solzhenitsyn spends the first few chapters of his book describing, in graphic detail, the kind of tortures and intimidation that these people experienced. By giving these details, those who have not experienced torture like this can sympathize with those who have. So while we can't justify these people in their complicity, we can sympathize in their weakness and offer them grace.

But this sympathy comes from our own weakness. Though many of us have not experienced torture, we have experienced compromising our values due to the weakness of our convictions and external pressure. This gives us enough “understanding” to be able to be gracious to those who have experienced far greater than we have. God on the other hand, in His perfect nature and essence, does not have this common experience with weakness, so how can He sympathize with the weakness of men? In the Old Covenant, God got around this problem through the mediation of human priests.

Priest, Prophet, and King

“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” And he gave him a tithe of all.”

-Genesis 14:18-20

We will explore more of the identity of this man Mechizedek in a bit here, but for now, let's focus on this concept of priestly mediation. Ancient man used to conceptualize religion as being a type of agreement or bargain that mankind had with the gods. The agreement was usually something of a power bargain in which a tribe or people group would serve and worship a god, or pantheon of gods, and in exchange for their worship, they would receive power and prosperity. However, because the gods were powerful and selfish, there needed to be a class of people called the priests who administered rituals between the people and the gods and then delivered to them gifts, usually in the form of healings, rain, and posterity.

In the covenant that God made with the nation of Israel through Moses, they received a similar class of priests that would mediate the covenant between them and God. But, this was not God's original intent. After the people are brought out of Egypt, God meets with them at Mount Sinai and communicates the ten commandments to them directly, but upon hearing the voice of God the people cry out:

"Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was."

-Exodus 20:19-21

Due to the holiness of God, the people cry out for a mediator to stand between them and God, Moses is then brought near to the Lord and takes on this role. Later on, the role that Moses solely inhabited is divided between three different castes of people, the king, the priest, and the prophet. The king was there to mediate the law of God, the priest mediated the rituals of God, and the prophet mediated the word of God. Each class was there to manifest a portion of God's glory to the people, without anyone coming in direct contact with the holiness of God. At the same time, these men were able to represent the nation to God Himself. The benefits of this system are laid out by the writer of Hebrews:

"For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins."

-Hebrews 5:1-3

Because the mediators of the covenant were men, they could minister to the people, while sharing in their weaknesses. This gave them sympathy and compassion for the people in their frailty and spurred them on to intercede for the people and passionately pursue holiness in God for the sake of the people. This is why, whenever the people of God fail, God threatens to wipe them out, but is “stopped” by the intercession of one of these mediating classes.

This strikes us as odd today because it seems as though God is violent and in constant need of being talked down. But it's actually because God's holiness can't sympathize with the weakness of men that He reacts to sin with perfect justice. There needed to be these mediating classes who spoke for the people in sympathetic weakness. However, this covenant was not a permanent solution, it was mainly meant to prepare the conscience of the people of God for the fulfillment of the law in Christ. While it accomplished this goal, in many ways, this covenant was an inferior version of the covenant that God made with Abram.

Melchizedek

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”

-Hebrews 7:1-3

The writer of Hebrews shows us that Jesus is not directly prefigured in the Levitical priesthood under the covenant of Moses, but instead in the figure of Melchizedek. While the Mosaic system was good in that it catered to the weaknesses of men, it could not bring man into direct contact with God. However, in Abram's covenant, instead of having a class of priests mediating the covenant, he has direct contact with God. The reason why he is able to do this, is because of this strange figure Melchizedek to whom he pays a tithe of the spoils of war.

Unlike the Levitical priests, the figure of Melchizedek is a priest, a king, and he functions as a prophet when he delivers a revelation of God to Abram. Beyond that he does not have a genealogy listed for us, making him *symbolically* immortal. When you put all these pieces together, though he doesn't seem to be literally Jesus, he is a *type* of Messiah that Jesus came to fulfill.

Our Great High Priest

“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren...”

Hebrews 2:10-11

In Jesus all the types of the Law are satisfied and we are brought back to the form of Abram's covenant, but a much superior version. In His divinity, He can perfectly represent God's holy character to us:

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.”

John 1:17-18

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

-Hebrews 1:1-4

But also, since He was fully man, He can sympathize with our weakness, and therefore intercede for His people in a superior way than even the priests of old.

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

-Hebrews 4:14-16

While the Old Testament priests could sympathize with our weaknesses before God, they were also subject to sin and death. This prevented them from being able to fulfill the law of God, or to actually purify those who drew near to God, since they themselves were filled with sin and corruption. But Jesus, in His perfection, was able to offer up His

own body for us to His Father. Giving His people perfect sanctification and access to the Father. It is this ministry that we see foreshadowed in this beautiful covenant of Abram:

“And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—”

-Genesis 15:17-18

In the story, Abram sets up a sacrament, or a sign of the covenant, in order to enter into a covenant with God, we will talk more about this sacrament in the next paper. Even though God had already made a vow to Abram, He was willing to condescend to Abram and bring him assurance through a ritual that Abram understood. Abram severed animals in half and created an aisle for him and God to walk through, as a sign that they would be faithful to their vows to one another under threat of death. In the ancient world, this type of ceremony was common, however what was uncommon was a monarch or ruler actually binding themselves to a vow under threat of death.

In most ancient contexts, the elements would be laid out, and the one without power would bind themselves to the vow through a demonstration like this, but the monarch would simply give his word. It was an astounding act of grace that God was willing to condescend to Abram and make this gesture of faithfulness to him, it is even more astounding that God alone, in the form of a burning torch, passed through the pieces of the animals and bound Himself to Abram without ever asking Abram to do the same. By doing this, God was showing His unconditional faithfulness to Abram in a way that He did not ask, nor expect, Abram to reciprocate.

As amazing as this action was for Abram, in the new covenant, we know that God went even further than this. By passing through the animals, God revealed that He would keep His word to Abram no matter what, and was even willing to demonstrate His faithfulness in a ritual. However, in the New Covenant, we know that even this amazing gesture was not enough. For even if God keeps the totality of His word, man is still incapable of keeping our word. We didn't just need perfect faithfulness from God, we needed a mediator who could both sacrifice Himself for our failure, as well as perfectly fulfill our necessary vows towards God. Jesus fulfills this picture in His earthly ministry.

“...by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to

make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.”

-Hebrews 7:22-28

It is upon this divine faithfulness that we draw near to God in a pure conscience. We have been forgiven by the sacrifice of Jesus and we rejoice in His heavenly ministry to us that He continues to intercede on our behalf that we are forgiven not merely for the sins of the past, but the sins of the present. This reality has a powerful effect on the confidence of the Christian if we are willing to meditate on it. Just as a couple can recall the vows of their marriage to give them certainty, even in hardships, so a Christian can, and should, meditate on the cross of Christ in order to maintain confidence in our doubt. The beauty of God is that He knows that we will struggle with doubts, but it is in His dramatic acts of faithfulness that we can have our doubts answered and experience confidence and assuredness in Him.

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

-Romans 5:6-11