

SECTION 6: THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SON

He is not here; he is risen.

Luke 24:6

The Preeminent Multitasker

I doubt that God has ever done only one thing at a time. His wisdom is so great that whenever He does anything, many things are being accomplished. God is the preeminent multitasker. Especially is this true as regards the work He accomplished in His Son. So many things were accomplished when God accepted the Son's sacrifice and glorified him to sit at His right hand that it is impossible to list them all. Below are just some of the results of God's glorification of His Son.

"You Gave Them to Me"

Before God accepted the Son's offering of himself as a sacrifice for sin, Israel prayed to no one but God, but from that point on, Israel was required to honor the Son just as they honored God if they wanted to remain in covenant with Him. Jesus told his disciples that "The Father doesn't even judge anyone, but has committed all judgment to the Son, so that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" (Jn. 5:22-23). Jesus referred to this monumental change in the heavenly order when he said in prayer to God, "They were yours, and you gave them to me" (Jn. 17:6).

My father used to compare this change with a business when it is sold. The employees of that company must acknowledge the new management if they hope to retain their positions. If they refuse to acknowledge the new management, they are fired and have no further association with the company. So it was with Israel. They entered into a covenant with God at Mount Sinai, but God told them that one day, He would make a new covenant with them, spiritual in nature instead of carnal, as the first covenant was:

Jeremiah 31

31. Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
32. not the kind of covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, even though I was their Husband, says the LORD.
33. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their heart. And I will be their God, and they will be my people.

God made Jesus the chief executive, so to speak, of that new covenant, and everyone in Israel who acknowledged Jesus as their new boss retained their position as members of what Paul called "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). Those in Israel who did not acknowledge the new management were dismissed from the company and had no more connection with God, even if they claimed they did. In this new order, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me" (Jn. 14:6). That is the way God has set up His new business.

Another name for the new company is "the body of Christ" (Rom. 7:4; 1Cor. 10:16; 12:27; Eph. 4:12), and one is brought into the company by receiving the Spirit of God which Jesus purchased for us

(1Cor. 12:13). That is why Paul taught that “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him” (Rom. 8:9b). Without the Spirit, a person is without God or Christ, for when the Spirit comes, the Father and the Son come with it (cf. Jn. 14:23).

Restructuring Everything

When Paul said that everything in this creation is held together by Christ (Col. 1:17), he really meant all things, not just the universe that we can see. And Peter was just as inclusive in his meaning when he declared to Cornelius and his household that Jesus is “Lord of all” (Acts 10:36). Jesus is Lord of everything and everybody, visible and invisible, good and evil, living and dead, whether in heaven, on earth, or beneath the earth. This is what Jesus was talking about when he said, “All power in heaven and on earth is given to me” (Mt. 28:18).

The glorification of the Son to sit at God’s right hand led to a restructuring of things above the earth in heaven and of things beneath the earth in Sheol, but not of things here on earth. Before Jesus was glorified, good and evil dwelt together everywhere. Wicked spirits mingled with good spirits in heaven; wicked men intermingled with righteous men on earth; and the wicked and the righteous continued to be together in Sheol after they died. When the wicked died, they were carried into the part of Sheol called Torment, separated by an uncrossable chasm from the righteous dead in the part of Sheol called Paradise. They were close enough to see each other and even to converse across that chasm, but they could not cross it (Lk. 16:23–31). However, when Jesus was glorified, he purged heaven of all who were wicked, casting out Satan and his angels forever (Rev. 12:5, 7–9), and beneath the earth, Sheol was purged of all who were righteous, for Jesus transferred Paradise into heaven, where he is (Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8). But *on* the earth, nothing like that took place. This world is still a place where good and evil exist together.

By purging heaven of all evil, Jesus made it a fit place for the righteous when they die, and by purging Sheol of all good, he made it a fit place for the wicked when they die. Before those changes were made, God loved His dead saints too much to bring them up to heaven, for great evil was there, and they had struggled enough against sin already. Instead, God kept them safe in Paradise, in the heart of the earth, within sight of the wicked but safe from them and the tormenting flames.

The Son not only arranged but also maintains the present state of things in creation. By the will of God, the Son, the living Word of God, created these heavens and this earth, “and by the same Word, the heavens and the earth which exist now are being kept in store, reserved for fire until the Day of Judgment and the damnation of ungodly men” (2Pet. 3:7). Jesus changed many things after he ascended into heaven, but he is not finished. He is preserving this present creation until the time appointed for him to make an even greater change. In God’s appointed time, the Son will provide God’s people with an entirely new earth, where nothing but righteousness dwells (2Pet. 3:13). The first time the Son came, he set things aright everywhere except here, where we live. When he returns, he will reign over this wicked world for a thousand years and then set things aright everywhere. For now, however, the righteous must continue in a world that “lies in wickedness” (1Jn. 5:19). That is one reason we needed Jesus to teach the parable of the Wheat and the Tares; it shows us how to deal wisely with the evils around us.

Judgment Day in Heaven

The purging of heaven after the risen Son was glorified was heaven’s Judgment Day. Michael, Gabriel, and others like them were spared God’s wrath, but not Satan and his angels. Until that moment, when the Son was crowned by God, there was no judgment for Satan and his angels to face, for the

Father had determined that once the Son was revealed, he would be the Judge of all, whether in heaven or on earth, living or dead (Jn. 5:22; 2Tim. 4:1). Peter warned the saints that Judgment begins at the house of God (1Pet. 4:17), and it began with God's house in heaven when Satan received from the Son the merciless judgment that he had so many times demanded for others.

In the book of Job, Satan said that God had erected a hedge around Job, protecting him and his family from harm (Job 1:10). What Satan did not know is that God had also erected a hedge around him, protecting him and his angels from the judgment which His hidden Son would one day execute against them. That protective hedge was removed when the Son took his place beside the Father. He then accomplished what Job spoke of: "By His Spirit, heaven will be clean, for His power will have pierced the fleeing Serpent" (Job. 26:13). Jesus once told his disciples that he saw Satan "falling like lightning out of heaven" (Lk. 10:18), but that was in a vision of things to come, for Jesus later made it clear that it had not yet happened (Jn. 12:31). He knew that the hedge protecting Satan would be taken away only when he was glorified.

"Rejoice, O Heavens! Woe to the Earth"

Among faithful heavenly beings, there was rejoicing when Satan and his angels were cast out (cf. Rev. 12:12a). For them, heaven must have suddenly felt cleaner. There had been wickedness in their midst for thousands of years which they must have felt, but could not understand. Remarkably, they a Voice commanded them to rejoice when it happened, and perhaps they needed to be told to rejoice and to have it explained what was making them feel better:

Revelation 12

10. I heard a great voice in heaven saying, ". . . The Accuser of our brothers has been cast out, who prosecuted them day and night before our God!

. . . .

12a. For this, rejoice, O heavens and those who dwell in them!"

Then, from the same Voice came a lament for us, the inhabitants of earth, for the Accuser's new home would be here:

Revelation 12

12b. "Woe to the earth and the sea! For the Accuser has come down among you, having great anger, knowing that he has little time."

Because the Son of God cast Satan and his angels down to earth instead of somewhere else, we now have to deal with the crafty spirits that heaven had to deal with for a long time. However, with the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, Jesus gave us some insight into how the Father dealt with evil while it was in His presence, and with Jesus' patient and kind treatment of Judas, he showed us how to follow the Father's example.

Satan Lost His Job

Jesus' parable of the Wheat and the Tares helps us understand that Satan was not cast out of heaven merely because he was wicked. Satan had been wicked in heaven for thousands of years before he was cast out. God cast Satan out of heaven because a new covenant of "grace and truth" had replaced the law, as John said, "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17). The law of Moses was glorious so long as it was in effect, but when the Son of God was revealed,

his glory surpassed the law's glory to such an extent that the law was left with no glory at all (2Cor. 3:7–11). And when the law lost its glory, Satan lost his job as heaven's Prosecutor of the law.

To use my father's parable, the new Owner of the company, Jesus, downsized heaven, and Satan position was eliminated. A prosecutor of the law was no longer needed because observance of the rites and rules of the law was no longer the standard by which God's people would be judged. Now, instead of a Prosecutor in heaven, we have "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1Jn. 2:1), and that single change makes this covenant far better than the old one, being "established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). God's people are still governed by a law, but it is "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas 1:25), which means that we will be judged by what the Son has liberated us to do, namely, to live without sin in God's kind of righteousness.

As long as Satan was heaven's Prosecutor, the standard for judgment was how well people observed rites and rules. Proper form was crucial to Satan because proper form provided him with a standard by which he could make judgments, but that standard of "commandments contained in ordinances" is what Jesus abolished on the cross (Eph. 2:14–15; Col. 2:14–15). And when Jesus did away with handwritten rules and rites, he rendered Satan useless as a Prosecutor. Isaiah did not understand any of this when the Spirit moved upon him to prophesy that the Messiah would not judge anyone or anything by appearances:

Isaiah 11

2. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD,
3. and He shall make him discerning in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what his eyes see, nor will he make decisions by what his ears hear.

If we judge by what we see and hear instead of being by the Spirit, we can only make judgments "in the flesh", as Paul would say it. With our own kind of life, it is impossible to do anything else. But to judge on the basis of what can be seen or heard is to judge on the basis of form, not substance. God sees what is behind the mask. He once told the prophet Samuel, "God does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1Sam. 16:7b). The eye and the ear cannot detect the condition of someone's spirit.

Jesus condemned the leaders of Israel because they made their judgments based on appearances (Jn. 8:15), and he commanded his followers not to do that (Mt. 7:1), telling them to make "righteous judgment" instead (Jn. 7:24). Righteous judgment is never wrong, for it comes from God's kind of life. When Jesus commanded his followers to make righteous judgment, he knew that they could yet do so, but he also knew that he would soon make it possible for them to obey that commandment.

The Prosecutor Becomes a Persecutor

The Accuser being cast out of heaven does not mean that Satan stopped accusing; it just means that his accusations can no longer be made in heaven's court. As I have said, God is still God, and Satan is still Satan. Paul taught that "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29), and God has not revoked Satan's calling or his anointing to be an Accuser of those who err. The difference is that now, he does his work on earth. Peter warned the children of God that Satan is wandering about the earth, "seeking whom he may devour" (1Pet. 5:8), and the part of the anatomy that devours is the mouth. So, it is with factual accusations that Satan turns both the world and unwary believers against God's faithful servants.

The hearts of new believers are prime targets of such slander. Their purity is often “devoured” by Satan and his sons when they feed them information about past errors of elders in the Lord who are now clean in God’s sight. That is why Paul straitly warned young Timothy never to receive an accusation against an elder unless two or three witnesses were present (1Tim. 5:19).¹ Whenever information about an elder comes to you, you should ask yourself, “Why is this being told to *me*?” And it would be wise to suggest to the person bringing the information that he should follow Jesus’ instructions concerning how to deal with a brother who has erred (Mt. 18:15–17).

Righteous men may fall seven times, Solomon said, but God will raise them up every time (Prov. 24:16) because they hope in His mercy. With compassion that is new every morning (Lam. 3:22–23), God forgives and renews the joy of the fallen, and buries their sins in the fathomless sea of His love.

Micah 7

18. Who is a God like you, taking away iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? He will not retain His anger forever because He delights in mercy.

19. He will repent; He will have compassion on us; He will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea!

But Satan does not forgive and forget. He brings to light past errors of cleansed saints and then watches those provable facts poison souls against them. Men’s accusations are often completely untrue, but to fabricate accusations has never been Satan’s way. He has always been wiser than to make false accusations that can be disproved, and he has always prided himself on being correct. When someone transgresses, Satan sees a hopeless and damned soul, but not Jesus; all he sees is another opportunity to demonstrate his Father’s goodness, and he is eager to do it.

When someone errs and will not repent, then to bring up that error against him may be considered prosecution. However, when someone errs and does repents, then to bring up that error against him is not prosecution; it is persecution. Paul did much evil to the saints before Jesus washed his sins away, and Satan and his sons used Paul’s former evil deeds to slander him to believers who were not yet established in the Faith. They were persecuting Paul with factual information about his past. This is how heaven’s former Prosecutor, in doing what he had always done, persecutes those who have been cleanse by the blood of Christ. He is cursed to be unable to do good, not even with facts that he can prove. In his mouth, even accurate information is transformed into a slanderous lie.

Jesus Is for Us

No one in God’s presence now feels superior to His people, as Satan did. Since Jesus purged heaven of all evil, every creature in heaven is *for* us, and a most important task God gives His angels now is to minister to us who believe in His Son (Heb. 1:14; Mt. 18:10). Most of all, however, Jesus is for us. He does not accuse us to the Father or demand merciless justice against us when we fall. On the contrary, he intercedes for us (Jas. 5:11; Heb. 7:25), for he knows what it is like to live in this world, surrounded by wicked spirits:

Hebrews 4

14. Having, therefore, a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

¹ For more on how slander works, see my book, *Slander*, available for reading or download at GoingtoJesus.com

15. For we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched by our weakness, but one who has been tempted in every way that we are, without sin.
16. Let us, then, boldly draw near to the throne of grace, that we might receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So what, then, if Satan is still Satan? Jesus is still Jesus. And if Jesus has the ear of God and is for us, who can be against us?

The Life of the Creator

On the day of Pentecost, God's life completely re-created those who received it. The first evidence that Jesus' followers had received a new kind of life is that they began to miraculously magnify God in languages they had never learned (Acts 2:1–11).² But speaking in unlearned languages was just the beginning. Nothing is impossible in God's kind of life, and with that life, Jesus' disciples began performing miracles, just as Jesus had told them they would do (Jn. 14:12; Mk. 16:17–18), so that the miraculous became the norm among those earliest believers:

Acts 5

12a. Many signs and wonders were continually being done among the people through the hands of the apostles.

....

15. And the sick were carried out into the streets and were laid on beds or pallets so that when Peter came by, his shadow might fall on some of them.
16. And a multitude from the surrounding cities also came to Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those troubled by unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

With a word, the apostles could cause souls to be given life (Acts 10:44–47), and with a word they could take life away (Acts 5:1–11). But more importantly, after receiving the Spirit, the apostles began, at last, to truly know God. Jesus promised them that when the Spirit came, it would guide them into all truth and remind them of things he had told them (Jn. 16:13; Jn. 14:26). And as they grew in the knowledge of God and His Son, the disciples must have lived in a constant state of amazement. The ancient scriptures which they had known since childhood became new, for they could now see the Son everywhere in them. The phrase, “Then I remembered the word of the Lord” was undoubtedly said by the apostles in those days more than the single time it is recorded (Acts 11:16).

A Shadow of Heaven

The sanctuary of God in the Old Testament was a most important shadow of the Son. The author of Hebrews calls the Old Testament sanctuary “the figure of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:23, 24), for it was designed by God as a replica of heaven, where Christ now serves as High Priest. Once the sanctuary was consecrated, a sin committed within it brought a swift and severe judgment (e.g., 2Chron. 26:16–20), even death (Lev. 10:1–2). Nothing unclean was allowed within God's sanctuary.

A discerning brother, upon learning this, wondered how that Old Testament sanctuary could have represented heaven if evil beings lived in heaven for millennia without being harmed by God. Wouldn't God have punished Satan and his angels in heaven, he said, if sin was punished in the earthly replica?

² For more on this subject, see my booklet, *The Sound of the Spirit*, available for online reading at GoingtoJesus.com.

The answer is that Israel's sanctuary was a shadow of heaven *as it would be after the Son purged it*. Since the Son consecrated heaven with his blood, nothing unclean has ever been allowed in it.

Purified by Blood

Moses' purification of the earthly sanctuary prefigured Christ purifying heaven with his blood:³

Hebrews 9

19. When every commandment of the law had been spoken by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of bullocks and goats, along with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and he sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,
20. saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you."
21. And both the tabernacle and all the utensils of the ministry he likewise sprinkled with the blood.

Hebrews 8

11. But Christ, as a High Priest of good things to come, appearing in a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands (that is, not of this creation),
12. neither with the blood of goats and oxen but with his own blood, entered once for all into the sanctuary, obtaining eternal redemption.

The author of Hebrews further explained that

Hebrews 9

22. Under the law, almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.
23. So then, it was necessary that the figures of heavenly things be purified with these *animal sacrifices*, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
24. For Christ did not enter into holy places made by hands, the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Another Kind of Fire

The consecration ceremony for Aaron, Israel's first high priest, was another Old Testament shadow of the Son. Aaron went through seven days of consecration in Moses' tabernacle before he began his ministry, offering his first sacrifice to God (Lev. 8, 9).⁴ So, Jesus spent seven days of consecration in God's true tabernacle before he began his ministry, offering himself as a sacrifice to God.

At Mount Sinai, when God accepted Aaron's first sacrifice, "fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering. . . . And all the people saw it, and they cried out and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:24). But when God accepted His Son's sacrifice, another kind of fire came out from the Lord – the fire of the holy Spirit – and consumed the sins of the disciples. They, too, cried out, not in terror but in joy, and not because the fire was consuming a dead animal, but because the fire of the Spirit was consuming them! David considered the animals blessed that were placed on God's altar and

³ The Spirit is the blood of Christ. It was by the power of the Spirit that Christ purified heaven. For more, see my online gospel tract #95, "The Blood of Christ", at GoingtoJesus.com.

⁴ Aaron's sons had to be consecrated with Aaron because someone would have to take over as high priest when he died, but Jesus was made a high priest forever "by the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16).

consumed (Ps. 84:3). He never dreamed that a man might one day be blessed to be “a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God” (Rom. 12:1), consumed by an invisible fire from heaven.

Everything Ruined

The Spirit prophesied through David several times about the Messiah being made King by God:

Psalm 2

2. The kings of earth set themselves, and the rulers assembled themselves together against the LORD and against His Messiah,
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4. He who dwells in heaven will laugh. My Lord will mock them.
- 5a. He will say to them in His wrath,
6. “In spite of *you*, I have enthroned my King upon Zion, my holy mountain.”

Psalm 110

1. The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The moment that coronation took place, Satan was confronted with the fact that God was not the kind of God he had always thought Him to be. In an instant, his dream of a co-regency with God vanished. Satan’s prosecution of transgressors of the law and all his other efforts to maintain God’s favor and the admiration of heavenly beings had been done with all his heart, but his heart was perverse. Everything he had done, he had done out of love for himself, not God. And now, with Jesus seated on the throne which he thought would be his, Satan did not feel that he had been treated fairly. But then, what fool ever thinks that he has been treated fairly when he reaps what he has sown?

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus ruined everything, from Satan’s point of view, and when he was cast out, Satan was neither afraid or ashamed, but furious (Rev. 12:12). He had zealously done everything God had ever told him to do, and he saw himself as having been perfectly righteous. But God knew his heart, and He judged Satan according to His kind of righteousness, not the kind Satan knew, that is, maintaining a righteous appearance.

If righteous judgment ever seems right to a fool, it is only when it is applied to someone else. Rather than humbling themselves and crying out to God for mercy, proud fools like Satan respond to God’s righteous judgment by pitying themselves as victims of it. And seeing themselves as victims, they can justify an angry response to it, even acts of retaliation. Heaven’s former Prosecutor pities himself as mistreated and misunderstood. If he were a human, living in modern Western culture, he would bring a lawsuit against God for entrapment . . . and win.

“Treason! Treason!”

What could Satan have thought when Jesus came back from the dead? He must have been confused. It does not appear that he was afraid, though, for he did not flee from heaven during the forty days that the resurrected Jesus walked on earth. Besides, he had seen other people raised from the dead (e.g., 1Kgs. 17:17–24). Nor did he know that Jesus would ascend into God’s habitation; no human had ever done that (Jn. 3:13). If Satan and his angels had known that Jesus would ascend into heaven, and if they had known what he would do to them when he was glorified, it is unlikely that they would have stayed around in heaven waiting for it to happen. But they *were* there in heaven when Jesus ascended and were still there a week or so later when Jesus made his sacrifice; otherwise, they could not have been there to be cast out.

One can only imagine how Satan's countenance fell when the Son of God, for the first time since creation, took his place at his Father's right hand. Satan probably felt betrayed, the same way Queen Athaliah felt betrayed when the righteous high priest Jehoiada revealed to the people that a descendent of David named Joash was alive and had been in hiding in the temple. That murderous woman thought she had rid the earth of all of David's descendants so that she could reign unmolested in Judah. When she saw Joash standing there wearing the crown, Athaliah indignantly tore her robes and screamed, "Treason! Treason!" as though *she* was the victim of a crime. Satan probably felt similarly wronged when the Son was brought by God out of hiding and took his place at the Father's right hand. Why else would he have been angry?

Mysterious Fellowship

What angers Satan most is something he cannot understand, namely, the mysterious, sweet fellowship of the Father and the Son, which they also share now with those who "walk in the Spirit". Ungodly people are like that, too. They hate the fellowship of the saints, but without understanding what it is they really hate, they imagine a host of imaginary wrongs in believers, just as Jesus said they would do and have always done: "Blessed are you, when people revile and persecute you, and say every evil thing against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be glad! Your reward is great in heaven, for that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Mt. 5:11).

There is nothing Satan or the world would not do to destroy the fellowship of the Father and His children. At the same time, there is nothing they *can* do to destroy it. They don't even know what it is, for they have never experienced it, and never will. It is as David told young Solomon, "The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:19). Jesus told his beloved disciples,

John 14

16. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another comforter so that He might abide with you forever,

17. the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive because it neither sees it nor understands it. You know it because it abides with you, and it shall be in you.

This invisible fellowship in the Spirit is what Paul was speaking of when he told the saints, "Your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3). John also spoke of this hidden fellowship when he said, "Behold, what great love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God! The reason the world does not know you is that it did not know Him" (1Jn. 3:1).

The wicked want God's children to feel about themselves the way they do about them, that they are misguided and missing out, but it is the ungodly who are misguided and missing out, for they are missing out on life itself.

Haman

Earlier in this chapter, I suggested that in heaven, at some point, God engaged Satan in a conversation concerning how best to honor His chosen one, and that this conversation was foreshadowed by the Old Testament conversation between Persia's King Ahasuerus and wicked Haman (Esth. 6:6-9). Wrongly assuming that the king had him in mind to honor, Haman proposed several grandiose honors, which the king then bestowed upon Mordecai, whom Haman greatly despised. If God and Satan did have such a conversation, it would provide us with yet another justification for the book of Esther to be in the Bible.

What a prophetic conversation between Haman and the Persian king that would have been, if God really did ask Satan to suggest honors that He might bestow upon the one He wanted to especially honor, knowing that Satan would expect himself to be the one! And if so, did Satan suggest that God exalt such a one “above the heavens”, and give him “a name above every name”, and grant him “all power in heaven and earth”, and command that “every knee should bow, and every tongue confess” that such a one was “Lord of all”? And did he suggest that God exalt that person so highly that there would be no access to God except through him and that no worship of God would be acceptable except it be in the name of that special, chosen one? Those are certainly the sort of honors Satan wanted for himself.

But alas, we are told nothing of such a conversation in heaven, and so we will deny our imagination any more of its pleasure for the time being.

Paul

After giving those apostles time to mature in knowledge, God called a young man named Saul of Tarsus and filled him with the Spirit. Then, not long afterward, he carried Saul, now called Paul, up into heaven and revealed to him a gospel which the apostles did not anticipate. Paul called that new gospel the “gospel of the Gentiles”, and it was so advanced in the knowledge of God that it challenged the faith of even the apostles. Peter acknowledged the great anointing that was on “our beloved brother Paul,” but at the same time, he admitted that Paul taught some things that were hard to understand (2Pet. 3:15–16).

Paul’s gospel was the next step in the knowledge of God. It was knowledge which Jesus’ own apostles did not have until Paul brought it to them. The best among them, such as Peter, James, and John acknowledged the unexpected truth which Jesus had revealed to Paul (Gal. 2:7–9), but others struggled with it, and a number of them outright rejected both Paul and his gospel.⁵

“The Witness that God Has Given”

A primary purpose for God sharing His life with mankind is to provide proof of His acceptance of the Son’s sacrifice. “The Spirit is the witness”, John would write, “because the Spirit is truth” (1Jn. 5:6). No news reporters were in heaven, of course, when the Son offered himself to the Father as a sacrifice for our sins. No cameras or microphones recorded that awesome, holy moment. According to the Old Testament shadow, when Israel’s high priest went into the Holy of Holies to present the blood of sacrifice for the sins of the nation, no one, not even the other priests, were allowed in the tabernacle (Lev. 16:17). In the Son’s case, then, even the holy creatures of heaven would have been barred from witnessing the event. Otherwise, the Spirit would not be *the* witness, as John said. It would only be one of many.⁶

The love for mankind that attended the grace given at Pentecost came at such a price, and the mercy shown was so completely undeserved, that to refuse it is a damnable offense. John said that whoever refuses to receive God’s witness to His Son, the baptism of the Spirit, is calling God a liar: “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness within him; he who does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar because he has not believed in the witness that God has given concerning His Son” (1Jn. 5:10). On the other hand, wrote John, whoever humbles himself to receive Jesus’ baptism of life “has set his seal that God is true” (Jn. 3:33).

⁵ For more, see my online book, *The Jerusalem Council*, available for reading or download at GoingtoJesus.com.

⁶ When the Spirit re-creates humans, it makes them witnesses to the Son (Jn. 15:26–27), but human witnesses pass away. The Spirit is the only witness that is available to every generation.

The Scriptures tell us that God is love. That means that God wanted a living relationship with us, and made relationship possible in the Spirit that His Son purchased for us. God never delighted in sitting on His throne and watching His people perform ceremonies. The prophets were moved to say such things, though none of them understood what the Spirit was saying:

Psalm 51

16. Truly, you do not delight in sacrifice; otherwise, I would offer it. Burnt offering does not please you.

Psalm 51 (Ps. 40:6–7)

5. This is why, when coming into the world, [the Son of God] said, “Sacrifice and offering have not pleased you, but a body you have prepared for me.
6. In whole burnt offerings and such for sin, you have taken no pleasure.
7. Then I said, ‘Behold, I go (in a roll of a book it is written of me) to do your will, O God.’”

The will of God was that the Son make the way for us to worship God the way He always wanted to be worshipped, spiritually and truly. Isaiah prophesied of a coming time — our time — when performing ceremonies in a sanctuary built by men instead of worshipping God in the Spirit would be a capital offense:

Isaiah 66

1. Thus says the LORD: Heaven is my throne, and the earth, my footstool. Where is this house that you would build for me? And where is this resting-place for me?.
2. All these things my hand made, and all these things *already* existed, says the LORD. But I will have regard to this man, to him who is humble and smitten in spirit, and who trembles at my word.
- 3a. Slaughtering one of the herd will be like killing a man; sacrificing one of the flock, like breaking a dog’s neck; offering up a gift, like offering up blood from a pig; burning incense, like blessing an idol.

Jesus told the elders of Israel (Mt. 12:7) that if they understood this one statement from Hosea 6:6, they would never again misjudge or condemn an innocent soul: “I delight in mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Christians’ ignorance of that verse has led them to devise a multitude of lovely Church ceremonies, as abominable to God as they are appealing to the flesh. Satan’s ignorance of the meaning of that verse is the reason he never understood why God called His seat in the sanctuary the “mercy seat”. Had it been up to Satan, he would have called it the “judgment seat” instead.

Knowing, not Believing

The plethora of religions on earth is proof that humans can be talked into believing almost anything about God, and they can be passionate about what they are taught, as history’s many religious wars demonstrates. Throughout history, millions have given their lives and/or taken the lives of others because they believed the wrong ideas about God which they were taught. By receiving the life of God, however, those who believe in Jesus can *know* the Jesus in whom they believe. Without God’s life, we can sincerely believe in God, but we can never know Him. This is why Paul said that without the Spirit, no one can say (and know it to be true) that Jesus is Lord (1Cor. 12:3).

Jesus baptized my father with God's kind of life in 1925 when he was a Freewill Baptist minister, and after he was expelled from that sect for receiving God's life, he grew in grace and in knowledge until his death in 1989. One of the many lessons he learned from his long years of experience, he said, was that anything we believe can be a lie *as far as we know*, and so, he exhorted us to strive to know God rather than merely believe in Him. He often quoted the apostle John: "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you might know" (1Jn. 5:13a). He taught us that newly born child of God knows his heavenly Father no better than a newly born human knows his earthly father and that we must pursue the knowledge of God *after* being born again if we hope to ever know Him. "The day you receive God's life," he would tell us, "is your first day in God's school." The apostles were grieved when those whom they had led to Christ did not grow in the knowledge of God (cf. 1Cor. 3:1–3; Gal. 4:19–20; Heb. 5:12–13), and they were thrilled when they did:

1Corinthians 1

4. I thank my God always for you, for the grace of God which is given to you in Christ Jesus,
5. because in every way, you are enriched in him in all speech and in all knowledge.

3John 1

4. I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in truth.

Accepting the Son

I have emphasized repeatedly the importance of what took place in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when God first shared his kind of life with man. However, God's life being shared with men on earth was not the result of the Son's sacrifice, but of God's acceptance of it. Everything depended on that. Without the Father's acceptance, there would have been no glorification of the Son, no sitting at the Father's right hand, no outpouring of the Spirit, no purging of heaven, and no redemption of fallen man. Everything depended on the sacrifice being accepted.

Nowadays, two popular pleas of Christian ministers are for sinners to "accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior" and to "make Jesus Lord of your life." But neither of those pleas makes any biblical sense. First, no human can make Jesus Lord of his life. God has already made him Lord of everybody's life, and Messiah, Savior, and King of all kings. God has given Jesus "a name that is above every name" so that he is "most blessed, forever." We can add nothing to the Son, much less make him something. Nor is it possible for a human to accept the Son of God because the greater does the accepting, not the lesser. The only One who has ever accepted the Son is the Father, for He alone is greater than the Son (Jn. 14:28). And it is because God accepted Jesus sacrifice and anointed him to be Lord of all that refusal to submit to Jesus is a damnable crime.

Never claim to have the power to make Jesus anything; just submit to who he already is. And never puff yourself up to think that you can accept Jesus; rather, pray that Jesus will make you acceptable to God.