

The Exchange

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed (Isaiah 53:4-5).

[The Father] made [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Everything that was Christ's has become ours, and everything which was ours has been handed over to Christ. As a result of this exchange, we have an eternal destiny which includes Heaven, perfect righteousness, complete peace, and innumerable physical blessings. We have become "fellow heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)." In exchange, Christ received our sins, our debts, our sufferings, and what had been our destiny: hell.

Christ demonstrated that this exchange was real and not just "positional," as He cried out from the top of the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me (Mark 15:34 NKJV)?" As we had been separated from God, so now was Jesus! As 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "He *became* sin!"

Because of the blood of the covenant, we have the promise of becoming as righteous as Christ. 1 John 1:7 says that "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." This is probably the most important difference between the New Covenant and the Old: sin is not just covered over and treated *as if* it does not exist in our lives, but is actually made to not exist, it is eradicated. As a result of the promise of sin's being not just overlooked, but cleansed entirely away, we have the promise of a return to the grandeur of the Garden of Eden. And not just the grandeur of the garden itself, but the New Covenant's greater promises, which were implied by a possibility within the garden, a possibility to which Adam never attained, eating from the Tree of Life.

Because of the exchange, not only is our sin removed and cleansed, but even the righteousness to fulfill all God's requirements is freely imparted to us. That righteousness is received through faith, but on the cross Jesus gave us even His ability to believe. Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus has become for us "the author and perfecter of faith." Even the means of our accomplishing the conditions of the New Covenant have been instilled into us through the exchange at the cross.

Probably no prophet of the Old Testament brings out so clearly the understanding of the "exchange" as does Isaiah. Not coincidentally, Isaiah also brings forth the greatest prophetic proclamations about Christ and the New Covenant. Isaiah 53, for example, describes Christ on the cross most eloquently. Not only does this scripture describe Christ's bearing our sins but also His bearing the curse resulting from those sins.

Where most English translations read that Christ bore, in addition to our sins, our griefs and sorrows, the Hebrew reads that He bore away also our sicknesses and diseases. Even English translations make this clear later when this scripture is quoted in Matthew 8:17, "in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 'He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases.'"

Isaiah describes the exchange again in 61:1-3,7. Christ would begin His ministry by

quoting this text about Himself:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting . . . Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs.

The specific exchanges mentioned are: gladness for mourning; garlands (representing victory in a contest or battle) for ashes (representing loss and despair); freedom instead of captivity; a mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting; a double portion (which also represents the birthright and a leadership role) instead of shame and dishonor; and joy instead of humiliation.

All these blessings will come upon God's children because of what is prophesied in Isaiah 53. Because Christ Himself was afflicted, He now brings the good news that He has taken upon Himself that affliction and has brought to us redemption. Because Christ's heart was pierced, ours can be restored. Because Christ was held captive by the Romans and the Jews, we can be delivered from every oppressor. Because Christ was willing to become a prisoner in the depths of hell, we have been given freedom from that horrific fate.

Christ was despised (Isaiah 53:3) that we might be lifted up; justice was taken from Him (Isaiah 53:8) so that injustice done to us could be made right; He was left alone (Isaiah 53:3) that we might be restored to fellowship with God and with others.

Christ suffered so that, as He said in John 17:13, "they may have *My* joy made full in themselves."

Christ became poor so that the scripture could be written that "though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9)."

Christ became helpless so that we might have Divine protection. This promise is given in 1 John 4:4: "You are from God, little children, and have overcome [those in the world]; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

Eventually, we will walk in blood covenant awareness to the point where all adversaries, even the devil, himself, will be overcome. Revelation 12:11 describes the victory which is prophesied to eventually be fully ours, and becomes ours to greater and greater degrees as we walk according to the principles mentioned in this scripture: "[Believers] overcame [the devil] because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death." Because of the blood which brings us into covenant, our willingness to bear witness to what happened through that covenant, and the willingness to give up our old temporary lives, victory is ours!

Not only will we have victory over the one who has the power of death, but eventually we will have victory even over death itself. Christ died so that we might live! Hebrews 2:14-15 says, "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, [Christ] Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their

lives.”

Christ not only died on the cross, but also went to hell so that we could go to Heaven. After describing how God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him in heavenly places, Ephesians 2:6 adds “and [God] raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.” Again the key phrase, “in Christ Jesus.” This promise is available certainly in the ages to come, but in Christ Jesus, to some degree now also.

One of the last blessings I will mention here, and one of the key promises of the New Covenant as opposed to the Old, is a change of nature. Christ took on an Adamic nature, predisposed toward sin (though He did not sin), so that we can take on a heavenly nature. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22,45-49 says,

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive . . . So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

For most, this promise will not take full effect until the final day, but there is a whole generation who will see this promise while they live. And the transformation promised here can take effect little by little every day as our natures are daily transformed “from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).”

Finally, I will say, to catch all the kinds of things not already mentioned, Christ was cursed that we might be blessed (Galatians 3:13-14). The result is described in 2 Peter 1:3-4: “His divine power has granted to us *everything* pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature.”