



# Prince of Peace

The Ministry of Reconciliation — Part 2



Bible Studies for Adults



# BIBLE STUDIES FOR ADULTS

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The Ministry of Reconciliation — Part 2

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# The Ministry of Reconciliation — Part 2

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## Prince of Peace

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# Passage Prologue

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## The Ministry of Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:14 — 6:2

For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says:

"In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you."

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

# Series and Quarterly Introductions

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This year's quarterlies are dedicated to what the apostle Paul called "the ministry of reconciliation." What is reconciliation and this essential ministry? The exciting truth is revealed in one of the Bible's most profound passages: 2 Corinthians 5:14 — 6:2 (see "Passage Prologue" on opposite page). We will take our time this year exploring it and learning how to participate in it.

The ministry, message, and ministers of reconciliation Paul writes about correspond to the three central agents addressed in the text. These form the basis of the first three quarterlies, each focusing on one agent and their role in reconciliation and the divine relationship in which they all partake.

The Author of the ministry of reconciliation is our heavenly Father. In the first quarter we praised and exalted Him: for "all things are of God" (v. 18). We learned who God is as our loving Father, the ground and source of all good relationships.

In the second quarter we focus on the center of the message of reconciliation: Jesus Christ. The lessons study what God has done through Christ: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us . . ." (v. 21). There's no reconciliation apart from Him. We will learn what Jesus accomplished as the Prince of Peace, the healer of all relationships.

Remarkably, we are the ministers of reconciliation — God's priests! The third quarter surveys our role "in Christ." No longer living for ourselves, we are compelled by love to be "ambassadors for Christ," bringing reconciliation on His behalf (v. 20). We will learn how the church is to be a joyous family, modeling relationship.

Finally, in the fourth quarter we stress that the purpose of God's ministry of reconciliation is nothing less than the new covenant and a new creation: "old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (v. 17). We'll learn how as workers together with God, salvation dawns every day (6:1, 2).

Let's get started on the second quarter!

— *Jason Overman*

# God in Christ

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself . . .  
(2 Corinthians 5:19).

**Read it:** 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; John 1:1-18

**Key words:** *incarnation, peace, paradox, unite*

**Think about it:** In the first quarterly of this series we studied our heavenly Father — who He is and all He does as loving and holy, righteous and faithful, Creator and Judge, Covenant-maker and Commander, Redeemer and Savior. The King of Glory. Learning He was far from the distant and angry God who is too often portrayed, we encountered the passionate, relational God of Israel.

Along the way, we learned why the ministry of reconciliation was necessary. Restoring broken relationships requires reconciliation. The Old Testament story is one of continued brokenness, where sin twists peace into enmity, blessing into curse. Alienation. But Israel's failure was not just her own; it indicted the entire human race. We all need to be reconciled.

In this quarterly, we pick up the story where we left off. How will the God of all things — the very source of relationship and its reconciliation — span the vast gulf between divine and human, life and death, loving Father and rebellious creation? How is peace made and how are relationships restored? We already know. The old has been pointing to the new all along: *Jesus!* He is the climax and goal of the story. If the everlasting Father is the author of reconciliation, then the Prince of Peace is its center, the embodied message of reconciliation. From an empty womb to an empty tomb, these lessons are all about Him.



We begin with an amazing truth that we will explore in the next few lessons: "God was in Christ. . . ." Our key text (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) reveals the close inner dynamic between Father and Son in the out-working of the ministry of reconciliation for us (see "Passage Prologue," p. 4). Both God and Christ are mentioned in this text five times, each as interrelated source and means of reconciliation. In Christ we don't find a mere man appeasing a capricious god, as pagans thought. It's the opposite. In Christ, through Christ, God acts to reconcile the world to Himself as only He can. It staggers the mind.

Here the apostle Paul draws attention to a great mystery, and in the process indicates that God's reconciliation begins with God's incarnation. The Gospels tell how, by some inscrutable miracle of the Holy Spirit, divinity and humanity peacefully unite in Mary's virgin womb. Matthew says the child is "God with us" (1:23). Luke says "Son of the Highest" (1:32). But John is most explicit and is where the term *incarnate* originates (Latin for "made flesh," 1:14).

Here is a marvelous double paradox: From eternity, the Word is both *with* God and *is* God, and in history this Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1, 14). The first paradox discloses that the Son is not the Father; they are distinct in person, yet they are one God in being. The second claims that the Word of God became flesh, uniting without diminishing two natures — human and divine — in the one person of Jesus Christ.

In the Incarnation the ministry of reconciliation begins. In Christ, the perfect relationship of Father and Son takes human form, the fullness of God's grace and truth embodied and declared (v. 18). In the Incarnation, full reconciliation through the work of Christ is anticipated, and already complete in the person of Christ, as once hostile natures are now united harmoniously in Him.

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### Answer it

1 \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ Christ, God acts to  
\_\_\_\_\_ the world to Himself.

2 From \_\_\_\_\_ the Word is both \_\_\_\_\_ God and  
\_\_\_\_\_ God.

3 In \_\_\_\_\_ this Word \_\_\_\_\_ flesh and  
\_\_\_\_\_ among us.

God's reconciliation begins with God's incarnation.

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### Talk about it

1 How is Jesus the climactic goal of the story of God and Israel?

2 Explain the dynamic of God in Christ for reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

3 How do the Gospels present the Incarnation as both miracle and paradox?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer together. With the Incarnation in mind, thank God for His reconciling love and all that He has done for us in Christ. Set out this week to meditate on the marvelous mystery of "God with us" in Jesus. Practice incarnation by embodying His grace and truth in a specific way this week.

# Son of God

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest”  
(Luke 1:32).

**Read it:** Hebrews 1:1-3; Luke 1:26-35; 2:4-14

**Key words:** *wonderful, highest, sonship, creation*

**Think about it:** I love the chorus “His Name is Wonderful” from my youth. It comprehends the story of Jesus’ birth perfectly. Unknown to most, something wonderful was happening in Nazareth, and then later on in Bethlehem. Isaiah’s old prophecy was coming to life: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given” (9:6). As Isaiah foretells and Luke records, “His name will be called Wonderful” because in Jesus, the Most High acts and is uniquely present: “Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

In Nazareth, the angel Gabriel announced the unimaginable news to a young virgin, Mary. Her child was “the Son of the Highest” because He was conceived by “the power of the Highest” (Luke 1:26-35). Jesus is unprecedented. No mere adopted son of human origin, Jesus Christ is Son of God and Holy One by divine initiative. By a miracle of Spirit-in-flesh, the Highest entered history.

The wonder of Incarnation is nothing less than new creation! As the Spirit of God moved over the waters at the beginning of time (Genesis 1:2), here the Spirit moved again, overshadowing Mary, to create anew — but on another level. Jesus was God with us, God made flesh in time and space, assuming and partaking in our nature (Matthew 1:23; John 1:14). The ministry of reconciliation that brings new creation is possible only as God came near in Christ in this way (2 Corinthians 5:17). In the

indescribable virgin birth, God began to make all things new through His Son.

By the term *Sonship*, we understand that the Son originates in the Father and shares His nature in all God is and does. This is true not only of the Son revealed in history as Jesus Christ but also as the Son of God from eternity. So close is their relationship that Jesus can claim, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Passages like Hebrews 1:3 reveal Christ as "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person," as both Creator and Redeemer.

We find the same in Luke's record of the Son coming into the world. In these early chapters (1-2) so many of the attributes and actions we have seen in our loving Father are already present and promised in the babe, Jesus: His tender mercies and holiness (1:35, 49, 54, 78); His judgments and covenant faithfulness (vv. 51, 72); His redemption and salvation (1:68, 69, 77). At His birth in Bethlehem we hear good news and see God's kingdom glory: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (2:4-14).

Zacharias unveiled the wonderful significance of it all. Truly in Jesus, God has "visited us" (1:68, 78). And to what purpose and end? What does the story say?

"To guide our feet into the way of peace. . . . Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (1:79; 2:14).

For our reconciliation He has come. It begins here. God's peace made flesh. Wonderful!

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### Answer it

- 1 In Jesus, the Most High \_\_\_\_\_ and is uniquely \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
- 2 By a miracle of Spirit-in-flesh, the \_\_\_\_\_ entered \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
- 3 The wonder of Incarnation is nothing less than \_\_\_\_\_ !

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Truly in Jesus, God has visited us.

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## Talk about it

- 1 How does Luke communicate the divine origin and nature of Jesus Christ?
- 2 How and why does the Virgin Birth mark the beginning of new creation?
- 3 What role does peace play in Luke's story of Jesus' conception and birth?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. If you know the old chorus "His Name is Wonderful," sing it together. Thank God for sending His Son into the world for our sake, doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Set out this week to be aware of the new creation that is Jesus Christ, and specific areas of life where He would guide your feet into the way of peace.

# Son of David

God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law  
(Galatians 4:4).

**Read it:** Matthew 1:1-17; Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 5:14-19

**Key words:** *Israel, Adam, representative, exchange*

**Think about it:** In the last lesson we focused on the divinity of Christ. Now we turn to His humanity. Some Christians have been tempted to think that it is *either* divinity *or* humanity, not both. *Both* is unfathomable. And yet that's the miracle of Jesus Christ that the New Testament clearly teaches, even if it is hard to comprehend. Paul is unashamed to declare this mystery, how that Jesus is seed of David in the flesh *and* Son of God by the Spirit (Romans 1:1-4). Both are essential for the ministry of reconciliation.

Matthew 1 demonstrates the same. While Jesus is "Immanuel . . . God with us" by the Holy Spirit (vv. 20-23), He's "Son of David, Son of Abraham" too (v. 1). Matthew's Gospel begins by rooting Jesus in the story of Israel. A genealogy includes names that evoke all the blessings and brokenness, all the faith and rebellion, all the gifts of kingdom and the curses of exile that define Israel. Into this particular story Jesus was born and lived as a man.

Paul summarizes: "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law . . ." (Galatians 4:4, 5). Jesus the Jew partook in and identified with Israel fully. United with her promises and curses, Jesus reconciled Israel as the perfect representative Israelite. Christ, mastering every trial and temptation, embodied her story and restored it.

The title *Son of David* holds further implications that we'll investigate in Lesson 4, but first we want to see how His identification with Israel has implications for all. Israel's covenant call was to bless all nations, a priestly kingdom to bring God's light to the world. But where God was faithful, Israel failed her calling — no better than the nations around her. More than Israel's story, Jesus takes up Adam's story, the human story, to recreate God's image in us.

The Son of David was also the last Adam. Again, Jesus' role was a representative Man. Where the first Adam was of the earth — a living being — the last Adam was of heaven — life-giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). Then the big reversal: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). Jesus' humanity is critical in this work of divine reconciliation: "As the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same . . ." (Hebrews 2:14).

Many texts tell of His great condescension and beautiful exchange, how what Christ accomplished in crucifixion began in incarnation — becoming like us so that we could become like Him: "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you . . . might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Philippians 2:5-8 tells best the full degree to which Christ participated in the human predicament — how being in the form of God, He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant and was obedient unto death. All this to defeat it and rescue us. His humanity, with all its hurt and hunger, began in a cradle and ended on a cross. This is the way of peace that the man Jesus walked for us.

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### Answer it

- 1 Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in the flesh and \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ by the Spirit.
  
- 2 Matthew's Gospel begins by rooting Jesus in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
- 3 Jesus takes up \_\_\_\_\_ story . . . to recreate God's \_\_\_\_\_ in us.

His humanity began in a cradle and ended on a cross.

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### **Talk about it**

- 1 How does Matthew 1 present Israel's long story and Jesus' place in it?
  
  - 2 What is significant about Jesus as representative Man and last Adam?
  
  - 3 What is meant by Christ's "great condescension and beautiful exchange"?
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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. With the Son of David and last Adam in mind, thank the Lord for all that He has done for us — becoming one of us, in all our problems and pain, sorrow and shame, that we might become like Him, who was fully human. Set out this week to be aware of the transforming impact of His "beautiful exchange" in the details of your life.



# The King Comes

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand”  
(Mark 1:15).

**Read it:** Matthew 2:1-10; 4:17-25; 12:22-30

**Key words:** *Messiah, ruler, healing, kingdom*

**Think about it:** The birth of Jesus happened under a shroud of obscurity. It was known to only a few that this Son of God, Son of David was the Messiah Israel had long hoped for. The political implications of this Christ child were evident from the start. Each of these titles proclaims the same news: *Jesus is King!* To Him belongs the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32).

We observed last quarter how already in the Psalms, David’s kingdom blends mysteriously with God’s own reign. The promised seed of David is the Son of God, and of Him it is written: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:8). As Mark records, this prophecy finds fulfillment in and is dramatically unveiled at the commencement of Christ’s ministry. The King has come! “The kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15).

But this Ruler is like no other, and a contrast of kingdoms is manifested early on. Luke sets the humble origins of this King Jesus over against the hubris of a world-taxing Caesar Augustus (2:1-11). Herod overheard wise men from the east tell of a Child King of the Jews, and so quickly attempted to assassinate Him (Matthew 2). Of course, the “powers that be” would finally kill the King of glory, and at the insistence of the rulers of His own people. They didn’t want this kind of King or this kind of kingdom.

In the politics and kingdoms of this world, as much today as then, we find magnified all the signs of a creation broken and alienated from its Creator. Here power, domination, suspicion, and fear forge division and war. The politics of Jesus is altogether different, however. He is no Herod or Caesar grasping for control of resources. As God's living message of reconciliation, this King and kingdom embody transforming healing and peace, justice and joy.

What does the kingdom of God, ministered by King Jesus, look like in action?

"The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:5).

King Jesus reversed curse and restored blessing. All things become new at His touch.

Passages like Matthew 4:17-25 and 12:22-30 are just two places where we see Jesus' kingdom power and authority on full display, not arrayed against creation but miraculously mending the broken and recovering the lost of it. It's a battle, not against flesh and blood enemies but against the powers of darkness that hold creation captive to corruption. Christ, the Messiah, is a Ruler in righteousness, breaking into history as He defeats spiritual captors and ministers His life to the captives.

"If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28).

Where King Jesus ministers, His kingdom manifests. The dark power of this world is scattered, and the kingdom of Satan retreats. Though sovereign over all, Jesus' realm is made visible as the healed are gathered and follow Him, repenting and confessing the Christ as Savior and Lord. It is the good news of reconciliation.

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### Answer it

1 What titles proclaim Jesus as King? \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ .

2 Which two rulers are contrasted with Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

3 Jesus' kingdom ministry embodies transforming \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ .

Where King Jesus ministers, His kingdom manifests.

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## Talk about it

- 1 How does the rule of King Jesus contrast with the kingdoms of this world?
- 2 According to Matthew, what characterizes the presence of the kingdom?
- 3 In what ways is, and isn't, Jesus waging war as King? What is the result?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Praise our Lord and King, Jesus Christ, who reigns forever and ever. Thank Him for the healing and peace that flow from His kingdom authority. Pray for His kingdom to come in its fullness. Let that begin in us today. Set out this week to recognize Christ's rule over your life and identify some specific ways to manifest His kingdom peace to others in need of it.

# Preaching Peace

He came and preached peace to you who were afar off . . .  
(Ephesians 2:17).

**Read it:** Matthew 5:1-10; 6:9-15; 7:24-29

**Key words:** *taught, authority, command, forgive*

**Think about it:** The kingdom of God breaks forth in a two-pronged advance. Matthew 4:23 says that Jesus went all over Galilee “preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness. . . .” In the last lesson, we looked at the tangible, miraculous power of King Jesus to transform creation by His word and touch, restoring kingdom peace and justice. In this lesson, we look at the other prong: preaching the kingdom. With physical renewal came a renewal of mind and conviction: conversion and a call to discipleship.

We already learned that our loving Father is righteous King and Commander. As is the Father, so is the Son. As the revelation of God’s reign of peace and joy, Jesus’ teaching is a word of authority and command that transforms the lives of those who hear in faith and follow Him in obedience. He tears down walls that alienate, mends wounded lives, and restores covenant relationship in grace. This is what Paul means in Ephesians: Before dying to *make peace*, King Jesus *preached peace and is our peace* (2:14-17).

Characteristic of His preaching is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). It echoes God’s voice at Mount Sinai. From this mountaintop, King Jesus spoke and taught. But while the first encounter with God’s voice of commandment made the people recoil in fear from His presence, this encounter presented a different outcome: *God with us* drew the

multitude to the Father in intimate instruction. He began with blessings: Blessed are the poor, the pure, the peacemaker, the persecuted . . . (5:1-10).

Like Israel in the wilderness, this multitude was called to be light to the nations and bring glory to the Father. But King Jesus commanded righteousness of a greater sort than the Pharisees. His instruction was in continuity with God's; He had not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. So much more than conformity to the letter of the law, this is kingdom righteousness — His righteousness — that transforms from the inside out, fulfilling the Father's will (vv. 14-20). This righteousness He commands we seek above all (6:33).

Preaching peace, King Jesus drew those far from God nearer to Him. He taught us to pray intimately, "Our Father in heaven . . . Your will be done." He dared to teach a peacemaking ethic that shows the Father's perfection and our status as sons of God: Love and bless the enemy; do good to them, pray for them (5:43-48; 6:8-15). The core of this peacemaking prayer and perfection is God's radical forgiveness. Jesus not only preached this peace but also practiced it on the cross.

We can contemplate participating in this perfect peace only in light of what is unveiled in the crucifixion and resurrection of King Jesus. But on the mount, He already taught the message of reconciliation He incarnated. His teachings astonished those who heard Him preach this gospel of the kingdom because His word of command was with authority. As then, the King and Commander now opens a narrow gate that leads to life. He bids us enter this way of peace and build our lives on the Rock by obeying His words (7:13-29).

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### Answer it

- 1 With \_\_\_\_\_ renewal also came a renewal of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
- 2 Jesus' teaching is a word of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that transforms lives.
  
- 3 Preaching peace, King Jesus drew those \_\_\_\_\_ from God \_\_\_\_\_ .

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Jesus not only preached this peace but also practiced it on the cross.

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## Talk about it

- 1 What is Jesus' two-pronged advance of the kingdom and its significance?
- 2 In what ways is the Sermon on the Mount in continuity with God at Sinai?
- 3 How does the Sermon on the Mount preach peace with God and others?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Humbly acknowledge how often we fall short of the perfect peace of our Father. Thank Him for Jesus, who preached peace in word and deed and commands us to be a peacemaking people. Set out this week to meditate on King Jesus' authoritative teaching and the ways it can correct your thinking and living.

# The Righteous One

We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

**Read it:** Matthew 3:15-4:4; Luke 22:39-46; 23:47; Romans 3:21-26

**Key words:** *tempted, faithful, sinless, salvation*

**Think about it:** The healing, preaching ministry of Jesus primarily directed disciples to the righteousness of God. It stands at the heart of His kingdom reign (Matthew 6:33). It is also the heart of who Jesus is and why seeking God's kingdom righteousness is to seek Christ himself.

From baptism to death, righteousness infused Jesus' being. To John the Baptist, His intent "to fulfill all righteousness" was clear from the start. At the end, on the cross, a centurion looked and exclaimed to God, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!" (Matthew 3:15; Luke 23:47). Intense temptation was present near these crucial events (Matthew 4:1-4; Luke 22:39-46), yet Jesus Christ endured every test and remained faithful to God's will in life and in death.

When the apostles looked back on Jesus, after crucifixion and resurrection, this trait stood out as defining His person and work: He is "the Righteous One" (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14, NIV); "Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). This defining attribute ties Jesus to His destiny. He alone was uniquely qualified to be God's reconciling Prince of Peace through death on the cross; His entire existence and ministry pointed to this goal. He knew and taught it: "But for this purpose I came to this hour" (John 12:27).

The New Testament insists that Jesus was subject to our temptations, yet did not yield to them: "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" (Hebrews 4:15). The Just One is a man like us in every way but one: Sin has left no stain and has no part in Him.

Here we find the basic logic for the atonement in all its variety — that is, what Christ has accomplished for us in His death. The next several lessons will examine a few of these, but righteousness is central to each. He is Savior because He is our representative substitution: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous . . ." (1 Peter 3:18, NIV).

Christ's righteousness is the key to our reconciliation. By it, God's salvation comes. Paul explains the profound truth in remarkable detail in Romans 3. Regarding humans, "There is none righteous, no, not one"; and yet, in Christ crucified, the righteousness of God is demonstrated (vv. 10, 21-26). This is the gospel of Christ and the power of God for salvation, and in it God's righteousness is revealed and we are justified by Him (1:16, 17; 3:26).

In the last quarterly, we learned that God's righteousness, faithfulness, and salvation are interrelated covenantal terminology. They communicate His love and commitment to His relationship with His people: to deal with the curse and to restore the blessing. But the relationship is reciprocal. Righteousness is expected of the saved too. In Christ, this reciprocation of righteousness is incarnated: God's faithfulness to us, and human faithfulness to God.

The divided are united in Christ: That is the message of reconciliation. Jesus "knew no sin"; He "died for all" so "that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:14-21). From God, to Jesus, to His people, through reconciliation, righteousness defines us all.

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### Answer it

1 The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ stands at the heart of who Jesus is.

2 In Christ, the \_\_\_\_\_ of righteousness is \_\_\_\_\_ .

3 Through \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness defines us all.



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His righteousness is the key to our reconciliation.

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## Talk about it

- 1 What is the significance of Jesus as tempted and righteous in the Gospels?
  
- 2 Why is the righteousness of Christ key to atonement and reconciliation?
  
- 3 What is covenant righteousness, and how is it fully reciprocated in Christ?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Come before God confident that we have an Advocate with our Father: Christ the righteous. We give Him thanks and praise for reconciling us through His righteousness and for giving us His righteousness by faith. Set out this week to be mindful of temptations and overcoming them by the Righteous One.

# Sacrificed Lamb

The Man Christ Jesus . . . gave Himself a ransom for all . . .  
(1 Timothy 2:5, 6).

**Read it:** Mark 10:45; 14:1; John 1:29-35; Revelation 5:8-12

**Key words:** *deliver, ransom, blood, destroy*

**Think about it:** Of all the images of God's reconciling work in Christ, one of the most powerful and memorable is that of the Lamb of God. This picture moves us because Jesus is not just a lamb, but *the Lamb slain*; by His blood we have redemption (Revelation 5:8-12). John the Baptist declared this great truth at first sight of Jesus: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

This metaphor is provocative because it is sacrificial and substitutionary. We recall the Old Testament sacrificial system as a whole, but a sacrificed lamb especially evokes Israel's seminal experience of rescue and her Redeemer in the Passover and Exodus. In this story we learn something counterintuitive. By the blood of a harmless lamb, God's power was unleashed to deliver His people and destroy the chains that held them captive.

As we learned in the last quarterly, this event was central to Israel's identity. By it she learned to trust her Redeemer. Captives cannot ransom themselves (Psalm 49:7), but God has and does and will. In the face of sin and exile, the prophets spoke:

"The LORD has redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he" (Jeremiah 31:11; cf Isaiah 35:10; 51:11).

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them

from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!" (Hosea 13:14).

Paul sees this last verse fulfilled in the victory that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, accomplished in His death (1 Corinthians 15:55-57). This is one important way of understanding what God has done in Christ and how He has done it. The cross is victory over the enemy, deliverance from and destruction of their power to hold captive. All this is present in the simple words of Jesus before He ushered in a new Passover as the Lamb of God: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

The beloved hymn sings this ransom: "Would you be free from the burden of sin? . . . Would you o'er evil a victory win? There's wonderful power in the blood." When the spotless Lamb of God was given over to darkness and was slain, His life-blood unleashed a power that vanquished the enemies of life. The New Testament sings about the victorious power of the sacrificed Lamb:

He "delivered us from so great a death" (2 Corinthians 1:10).

He delivered us "from this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4).

He "delivered us from the power of darkness" (Colossians 1:13).

He died to "destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those . . . subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

He died "that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

Reconciliation is the good news that the Lamb of God has ransomed us from the hand of one stronger than we. By death He destroyed death so we might live to God in Christ. Victory in Jesus my Savior forever!

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## Answer it

1 *Lamb of God* is provocative because it is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

2 The cross is \_\_\_\_\_ over the \_\_\_\_\_.

3 By death He \_\_\_\_\_ so we might live to God in Christ.

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Jesus is not just a lamb but *the Lamb* slain.

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## Talk about it

- 1 How does Israel's story inform our understanding of Jesus as the Lamb?
  
- 2 How do the Prophets inform our understanding of Jesus as our ransom?
  
- 3 What do the Epistles say about the victory power of the blood of Christ?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Praise the Lamb slain, for He is worthy and has defeated death and redeemed us to God by His blood. Set out this week to identify areas in and around your personal life where bondage needs to be broken by the ransoming power of the Lamb.

# The Cursed

“And He was numbered with the transgressors” (Mark 15:28).

**Read it:** Isaiah 53; Mark 15:1-15; Galatians 3:10-14

**Key words:** *sin, bear, penalty, cross*

**Think about it:** The climax and focal point of all four Gospels is the cross of Christ. It is the absolute center of our faith: “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” It was and still is scandalous, this cross. Foolishness to those perishing, Paul writes, but the power of God to those being saved (1 Corinthians 2:2; 1:18). To most, an end like this was unspeakable humiliation, at best; but for those few others, herein was God’s unfathomable intention.

These two perspectives run side by side as the passion of Christ commences. Mark 15 tells the story well. From the human point of view, Jesus was just one more criminal delivered up for punishment — one radical transgressor among many. But from our loving Father’s view, the great ministry of reconciliation unfolded in His righteous Son. Here’s something only God-made-flesh could do.

God’s mysterious plan had already been announced by the prophet Isaiah, if unrecognized at the time by Jesus’ devastated followers. A righteous servant would come, and the Lord would lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. He would bear our griefs and sorrows; He would carry our iniquity and our sin. Though innocent Lamb, He would be wounded for our transgressions, an offering for sin. By His intercessory act, justification and life would come (53:1-12).

This prophecy was fully realized in the cross and deeply informs our thinking of what God did in Christ there. From the beginning of this

series, we've seen alongside our faithful Father the devastating problem of sin and its penalty in the curse of death. It is now clear how our loving, holy God reconciled the intractable problem that separated creation from Him. He demonstrated His holy love by taking sin and curse upon Himself, condemning and destroying both.

The New Testament teaches that in Christ — divine Son and perfect Man — both God's mercy and judgment were displayed. Paul writes that on the tree, Christ redeemed us from the curse, "having become a curse for us"; that God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us"; that by "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . condemned sin . . ." (Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:3). God did it *for us* in love, extending forgiveness and righteousness, and restoring blessing and life.

Quoting Isaiah 53, Peter states this truth simply, beautifully: "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

This awesome grace of God in Christ — loving Father and Prince of Peace — is a nearly incomprehensible gift that reconciles and transforms the world when it is received by faith. Where sin brings pain, Jesus bears that pain. Where it brings grief, Jesus carries that grief. Where sin brings alienation, Jesus takes that alienation upon Himself. Where it brings a curse, Jesus becomes cursed. Where sin brings death, Jesus tastes that death and dies. Whatever penalty sin calls down upon us, God in Christ says, "I will bear it for you."

At the cross, all the sins of the world, with their curses, are gathered and laid upon the Son of God. There at the cross, He assumes them fully, condemns them completely, and reconciles all to the Father. Amen.

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### Answer it

- 1 The \_\_\_\_\_ and focal point of all four Gospels is the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
- 2 God's mysterious plan had already been announced by the prophet \_\_\_\_\_ .

3 God takes sin and curse on Himself, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ both.

Reconciliation . . . Here's something only  
God-made-flesh could do.

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### Talk about it

1 How does Mark 15 show both human and divine intentions at the cross?

2 How does Isaiah 53 explain God's reconciliation in the cross of Christ?

3 How do the Epistles show both God's mercy and judgment in the cross?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. How overwhelming and humbling it is to consider the price the Father and Son paid for our reconciliation. Our debt and His gift. Set out this week to better understand this grace and how it is changing you specifically.

# The Peacemaker

You who once were . . . enemies . . . now He has reconciled  
(Colossians 1:21).

**Read it:** Luke 23:26-43; Romans 5:6-11; Ephesians 2:11-18

**Key words:** *enemies, forgiven, peace, near*

**Think about it:** From the first lesson in this series, we saw that *relationship* is the word we associate most with reconciliation. One precedes the other: Reconciliation is the mending of broken relationships. Another word we relate to this one and its divine outworking is *peace*; it is a synonym. Colossians 1:20 shows this and how peace is accomplished. By Jesus, God “reconcile[d] all things to Himself . . . having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

We’ve seen many times now that our loving Father is a relational God, but in the cross of Christ, we see how far He goes to restore right relationship with His creation. While Paul speaks of God’s peacemaking on a universal scale in Christ, His gift of reconciliation is intimately, personally illustrated by Jesus on the cross. Luke’s account shows the Peacemaker in action (23:26-43).

There at Calvary, surrounded by enemies, the Son of the Highest — God with us — was nailed to a cross. The women who loved Him wept at His bloody feet, watching, listening. What was happening? What did it mean? And then Jesus spoke, and the meaning of His death was unveiled: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (v. 34).

As the Son of God — the fullness of God — bled from the cross, He forgave His enemies. Here was the message of reconciliation played out



before our eyes. As it continued, we learn where this peace went: to a criminal dying next to Him, who recognized who Jesus was and made this request: "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (vv. 42, 43). The blessed effect of reconciliation is found in Jesus' "with Me."

The earlier prophecy of Zacharias had come to pass; God's visitation and the way of peace was realized (1:78, 79). At Calvary, on the bloody tree, we observe the depth of God's love and forgiveness. Under the most brutal and hateful conditions, God in Christ absorbed every blow and obstacle and extended peace. For those who receive the gift, as the criminal did, those alienated from God are brought near in Christ.

Paul writes about these details of the reconciliation in three texts: Romans 5:6-11; Ephesians 2:11-18; and Colossians 1:19-22. Each testifies that God's reconciling peace has been accomplished "through the death of His Son," "by the blood of Christ," "the blood of the cross" (Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:20). Paul's message is the gospel of Jesus Christ: "He preached peace . . . [made] peace . . . is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Each text emphasizes God's peacemaking with those who were once enemies: "God demonstrates His love toward us . . . when we were enemies," He "abolished in His flesh the enmity . . . putting [it] to death . . . And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled" (Romans 5:8-10; Ephesians 2:15, 16; Colossians 1:21). Christ offers enemies His friendship.

Finally, each scripture speaks of our nearness to God. We have "access . . . and rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Once aliens and strangers, those far off are now brought near, and we are "holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight" (Romans 5:2, 11; Ephesians 2:12, 13; Colossians 1:22). *With Him!*

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## Answer it

1 Another word for *reconciliation* and its outworking is \_\_\_\_\_ .

2 As the Son of God bled from the cross, He \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_ .

3 Paul speaks of God's peacemaking on a \_\_\_\_\_ scale in Christ.

Those alienated from God are brought near in Christ.

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### Talk about it

1 How does Luke's Gospel illustrate reconciliation in action on the cross?

2 What elements of reconciliation do Paul's epistles have in common?

3 How has the Peacemaker changed, and is changing, your life?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. We all were once aliens and enemies of God, but praise the Lord for loving us and bringing us near to Him by the blood of Jesus. Set out this week to extend that peace of Christ to someone in need of forgiveness.

# A New Covenant

“This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20).

**Read it:** John 19:28-37; 2 Corinthians 3:1-8, 18; Hebrews 8:1-13

**Key words:** *blood, heart, united, Spirit*

**Think about it:** The cross of Jesus Christ is a many-splendored thing. Over the last three lessons we have seen how the Righteous One gains victory over evil, condemns sin, and makes peace by His blood. The New Testament tells of other things accomplished by His death that space doesn't allow us to look at now. One that is essential to the message of reconciliation is the promise Jesus gave at the Last Supper. By His shed blood He will establish a new covenant (Luke 22:20).

In the last quarterly we learned of our covenant-making Father and that no biblical word says relationship like *covenant*. We defined *covenant* as a “sacred bond forged in sacrifice.” As in marriage, God comes near in covenant and draws us into intimate, reciprocal, faithful relationship with Him. At the sad end of that Old Testament story, we saw the covenant promises of blessing and life lost because Israel was faithless and disobedient. The curse and condemnation that prevailed since Adam still held sway.

But even so, the Law and the Prophets promised a new covenant. Our loving Father would not be thwarted by human rebellion and sin. With the blood of Jesus poured out in death, as John's Gospel vividly portrays, the old sin era of condemnation was assumed in His flesh and put to death: “It is finished!” But as Jesus gave up His spirit, life blood poured from the wound where a spear pierced His side (19:28-37). In the cross,

there is an end and a beginning. In Christ, God and man meet, and the new covenant is inaugurated.

New covenant life is experienced only *in Christ*. All that covenant experience holds forth in restored relationship and blessings with God is found *in Christ*. *He is the new covenant*. We are complete in Him because He is complete in God (Colossians 2:10). Life in Christ means not only forgiveness of sin but also a new nature and God's law written on our hearts. His obedient righteousness transforms. His life flows to us from the Holy Spirit, who unites us to Him.

This summarizes the new covenant teaching of Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 and serves as the foundation for what is to come about new creation and the ministry of reconciliation in chapter 5. No longer are we captive to a ministry of death and condemnation that defined the old world, with God's law written on stone. Now our sufficiency is not of ourselves but of God. It is by the ministry of the Spirit of life, who writes God's law on our hearts, conforming us to the image and glory of the Lord (3:1-18).

In Christ our High Priest and Mediator, a new, better, and more excellent way has come. The old covenant is obsolete because it couldn't overcome sin and death and bring life and blessing. But Jesus has. United in Him, by the Holy Spirit, God's promises are fulfilled in Him and us. Then the ancient covenant saying is truly fulfilled: "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Hebrews 8:1-13).

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### Answer it

- 1 Jesus established the new covenant by His \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
- 2 In the cross, there is an \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ .
  
- 3 Life in Christ means \_\_\_\_\_ of sin and the \_\_\_\_\_ written on hearts.

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New covenant life is experienced only in Christ.

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### Talk about it

- 1 How do the Gospels reveal the cross of Christ as an end and a beginning?
- 2 Paul contrasts what two ministries in 2 Corinthians 3, and to what end?
- 3 Why is Christ and being in *Him* central to the new covenant and life in it?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Thank God for being our God and for making us His people by the new covenant in Christ. Praise Him for forgiving us and transforming us by His Spirit. Set out this week to think about what it means to be a member of the new covenant and how to participate in it fully.

# A New Creation

“He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him” (Mark 16:6).

**Read it:** Matthew 28:1-8; Romans 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

**Key words:** *raised, newness, likeness, live*

**Think about it:** He's alive! The tomb is empty! Christ crucified is raised!

All our discussion about the cross of Christ would be for nothing if not for His resurrection from the dead. By this climactic act, the loving Father vindicated His obedient Son and validated all He was and did. Paul is emphatic on it: “If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty” (1 Corinthians 15:14). But He has risen! Resurrection confirms our reconciliation.

The unparalleled event of resurrection stands at the other end of incarnation and completes new creation in Christ. Raised a spiritual body, incorruptible, our risen Lord *is* new creation (vv. 42-44). But death is hard to shake; it is a reliable fact. The incredulity of His followers is understandable. Resurrection disorients us as it shatters all we have ever known, like the sun in our eyes chasing shadows and marking the dawn of a new world (Matthew 28:1-8).

Even in the disciples' uncertain stupor, Jesus gently came close to reassure them of this new reality in Him. “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands,” He said to doubting Thomas, “reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” The doubter exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:27, 28). It's the same for all who face the Resurrection.

We've come full circle to the beginning of the story this series is telling: back to the Creator and His creation, once fallen but now redeemed. In Christ, His death and His resurrection, the destiny of the whole cosmos — and each of us — is united to His likeness. What the loving Father has completed in His raised Son will fill the earth and make all things new. In Christ it begins.

Looking again at 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 in light of this full story of Father and Son, ministry and message of reconciliation, everything is clear: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (v. 17). Apart from Christ, the old world is passing away; but *in Christ*, our new lives are the resurrection story!

Paul explains how united we, and the world, are to Christ and all He did: "If One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (vv. 14, 15). In Christ God reconciled the *world* and *us* to Himself (vv. 18, 19).

This story is still working itself out, but God's intentions are cosmic in scope. *All things new!* But we participate in resurrection life one person at a time. Paul explains the full implications of our personal union in Christ:

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection (Romans 6:4, 5).

May we all be resurrection stories — witnesses of new creation in Christ.

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### Answer it

1 In resurrection the Father \_\_\_\_\_ His Son and \_\_\_\_\_ all He was and did.

2 Raised a spiritual body, \_\_\_\_\_, our risen Lord is \_\_\_\_\_.

3 Resurrection confirms our \_\_\_\_\_ .

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In Christ our new lives are the resurrection story.

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### Talk about it

1 How do we see new creation in the Gospel record of Christ's resurrection?

2 How does Paul explain our new life united in Christ and its implications?

3 How and where do you see new creation evidence of the Resurrection?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Praise God who has raised up His Son from the dead for our justification and life. Praise the Lord for raising us up in resurrection life with Him. May His new creation fill the whole world. Set out this week to walk in newness of life — in specific ways that show the world that Jesus is alive!



# Day of Salvation

Now is the accepted time . . . now is the day of salvation  
(2 Corinthians 6:2).

**Read it:** Matthew 28:16-20; 2 Corinthians 5:14 — 6:2; Revelation 12:7-12

**Key words:** *now, commission, ministry, authority*

**Think about it:** We have seen that with the resurrection of the Son of God, a new day has dawned. Everything is altered. All is seen from a new point of view in light of His life. Paul remarks on the full extent of this reality in an incredible claim made in our main series text. Because Christ died and rose again, “we regard no one according to the flesh. . . . old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:16, 17).

Resurrection changes everything. In the Risen One, death and time itself are overcome as eternity punctures history. Christ’s everlasting reign begins, and the old age begins to pass away. *Then* and *now* take on new meaning in this world-altering event. *Then* is life under the curse — limited and ultimately lost, without Christ. *Now* is salvation — new creation and blessed life in Him.

In Christ, every moment is present and participates in the reconciliation that He has made. We can’t look at anything or anyone in the flesh because new potential overlaps all that is: Every person and every circumstance can pass from *then* (apart from Him) to *now* (with Him), where the word of reconciliation is received in faith. This is why Paul says, “Now is the accepted time . . . now is the day of salvation” (6:2). The Risen rules right now.

Herein, Christ is revealed not only as Savior but also as sovereign Lord over all — the King unveiled in all power and authority. The disciples witnessed the truth of this in Galilee after His resurrection: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). From resurrection authority is born resurrection commission. King Jesus instructs, *Disciple! Go!*

Paul describes this commission in different words, but with a similar meaning. God has *given* and *committed* this ministry and message of reconciliation to us. He has made us “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). We will explore this ministry in detail in the next quarterly, *Priests of Joy*. For now, we recognize that the Risen One has made us ministers of His kingdom — ministers of the new covenant and day of salvation, powered by resurrection life. We’re authorized by the King.

No one before or after has ministered in the authority of Christ’s commission like the apostle Paul: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes . . .” (Romans 1:16). In Paul’s ministry we see what must always be present: Resurrection is not merely a past event but is ever-present *now*. He lives! In this transforming truth, Paul turned his world upside down. We can, too, if our eyes are fixed, not on the flesh but on His resurrection reality.

“Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:10, 11).

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## Answer it

- 1 We can’t look at anyone \_\_\_\_\_ because new potential overlaps all.
- 2 God has \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the ministry of reconciliation to us.

3 Resurrection is not merely a \_\_\_\_\_ event but is ever present \_\_\_\_\_.

From resurrection authority is born resurrection commission.

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**Talk about it**

1 How do the Scripture readings portray Christ’s authority and our ministry?

2 How does resurrection alter our perception of reality? What is right *now*?

3 How can regarding things “according to the flesh” destroy our ministries?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. Give thanks and praise to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who has commissioned us as ministers of His salvation and kingdom in resurrection authority. Set out this week to review the ways that this commission and calling are threatened when we view reality through the eyes of the flesh.

# Above All Names

“Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior . . .” (Acts 5:31).

**Read it:** Luke 24:44-53; Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 5:6-12

**Key words:** *exalted, name, worthy, worship*

**Think about it:** This quarterly has been dedicated to our Prince of Peace. We’ve seen how in conception and birth, ministry, death and resurrection, our loving Father was revealed — *God with us* — for salvation. In the Son of God, the message of reconciliation was declared and accomplished in person. Now we come to the end of the biblical narrative of the man Jesus Christ. But this is no end. His ascension to the right hand of God, His return to the bosom of the Father from which He came, is just the beginning. It is our entrance into God’s eternal presence and kingdom.

Jesus’ last words to His disciples are as important for us as it was for them:

“These are the words which I spoke to you . . . that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. . . . “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations . . .” (Luke 24:44-47).

At Jesus’ exaltation after He fulfilled all things, we understand the unity of loving Father and Prince of Peace, the unity of God’s Word in one long story told in Old and New Testaments, and how Jesus Christ is

the center of its message. Here at the story's end, we understand that Jesus has committed His story to us to live and share. The living story of reconciliation.

Like the disciples who watched as He was carried to heaven, we worship Him with great joy (v. 52). Right here our own personal stories truly begin, joined to His story through the salvation that is in His name: "For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Paul and John record this praise and worship of the exalted, worthy One too. For His obedience unto death on the cross for our reconciliation . . .

God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Revelation 5:12).

The Prince of Peace, worthy Lamb, and exalted Lord we worship has made us His kings and priests (5:10). He has authorized us to represent His kingdom reign to the dying kingdoms of this world as ambassadors of His reconciliation. We'll explore this exciting ministry as His "priests of joy" in the next quarter.

We ended the last quarterly with the glory of God and end this one there too. "All things are of God," we learned at the beginning, and all things rebound to His glory, especially His glory in the face of Jesus. Blessed be His name forever and ever!

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### Answer it

1 Jesus opened their \_\_\_\_\_ so they could comprehend \_\_\_\_\_ .

2 At the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus every knee should \_\_\_\_\_ and tongue \_\_\_\_\_ .

3 The exalted Lord we worship has made us His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus has committed His story to us to live and share.

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### Talk about it

1 What is the significance of the last words of Jesus before His ascension?

2 What is emphasized in our Scripture readings about Jesus' exaltation?

3 How have these lessons prepared you to be ministers of reconciliation?

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**Summarize it:** Using the four key words, recap the lesson.

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**Apply it:** Start with a closing prayer. We humbly and joyfully bow the knee and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God. Worthy of our praise and worship is the Lamb slain. Set out this week to examine how well you know the story of Christ and how prepared you are to minister it to others.