

“Eight Jewels on the Ring of Reconciliation”

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The title for the study comes from the Thompson Chain Reference Bible. Let us begin with a definition of the term “reconciliation.” Reconciliation is about making friends again following an estrangement. All men have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and God is holy, thus the breach of friendship. The seventh century B.C. prophet Habakkuk affirmed, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?” (Hab. 1:13). Isaiah said, “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1-2). The broken friendship between man and God is reconciled in Christ and in his church. On this subject Paul wrote, “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col. 1:20). The vital place of the church of Christ in clearing up this estrangement is seen in Ephesians 2:16 where both Jew and Gentile are brought together in the church and made friends again with God, “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” “The body” as used by Paul in Ephesians means “the church,” “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23, emphasis added).

The Text

The mine from which the “eight jewels on the ring of reconciliation” will be extracted is Romans 5:1-10. The surrounding context may be viewed beginning with the perspective of the *relationship* with God through faith that is extended to the spiritual descendants of

Abraham including the *redemption, righteousness, and remission* of sins that is in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-25; 4:16-18). The *reconciliation* made possible with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:10). And, the *righteousness* of God through which grace reigns unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:21-6:23). Now having established the context in which the discussion of reconciliation is couched, see if you can find the eight jewels we will be discussing from the text of Romans 5:1-10.

¹Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

²By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

³And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

⁴And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

⁵And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

⁶For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

⁸But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

¹⁰For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The Treasures

Did you ever see a “Mother’s Ring” on which the birthstones of each of her children are featured? The idea of the “ring of reconciliation” is borrowed from that concept. The eight

treasures or jewels on the ring are Peace, Access, Joy, Glory in Tribulation, Patience, Experience, Hope, and Love.

Peace

The first jewel on the ring of reconciliation is peace which is brought about through justification by faith meaning the forgiveness of sins in Christ (v. 1). Twice in Isaiah, the prophet said, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:21; 48:22). Sinful man should seek peace with God in Christ and in his church (Isa. 55:6-7; Acts 17:24-31).

Access

Access into the saving grace of God is gained through faith. A door key gives you access to your home. A car key gives you access to your automobile. A checkbook gives you access to your money. Without the door key, car key, and checkbook we're prohibited the enjoyment of our possessions. Likewise, "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Even as "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17), the word of God is the "word of reconciliation" uniquely through which the redeemed find access to friendship with God (II Cor. 5:19). Therefore, the word of God may be viewed as the key that unlocks or grants access to the ring of reconciliation through Jesus Christ.

Joy

The jewels are beginning to accumulate now. Justification by faith bringing peace with God and access into the saving grace of God in which the redeemed firmly stand brings about "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God." This is precisely why following his baptism the Ethiopian eunuch "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).

Glory in Tribulation

Perhaps the truest test of genuine faith in God is seen in how we think and react when faced with trouble. By wearing "the ring of reconciliation" in a spiritual sense, the Christian is able to rise above the troubles and cares of the world that would steal saving faith away and move above and beyond the trials even to the

elevated position of actually glorifying God when in tribulation. A reading of II Corinthians 6:1-10 will show that the apostle Paul himself was preaching "the word of reconciliation" and enduring severe hardships not for self-aggrandizement or personal gain but for the privilege of working together with God to bring salvation to the lost world.

Patience

The progression of thought and character development presented here begins with patience as a fruit or anticipated result of tribulation. Then through patient effort as a kind of groundwork or foundation experience is gained. And, by remaining faithful through a variety of experiences hope brightens. According to Nelson's Bible Dictionary patience is defined as "Forbearance under suffering and endurance in the face of adversity." Two Greek words round out the understanding of what is meant by patience. The first of these is *makrothymia* and points to patience with people. The second is *hypomone* and points to patience with things.

Experience

The long application of divine truth in the life of a Christian yields experience. We learn our strengths and weaknesses and know spiritual pitfalls to avoid and sources of blessings to seek. Great motivation abides with a Christian through the promises of God like Revelation 2:10, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Hope

Defined as "earnest expectation," hope yields salvation. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24).

Love

Paul wrote that "the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13). What surpassing gratification to know the love of God!

The Timing

“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation)” (II Cor. 6:2). Friend, are you wearing the “ring of reconciliation”?