

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION Chapter 10

THE HOLY BIBLE TEACHES THE WAY OF SALVATION

by A.W. Pink

Transcript

THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

Chapter 10

THE HOLY BIBLE TEACHES THE WAY OF SALVATION

The uniqueness of the Bible appears most conspicuously here, as anyone may ascertain for himself by comparing the teaching of the so-called "sacred books" of all human religions. The difference between what is revealed in the Scripture of Truth and the systems of men upon the attainment of holiness and eternal felicity is like unto that between light and darkness. At no other point does the celestial nature of the Bible shine forth more unmistakably than in the plan of redemption which is made known therein. The good news which it heralds to ruined and lost sinners is such as was undiscoverable by the light of nature, yet is authenticated by its own intrinsic excellence. The Gospel which is published in the Bible attests itself by virtue of its matchless merits. It discovers its Divine origin by a proclamation of truth which is self-evident. There is no need for an appeal to be made unto any external testimonies, for a true perception of the Gospel demonstrates its Divine nature. That which is affirmed in the Gospel is manifest by its own assertion as something far surpassing all the inventions of the human mind. The Gospel itself is light, for its central Object is "the Light of the world" (John 8:12). The advent of Jesus Christ to this earth was predicted as the rising of "the Sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2), and the universal spread of His Gospel is represented under the figure of that grand fountain of natural light diffusing His beams over every part of the earth (Ps. 19:1-5, and cf. Rom. 10:17, 18). Now light necessarily proves itself for it is self-evident, needing nothing to manifest it. It serves to discover other objects, but requires nothing to discover itself. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5:13), and the Gospel makes manifest the perfections of God, setting forth an open discovery of them before our minds, beyond any other of His wondrous works. Therefore is this Divine revelation, this message of glad tidings unto condemned criminals, designated "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1:11) because His ineffable glories are there so brightly displayed. The consummate wisdom of God is evidenced far more eminently in the work of redemption than in any of His marvels in creation or in Providence, so that none but the blind can be unconvinced thereby. The Gospel evinces its Divinity by the solution which it offers to a problem for which the combined wisdom of all mankind can furnish no adequate solution. That problem is succinctly

stated thus: "How, then, can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4). The problem is twofold: legal, and moral, respecting man's relation to the Divine Law, and his fitness for the celestial Temple. Man is a transgressor of the Divine Law. Every member of the human race is such. Anything short of perfect and perpetual obedience to the Divine commandments in thought and word and deed constitutes one a transgressor. Measured by such a standard, each of us must plead guilty, for we come far short of it. The Law condemns us: how, then, can we be acquitted? On what possible ground can the righteous Judge declare us to be entitled to the award of the Law? But more—we are fallen and sinful creatures, and as such unfit to dwell in the immediate presence of the ineffably holy God. How shall we get rid of our defilement? How do we obtain that unsullied purity to make us meet for Heaven? Let us briefly amplify the several elements which enter into that problem. 1. The requirements of God's Law. They are founded upon the perfections of its Framer, and therefore nothing less than spotless holiness is demanded of us. Negatively, it proscribes not only wrong deeds and corrupt counsels of the heart, but—as no human legislation ever did—it also prohibits evil desires and propensities, so that all unchaste imaginations are forbidden, as also the spirit discontent, envy, revenge—anything which is contrary to the perfections of God Himself is interdicted. Positively, the Divine Law demands from us an entire, unreserved, and uninterrupted yielding of soul and body, with all their faculties and powers, unto God and His service. It requires not only that we love Him with all our heart and strength, constantly, but that love to Him must actuate and regulate all our actions unvaryingly. Nor is that unreasonable, for we are all God's creatures, made for His glory, and originally created without sin, in His own image and likeness. 2. The charge preferred against us: "there is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Not a single member of our fallen race measures up to the holy standard which our Maker and Governor has set before us—not one who meets the just requirements of His Law. Nor is there one who has made a genuine, wholehearted, and sustained effort to do so. So far from subordinating all his interests to the will of God, the natural man follows the desires and devices of his own heart, giving place to God only so far as that is pleasing to himself. Though he owes his very life to His daily care, yet he has no concern for His glory. He is ungrateful, unruly, ungodly, abusing God's mercies, despising His reproofs, trampling under foot His commandments. And therefore "all the world stands guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). 3. The sentence of the Law. This is clearly stated in the Divine Word. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Whoever violates a single precept of that Law exposes himself to the displeasure of God, and to His just punishment as the expression of that displeasure. No allowance is made for ignorance, no distinction is made between persons, no relaxation of its strictness is possible. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," is its inexorable pronouncement. No exception is made whether the transgressor be young or old, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile: the wages of sin is death, for "the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18). 4. The judge Himself is inflexibly just, "that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:7). In the high court of Divine justice, the Lord interprets the Law in its sternest aspect and judges rigidly according to the strictness of its letter. "He is a holy God, He is a jealous God: He will not forgive your transgressions and your sins" (Josh. 24:19). God is inexorably righteous, and will not show any partiality either to the Law or to its violator. "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things., who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:2, 6). He has determined that His Law shall be faithfully upheld and its sanctions strictly enforced. 5. The sinner is unquestionably guilty. It is not merely that he has infirmities, or that he has done his very best, yet failed to attain unto absolute perfection. He has set at naught God's authority, and has proved a proud rebel rather than a loyal subject. He has gone his own way and gratified himself, without any concern for the Divine honour. Morally respectable he may be in the sight of his fellows, but a criminal

before the Divine tribunal. It is impossible for any man to clear himself of the solemn charge: he can neither disprove the accusations which the Law prefers against him, nor vindicate himself for the perpetration of them. Here, then, is how the case stands. The Law demands flawless and continuous obedience to its precepts in heart and in act, in motive and performance. God charges us with having failed to meet those just requirements, and declares us guilty. The Law then pronounces sentence of condemnation, and demands the infliction of the death penalty. The One before whose tribunal we stand is omniscient, and cannot be imposed upon; He is inflexibly just and swayed by no sentimental considerations. We are unable to refute the charges of the Law, unable to vindicate our sinful conduct, unable to offer any reparation or atonement for our crimes. Truly our case is desperate to the highest degree. Here, then, is the problem. How can God justify the willful transgressor of His Law without justifying his sins? How can He receive him into His favour without being the Patron of a rebel? How can God deliver him from the penalty of His broken Law without going back upon His word that He, "will by no means clear the guilty"? How can life be granted to the culprit without repealing the sentence, "the soul that sinneth it shall die"? How can mercy be shown to the sinner without justice being flouted? That is a problem which none of the jurists of this earth could solve, one which must forever have baffled every finite intelligence. Yet, blessed be His name, God has, in His consummate wisdom, devised a way whereby the chief of sinners can be dealt with by Him as though he were entirely innocent. Nay, more—He pronounces him righteous, up to the required standard of the Law, and entitled to its reward of eternal life. The Gospel provides a plain, satisfactory, and glorious solution to that problem, and therein evidences its Divinity. To that solution we now direct the reader's attention. That solution may be summed up in one word, namely, substitution, though a million words could not express all the stupendous wonders attending the same. God decreed that salvation should be provided for transgressors and, in order that His righteousness might not be compromised, determined that Another should take their place, and in their stead make a full satisfaction to the Divine Law, by rendering a flawless obedience to it. But where was to be found one suitable for this task, for, first, he must be a sinless being? There was not a single candidate among the sons of men, for the whole human race was guilty. From whence, then, could a substitute be found? Suitable, we say, for not only must he be without sin, but his obedience to the Law must possess such super-abounding worth as to pay the debts not of one sinner, but of all sinners for whom it was vicariously performed. His obedience must needs possess more merit than their total demerits. That necessarily excluded all the angels, for as creatures of God they themselves were obligated to render perfect obedience to Him, and in so doing merely performed their duty; consequently no merit attached to the same, and so there was no excess for others. Further, none would be suitable save one who could act in his own absolute right, one who in himself was neither a subject nor a servant, otherwise he could merit nothing for others: he that has nothing that is absolutely his own cannot pay any price to redeem others. He must be a person possessed of infinite dignity and worthiness, so that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessing. He must be endowed with infinite power and wisdom to qualify him for such a stupendous undertaking. He must be one of unchanging integrity and immutable faithfulness, or he could not be depended upon for such a momentous task. He must be one of matchless mercy and love to willingly serve as the Substitute and die in the room of fallen and depraved men. It was also requisite that he should be a person infinitely dear unto God the Father, in order to give an infinite value to his transaction in God's esteem. Now where, my reader, was such a one to be found? Had that question been propounded to the ablest of men, yea, to a conclave of angels, it had remained unanswered forever. But "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27). That problem which was far above the compass of all creatures was solved by Omniscience. The surpassing goodness and infinite wisdom of God selected His own Son for the undertaking, for He was in every way fit, possessing in

Himself all the requisite qualifications. But here another problem, no less than the former, presented itself. The Son was absolute Sovereign in Himself: how then could He serve? He was infinitely above all law: how then could He perform obedience to law? He was the Lord of Glory, worshipped by all the heavenly hosts: how then could He be substituted in the place of worms of the dust? Moreover, as their Substitute, He must not only fulfil all the preceptive requirements of the Law, but He must also take upon Him their sins and expiate their guilt; He must suffer the Law's condemnation, endure its penalty, receive the awful wages of sin. But how could One of such infinite dignity enter such depths of humiliation? How could the ineffably Holy One be judicially "made sin" for them? How could the Blessed One be made a curse? How could the Lord of Life die? As another has said, "If God had declared who the person is that should do this work and had gone no further, no creature could have thought which way this person could have performed the work. If God had told them that His own Son must be the Redeemer, and that He alone was a fit person for the work, and that He was a person every way sufficient for it, but had proposed to them to contrive a way how this fit and sufficient Person should succeed, we must conclude that all created understandings would have been utterly at a loss." Yet the Gospel makes known the wondrous and glorious solution to that problem, a solution which had never entered the mind of man to conceive, and in the revelation made of that salvation the Gospel bears unmistakably the impression of Divine wisdom and carries its own evidence of its Divinity. The manifold wisdom of God determined that His Son should become the Representative and Surety of sinners and so be substituted in their place. But who else would have thought of such a thing: that the Son should occupy the place of rebels and become the Object of Divine wrath! And in order for the Son to be the sinner's Surety, He must render satisfaction to the Law in man's own nature! What created intelligence had deemed such a thing possible: that a Divine Person should become incarnate and be both God and man in one Person! Had God made known such a marvel, what finite intelligence could have devised a way whereby the Son should become flesh without partaking of the pollution of fallen human nature! Not only that the finite should become finite, the Ancient of Days an infant, but that He should be born of a woman without being tainted by the virus of sin! No angel had ever dreamed of the miracle of the virgin birth, whereby an immaculate human nature was produced in Mary's womb by the operation of the Holy Spirit, so that "a holy thing" (Luke 1:35), spotless and impeccable, was born by her! But that was no mystery to Divine wisdom. The Son of God became the Son of man. And so we might continue, paragraph after paragraph, pointing out that the circumstances of Christ's birth, the details of His life, the reception which He met with from the world, the character of His mission, the nature of His death, His triumphant resurrection from the tomb, His ascension into Heaven, His there being crowned with honour and glory, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords—each and all of which transcend the powers of human imagination. But a word requires to be added upon the application of Christ's work to His people. How shall they partake of the benefits of His redemption without robbing Him of His glory? By what means shall their enmity be subdued and their wills be brought into subjection to Him? That was a further problem which no man could have solved. It is by the Spirit's communicating to them a new nature, making them sensible of their wretchedness and need, and causing them to stretch forth the beggar's hand and receive eternal life as a free gift. Though indwelling sin be not removed in this life, Christ's love has so won their hearts that it is now their fervent desire and sincere endeavour to live daily so as to please and glorify Him. Now we submit to the critical reader that the Gospel is stamped with the Divine glory, that the wisdom of God appears conspicuously in the way of salvation that it exhibits. In its unique contrivances, its accomplished designs, its glorious ends, its blessed fruits, its stupendous wonder in transforming lawless rebels into loving and loyal subjects, we have that which is worthy of Omniscience. Never had it entered into the heart of man to conceive not only of Hell-deserving sinners being saved in a way suited to all the Divine

perfections, but which also provides for their being personally conformed unto the image of God's Son, made "like Him" in holiness and happiness, made "joint heirs" with Him and eternal sharers of His glory. When impartially examined, it is self-evident that the Gospel is not of human origin. Certainly the Jews did not invent it, for they were its bitterest enemies. Nor the Gentiles, for they knew nothing about it until the Apostles preached it to them. Nor did the Apostles themselves, for at first they were offended at it (Matthew 16:21, 22). The Gospel is of God: thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable gift! In what way shall depraved and guilty creatures be delivered from wickedness and punishment and restored to holiness and happiness, is the most difficult as well as important question which can engage the mind. Such an inquiry is of no interest to a pleasure-loving trifler, but is of vast moment to the sin-convicted soul. He knows that God is justly displeased with him, but how He shall become reconciled and receive him into His favour, passes his comprehension. A sense of guilt makes him afraid of God: how shall the cause of that fear be removed? Those are difficulties which human religions do not resolve and before which reason is silent. No amount of present repentance and reformation can cleanse the blotted pages of the past. When brought face to face with the dread realities of death, judgment, and eternity, the soul is appalled. A vague hope in the general mercy of God suffices not, for that leaves His justice unsatisfied. The Gospel alone provides a satisfactory solution to these problems and peace for the burdened conscience. Neither sorrowing nor amendment of conduct can right the wrongs of which the sinner is guilty before God, nor can he by any self-effort change himself for the better, still less fit himself for Heaven. A sinner may be filled with bitter remorse for his vicious excesses, but tears will not heal his diseased body or deliver him from an early grave. The gambler will condemn himself for his folly, but no self-recriminations will recover his lost estate or save him from spending his remaining years in poverty. Thus it is evident that when it comes to the blotting out of his iniquities before God and the obtaining of a new nature which renders him fit for the Divine presence, man must look outside himself. But where is he to look for deliverance from himself for sin has made fallen man averse to fellowship with the Holy One? How then shall he desire, seek after, delight in that which is repellent to him? He is bidden to look unto One who is "mighty to save" (Isa. 63:1). The Gospel presents a Divine Physician who can heal the moral leper, yea, give eternal life to one who is spiritually dead. The Lord Jesus is "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25). His salvation is an all-sufficient and everlasting one, freely offered, "without money and without price." Such a Saviour, such a salvation, is of no human invention; therefore the Book which makes them known must be Divine. It may be asked, If the Gospel be self-evident, why do not all men believe it? The answer is, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The great majority deliberately close their eyes and steel their hearts against its appeal, because that appeal clashes with their corruptions and worldly interests. Not until men solemnly contemplate the character of God, their relation to Him as the subjects of His government, and their utter unpreparedness for His awful tribunal, will they seriously consider the claims of His Gospel. As food is relished most by the famished, as health is valued highest by those who have suffered a painful and protracted illness, so the Gospel is only welcomed by those who realize they are under the curse of a sin-hating God, stricken with a moral malady which no human remedy can relieve, hastening to hopeless eternity. Nevertheless, he who believes not shall be damned.

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/the-doctrine-of-revelation-chapter-10-the-holy-bible-teaches-the-way-of-salvatio/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net