

Title: **CURSED, REDEEMED, BLESSED**

Text: Galatians 3:13-15

Subject: *Redemption by Christ*

Date: Friday Evening — October 24, 2008

College Grove Grace Church

College Grove, Tennessee

Introduction:

There are two verses of Scripture that are upon my heart and mind almost incessantly. They reveal sweet, gospel wonders, wonders of God's amazing grace that grow more wondrous day by day. They declare mysteries that I never hope to comprehend. I quote these two verses very frequently, more frequently than any others. In fact, I purposefully quote one or both of them every time I preach. Those two verses are 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13.

(2 Corinthians 5:21) "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

(Galatians 3:13) "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree."

I have no idea how many times I have preached from 2 Corinthians 5:21. But, as I began to prepare this message this morning, I was surprised to discover that I've only preached two times from Galatians 3:13. Tonight, I believe, the Spirit of God has given me a message for you from Galatians 3:13 and 14. That will be my text. The title of my message is **CURSED, REDEEMED, BLESSED**. In these two verses the apostle Paul describes God's elect in these three states: cursed, redeemed, and blessed. Read the text with me.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

—Galatians 3:13,14.

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The law cannot save. It cannot give life. It cannot justify. It cannot make a sinner righteous. It cannot sanctify. It cannot bless. The law of God is holy, and just, and good; but it can never produce good in us or for us. The law is a ministration of death. It exposes sin, declares guilt, curses and condemns the guilty, and ministers death. It genders bondage, but never liberty. It condemns, but never blesses.

If we are to be saved, justified, made righteous before God, and blessed by him, we must look elsewhere. The broken law makes us lost sinners. And what the law once does, it cannot undo. It destroys, but cannot build. It imprisons, but cannot deliver from prison. The law kills, but cannot make alive. Sinai has the thunder and the terror of the Almighty, but not the good news of his grace. — But, blessed be his holy name forever, “*Christ hat redeemed us from the curse of the law!*”

CURSED

First, our text speaks of God’s elect as people who were once under the curse of the law. — This is the state of nature, the state and condition of all Adam’s race by nature.

The curse of the law is God’s sentence upon the guilty. It is the utterance of his holy anger. He speaks in accordance with his holy law. He always speaks in accordance with his holy law. The curse of the law is really God’s curse. The law simply proclaims the curse upon the guilty.

It is written in the law, “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*” We read here in Galatians 3:10, “*Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*”

If you are holy, perfectly holy, without sin or any deviation from the will and glory of God of any kind, you have nothing to fear from God’s holy law. The law has nothing to say to you. But, since, there are none like that upon the earth, since, “*There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not*” (Ecclesiastes 7:20), the Book of God declares that all of us are by nature born under the curse of the law, condemned, justly condemned (John 3:18-19, 36; Romans 5:12).

(John 3:18-19) “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not

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believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

(John 3:36) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

(Romans 5:12) “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

CHILDREN OF WRATH

Because we are all born sinners, we are all children of wrath (Ephesians 2:4) by nature, wrathful children, under a conscious sense of wrath because of a conscious sense of guilt (Romans 1:18-20).

(Romans 1:18-20) “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; (19) Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. (20) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

Because of sin, the curse of the law, the curse of God is upon all men by nature. The law is justice; and justice is blind. It shows no pity, extends no mercy, has no compassion. It gives no consideration to age, circumstance, ignorance or learning. The law says, “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die;*” and it executes the sentence with cold, passionless, unfeeling, blind justice. The sentence of the law upon the guilty is death. It will never reverse itself.

- “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*”
- “*The wages of sin is death.*”
- “*Thou shalt surely die.*”

DEATH

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What is that death that has passed upon all men because all have sinned? What is that death which the law of God coldly, without passion or feeling, justly pronounces upon the guilty?

- That death involves the wrath of God.
- It involves shame and bondage.
- Death involves darkness, and unrest.
- The dead are shut out, unaccepted, unwanted, unacceptable.
- Death is banishment, exile, deprivation of good, of happiness, of life.

This death which the law declares to be our rightful, just wage, that which it is right and just for us all to suffer by the hands of God is...

- **Spiritual Death** — Death with reference to God, death in our souls, death to all things spiritual and truly living.
- **Physical, Temporal Death** — The death of these bodies. What a long, torturous process that is!
- **Eternal Death** — The Second Death, the death of body and soul forever in hell. — **And, what is hell?**

“To say Hell is a horrible place is an understatement. Most people think of Hell as the farthest point from God. It is the caves where Satan’s minions scamper about, poking feeble folk with tiny pikes and taunting them for all eternity. As bad as this seems, it does not even compare to what Hell really is. Hell is the very presence of God and His wrath without Christ as a mediator. Hell is the place where men face God without a savior, without anybody to pay their debt of sin. If you thought Satan’s minions were scary, imagine being face to face with all God’s wrath with no Jesus in sight.”

—Nathan Terrell

This is the state and condition of all men by nature — “*Cursed!*” That is where we were when Christ came. That is where we were when God found us by his grace. But, bless his name, he did not leave us there. Our text speaks of another state. Look at our text again. — “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*”

REDEEMED

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Second, the Holy Spirit describes all God’s elect in a state of redemption. — “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.*”— Our Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was appointed and called to this work by his Father. He voluntarily agreed to be our Redeemer because of his great love for us. The Old Testament prophets spoke of him as that One who would come into the world as our Redeemer. And in the fulness of time he came here in human flesh to redeem us. By his obedience unto death as our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus has obtained eternal redemption for us with his own blood.

- He was abundantly qualified to redeem us, as our Kinsman Redeemer.
- He was willing to redeem us, because of his honor for God’s law and his great love for us.
- He was able to redeem, because he is God.
- And he “*hath redeemed!*”

Is that good, or what? Now, watch this. — “***Christ hath redeemed us!***” The Lord Jesus Christ, when he died upon the tree actually redeemed somebody. Here the people he redeemed are called “*us.*” I take that to mean that our Savior did not redeem those who are not redeemed, and that he did redeem all who actually are redeemed. The “*us*” that he redeemed are...

- **God’s elect** (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- **Those for whom he prays** (John 17:9, 20).

(John 17:9) “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

(John 17:20) “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.”

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- **Those the Father gave him to redeem before the world began and those whom the Father gives him in the saving operations of his grace** (John 6:37-40).

(John 6:37-40) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

- **Those who believe him, receive him, and trust him** (John 1:12-13).

(John 1:12-13) “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

We were lost, cursed, condemned, under the sentence of the law; but Christ redeemed us, bought us out from under the curse by his own precious blood.

How did our Savior redeem us? “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*” He was made to be a curse for us! He was made to be sin, the cursed thing; and being made to be sin for us he was made a curse for us. We were under the curse; but Christ was made to be the curse!

(Isaiah 53:10) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

(2 Corinthians 5:21) “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

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“It is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*” The place where that is written is Deuteronomy 21:23. The text Paul is quoting here actually reads, “He that is hanged upon the tree is the curse of God.”

DELIVERANCE

The word “*redeemed*” means “bought out, or delivered from.” It has the idea of the deliverance of captives by a lawful ransom. Let’s think about that deliverance which our all-glorious Christ has accomplished for us by his sin-atonement death as our Substitute upon the cursed tree.

- **He delivered us from all to which the curse subjected us, present and future, physical and spiritual, temporal and eternal:** — the bondage — the exile — the imprisonment — the shame — the misery — the darkness — the woe — the death — the wrath — the hell! From all this Christ has delivered us; and the is deliverance as complete as it is free.
- **Our blessed Savior delivered us by a just, lawful purchase.** There was a heavy price put on our heads by the law of God. The price must be paid in some way, else the full curse must be poured out upon us. But our great God says, “*Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom!*”
- **Redemption is deliverance by a Substitute.** Christ is our Redeemer, our all-glorious Substitute and Surety, in whom we have redemption (Ephesians 1:7).

(Ephesians 1:7) “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Our Savior coined the ransom money out of his own Person. He took our place, bore all our guilt, and endured all our curse. The Son of God stood before the law in our place, as the offender, as the guilty one, and the curse that was due us fell on him as his curse. When he was made sin for us, the curse that was ours fell on him, because our sin was made his! He died the just for the unjust, the blessed for the cursed, the holy for the unholy. He took the curse and the sword of justice into his own holy being and exhausted both the curse of the law and the sin that called for the curse by his one great sacrifice for sin!

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- **Redemption is deliverance by Christ** (Isaiah 63:1-5; 59:16).

(Isaiah 63:1-5) “Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (2) Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (3) I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.”

(Isaiah 59:16) “And he saw that *there was* no man, and wondered that *there was* no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.”

He loved us. He pitied us. He redeemed us. He delivered us. His own right hand and his holy arm have gotten him the victory. Christ is our Deliverer, our Ransomer, our Substitute, our Savior. He sets the captive free!

- Redemption is deliverance by Christ, but not merely deliverance by power. **Redemption from the curse of the law is deliverance by Christ crucified, deliverance by a penal Substitute, deliverance by the crucified Lamb of God.**

We must be saved by blood, or we cannot be saved. — “*Without shedding of blood is no remission*” (Hebrews 9:22). The Substitute must hang upon the tree, lifted up between heaven and earth, cursed by heaven and despised by earth. He must bear our shame, endure our anguish, and die our death. Christ was made a curse for us. Being made a curse, he was crucified. Crucified, he put away our sins, removed our guilt, paid our debt, took away our punishment, took away our doom, took away our judgment, and took away our curse.

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There is therefore now no condemnation and no possibility of condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Who are they for whom there is no curse, no possibility of condemnation? Who is in Christ? They are those who believe God, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

(Romans 8:1-4) “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

“*Christ hath redeemed us!*” — The work is done, finished, complete, and effectual! **The cross is the key that opens the prison door, takes away the bars of death, and delivers sinners from hell.** The work was done by Christ alone upon the cursed tree. — “*Christ hath redeemed us!*” Redemption makes it a just and righteous thing for the holy Lord God to justify the ungodly and release the guilty.

Are you listening? This fact, “*Christ hath redeemed us,*” brings God’s holy law, by which we were cursed, over to our side. Justice satisfied demands release! How often the Lord God would have destroyed Israel in the wilderness, had not Moses stood between God and his people (Exodus 32:10-11, 32; Deuteronomy 9:19, 25; 10:10; Psalm 106:23).

(Psalms 106:21-23) “They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; (22) Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* terrible things by the Red sea. (23) Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them.*”

- Moses represented the law and justice of God.
- And Moses represented the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, by whom the law and justice of God are fully satisfied.

BLESSED

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That brings us to verse 14. Do not miss connecting link between Galatians 3:13 and 14. It is the word “*that*.” And that makes it clear that **all the redeemed, though cursed by nature, are brought into a state of blessing by grace.**

(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Redemption involves more than merely removing the curse and making a way for the blessing to come. **Redemption brings the blessing of Abraham, the blessing of God upon Abraham, upon the redeemed.** The blessing must come upon the redeemed. Else...

- redemption is incomplete,
- grace is frustrated,
- the love of God is meaningless,
- the blood of Christ is insignificant, a worthless waste,
- justice falls to the ground,
- and God almighty, all-wise, all-good, is a cruel monster who slaughtered his Son for nothing!

Our great God and Savior did not leave his work incomplete. He not only took the curse away, he supplanted it with the blessing! Let’s look at verse 14 line by line.

“**That the blessing of Abraham**” — What is that? Let’s look in the Book of God and see. The Holy Spirit tells us that it is the blessedness of righteousness by divine imputation, by faith, without works. The blessing of Abraham is the blessing of free justification by the righteousness of Christ (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3-6, 9, 16).

(Genesis 15:6) “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

(Romans 4:3-6) “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (4) Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. (5) But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the

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ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (6) Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,”

(Romans 4:9) “*Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.”

(Romans 4:16) “Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,”

“**That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles.**” — It was promised to Abraham that in him, in his Seed, Christ, the Gentiles, God’s elect scattered through all the nations of the world, would be blessed with this gift of free justification by imputed righteousness, the blessing of redemption (deliverance) from the curse of the law.

Obviously, this does not mean that the blessing of free justification would come upon all the Gentiles, for all are not justified. Rather, this blessing comes to all who were ordained unto eternal life and redeemed by the blood of Christ. And, as **John Gill** declares, “in consequence of that (they) believe in Christ.”

In other words faith is not the cause of the blessing, but the consequence of it. Though God’s elect were blessed with this blessing, along with all other spiritual blessings, in Christ Jesus before the world began (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:9), the curse of the law stood between us and the personal knowledge, experience, and enjoyment of it. We could have no peace and comfort in our souls until, trusting Christ, we saw the curse removed. **It is not faith that makes a sinner righteous. Yet, there is no righteousness to be had without faith in Christ.**

“My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice

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To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing redeeming love.”

— Isaac Watts

Now, watch this. — **The blessing is ours only “through Jesus Christ.”** — Christ is the Mediator from whom and through whom this and every blessing of grace comes to the children of God. We have it in him, through him, and by him.

Look at the next line. — **“That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”** What does that mean? Is Paul here telling us that we receive (The word is a very strong word. It means “take,” or “catch,” or “lay hold of.”), the Holy Spirit by faith, that we induce the Holy Spirit to come to us and give us life by faith? Of course not!

- If that were the case, none would ever be blessed, because anything left up to dead men must go undone.
- To suggest such an absurdity is to make the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice and its result depend upon helpless, spiritually dead sinners.
- Faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:8), the fruit of the Spirit in us (Galatians 5:22-24); and the operation of his grace and power (Ephesians 1:19; Colossians 2:12).

Paul’s meaning is that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, making a way for us to receive the Spirit of promise and all the blessings of the sons of God by him (Romans 8:15; Gal. 4:4-7).

(Romans 8:15) “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

(Galatians 4:4-7) “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, (5) To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (6) And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (7) Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

THROUGH FAITH

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Now, look at the last two words of verse 14. — “**through faith.**” — “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*”

The blessing cannot be obtained by works. It is obtained by faith, by faith that it might be by grace (Romans 4:16)

(Romans 4:16) “Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.”

Christ’s blood expunged the black record of our sins and delivered us from the curse of the law. Faith in him brings the blessing of redemption and righteousness, forgiveness and peace, justification and reconciliation to us (Romans 4:23-5:11).

(Romans 4:23-25) “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; (24) But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; (25) Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

(Romans 5:1-11) “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were

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enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

Abraham got all he had, simply believing what God told him. Even so, we get all the blessing of grace simply by believing God.

APPLICATION:

1. **The curse of the law is no idle threat.** It is real, terribly real. “*The wrath of God abideth*” on him on whom that curse lies. Flee from the curse. Flee the wrath of God! Escape for your life! “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”

“Ye sinners seek his grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear.
Fly to the refuge of the cross
And find salvation there.”

2. **The blessing promised is no idle promise.** It is sure and true. God, who cannot lie, made the promise to his own darling Son before the world began. He promised his Son that he would give eternal life to his people (Tit. 1:2-3).
3. **The way to obtain this blessing of free justification, perfect righteousness before God; and everlasting salvation in Christ is neither difficult, nor costly, nor mysterious.** It is simplicity itself. It is the easiest of all easy things. Nothing but pride and self-righteousness makes it difficult. To give up and let go all self-righteous hope and drop into the open arms of Christ is all. — To believe on the Son of God is to obtain the blessing. — “*He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life.*”

Illustration: — *Ed Solomon’s comments about his relationship with B. H. Carroll* — “One day I will stand in the presence of our Heavenly Father,” Dr. Carroll’s voice radiated his joyous faith as he continued. “And He will, because I have received His Son on earth, He will receive me into His glory even as He would receive His only begotten Son.”

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Amen.