

## SERMON PREACHED AT THE SUNDAY CONVENTION SERVICE

by

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In the name of Jesus Christ, the only genuine Savior for all sinners, dear friends:

Our sermon text is from the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 17 and 18:

*“For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”*

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Jesus set forth a strong warning to us and to all His followers when He said: *“Beware of **false** [pseudo, lying] prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* (Matthew 7:15). The Savior made it very clear to each of us and to all of His followers that such prophets are **dangerous**, to be avoided (Romans 16:17-18), even though they may **appear to be and seem to be harmless and not dangerous**, which is their *“sheep’s clothing.”*

In Jeremiah 23, the Lord Himself did not hide His opposition to such false, pseudo, and lying prophets when He said: *“Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that **use their tongues and say, ‘He saith’**”* (v. 31). We, likewise, should not hide our opposition to such lying prophets today who **misrepresent God** and who **do not speak for God**; they are **not His mouthpieces**. They speak for themselves; they are their own mouthpieces. Indeed, such prophets are always to be avoided and not listened to or supported in any way (I Timothy 6:5c).

BUT Christ Jesus is NOT such a prophet. He is not a liar; in fact, as God, He *“cannot lie”* (Titus 1:2a). He Himself declared: *“I am...the Truth”* (John 14:6). Our sermon text for this Convention Sunday confirms these facts. Therefore, let us this morning, on the basis of John 1:17-18, gladly and willingly affirm that

**Christ, the Divine Prophet, Proclaimed the Grace of God through His Vicarious Atonement.**

**I. He redeemed us from the curse of the Law given by Moses on Mount Sinai.**

**II. He proclaimed to us in the Gospel His grace and truth gained for all people.**

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### I.

*“The Law was given by Moses.”* God revealed and gave His Holy Law in writing to Moses (Deuteronomy 5:22b) on Mount Sinai. Moses was God’s instrument in conveying this divine Law to the people.

What does this written Law of God say to us (and really to all people)? God’s Law is what God teaches us on how we are to be and not to be; what we are to do and not to do. God is serious in His written Law; He is *“a jealous God”* (Exodus 20:5b), as well as a just and holy God. His Law, given in writing to Moses, demands of us perfect obedience (Matthew 5:48), perfect

holiness (Leviticus 19:2), that is, a perfect sinless life. This written Law of God is summarized in Jesus' own words: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, ...and...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

The consequence of failing to do everything that this written Law of God demands of us is spoken of by James in his Epistle, where he says: "*Whosoever shall keep the whole Law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*" (2:10), for "*sin is the transgression of the Law*" (I John 3:4). Failing to do everything that this written Law demands is sin against God, for it is His Law which we are guilty of violating and transgressing, even if it would be only in one point, even if we would sin ignorantly. If God would hold and charge every one of our sins against us, who of us could stand before Him uncondemned and not guilty of His just wrath and punishment? The Psalmist, in Psalm 130, confessed: "*If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee*" (vv. 3-4).

Where did this forgiveness of our sins, our iniquities, our failures, and our imperfections come from? This forgiveness came from our divine Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15), Christ Jesus, who "*hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree'*" (Galatians 3:13). This divine Prophet, Christ, redeemed us already **in eternity** when He, the Lamb of God, was "*slain from the foundation of the world*" (Revelation 13:8b); but He also, in time, at a certain point in the history of this world, redeemed us, as the Apostle Paul teaches us in Galatians 4, where he says: "*When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*" (vv. 4-5).

This redemption, this payment of the required price to God, was done not only for us, but for all sinners in the whole world, as Paul, the Apostle, plainly tells us that Christ "*died for all*" (II Corinthians 5:15a; see also v. 14). This was Christ's passive obedience, His suffering and death in our behalf, paying to God "*the wages of sin*" (Romans 6:23a), even suffering for us the very pains of hell (Matthew 27:46). Furthermore, Christ also placed Himself under the demands of God's Law in our behalf, and perfectly carried out those demands for us and for all, which is His active obedience. Christ Himself declared: "*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17; see also Galatians 4:4-5). The results of this vicarious atonement, this substitutionary reconciliation of the world to God by Christ, the divine Prophet, are the forgiveness of sins for the world (John 1:29), the objective justification of the world (Romans 3:24; II Corinthians 5:19), and the declaration of righteousness for the whole world (Romans 5:19b).

This finished work for the world of sinners by Christ, the divine Prophet, the "*Seed*" (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16) of the woman, "*the Angel of the Lord*" (Genesis 22:15-18), "*the Messenger of the covenant*" (Malachi 3:1) is and will always remain the only foundation for saving faith; for "*Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*" (Romans 10:4). This completed redemption by Christ ought ever to be an on-going cause for all believers in Christ, the divine Prophet, to continue to praise, honor, adore, respect, and worship Him every day of our lives. Let us not become weary of and negligent in praising, honoring, adoring, respecting, and worshipping this dear Christ, our divine Prophet and our divine Redeemer as He proclaims to us in the Gospel His grace and truth, gained for all.

## II.

"*Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*" What is grace? Grace is that undeserved, unearned,

and unmerited loving kindness, merciful favor, and free gift of God in Christ, on account of Christ, and because of Christ, the divine Prophet; grace is the proclamation of Christ's vicarious atonement, His vicarious satisfaction, His substitutionary and satisfactory work gained for and given to all sinners.

Because this Christ is true God with the Father, and is therefore in the bosom of the heavenly Father, He has revealed and made known to us the heart of God, the mercy of God, and the love of God, as He did, for example, to Nicodemus when He said to Him: "*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but He that believeth not is condemned already, because He hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*" (John 3:14-18). The grace of God must **always** be traced back to Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul declared to the believers at Corinth and to each of us: "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*" (II Corinthians 8:9).

"*Grace **and truth** came by Jesus Christ.*" Jesus declared of Himself: "*I am the Way, **the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me***" (John 14:6). Christ, the divine Prophet, spoke the truth through "*Moses and the prophets*" (Luke 16:29 and 31; 24:25-27; John 5:46), especially the truth of the Gospel; He spoke the truth Himself when He was here on earth, declaring Himself to be the only Savior for sinners and the only Way to heaven (John 14:6a); and He still speaks the truth today through those who preach and teach faithfully in the Pastoral Office (Luke 10:16; II Corinthians 5:20). The Apostle Paul brings this home in I Corinthians 4, where He said: "*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*" (v. 1).

Because "*no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.*" Christ Jesus revealed and made known to the sinful world the heavenly Father's very thoughts and desires, for He and His Father are "*One*" (John 10:30). The heavenly Father, at the transfiguration of Christ Jesus, showed this Oneness when He declared of Christ Jesus: "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; **hear ye Him***" (Matthew 17:5). Let us, with our faith clinging to that grace and truth which Christ Jesus has brought to us and for us in the Gospel, continue to hear Him and His Word as they are preached and taught in their truth and purity yet today. Let us be encouraged, strengthened, and comforted by the words of our Savior in John 10: "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand*" (vv. 27-28). Amen.

***Soli Deo gloria!***

