

Title:           **WHO FIRST TRUSTED IN CHRIST?**

Text:           Ephesians 1:12

Subject:       *The Father's Trust in Christ*

Introduction:

After faithfully preaching the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ for nearly 50 years, on the last day of his life in this world (April 6, 1827) Robert Hawker quoted these verses of Holy Scripture to some friends and briefly explained their meaning (Ephesians 1:3-12).

(Ephesians 1:3-12) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (8) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (9) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

**When he got to verse 12** — “*That we should be to the praise of His glory Who first trusted in Christ.*” — The old pastor paused and asked, “Who

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Reading:   *Ephesians 1:1-14*

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first trusted in Christ?” And then made this answer: “It was God the Father Who first trusted in Christ.”

### **WHO?**

Actually, the word translated “*Who*” is in the plural. That fact has led many good commentators to object to Hawker’s interpretation of the words, suggesting instead that Paul must have had in mind Old Testament believers, the early Jewish believers or the apostles themselves.

But Hawker’s interpretation is, in my opinion, the only interpretation that fits Paul’s language, though it is true that the masculine article translated by the English pronoun “*Who*” (τοῦν) must refer to more than one person. It is written in the plural because it refers to the entire Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You see, all three Persons in the Holy Trinity trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Surety with all the purpose and glory of the triune God, as it is set forth in this passage. **Throughout this paragraph God the Father is spoken of as the Covenant Spokesman for the Holy Trinity.** We are saved to the praise of the glory of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, not just to the praise of the glory of the Father. **And Christ is spoken of as the Covenant Spokesman for his elect, as our Surety.**

This interpretation is even more obvious when we realize that the word translated “*trusted*” (προηλπικोटαν) is a perfect participle implying an action completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated. It is a word that is used nowhere else in the Bible. When the Scriptures speak of our faith in Christ another word is used. The words here, “*trusted in*,” would be more accurately translated “fore-hoped in,” or “hoped in beforehand,” or “hoped in advance.” So when the question is asked, “*Who first trusted in Christ?*” the answer Paul gives is in this text is “The triune God, for whose glory and by whose grace we are saved in Christ.”

**Nothing else will fit the context** in which our text is found. Paul is talking about the inheritance we have obtained in Christ already, from eternity, according to God’s sovereign, blessed, eternal purpose of grace in Christ our Surety. He is explaining to us the mystery of God’s will revealed in Christ (Eph. 1:7-12).

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(Ephesians 1:7-12) “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (8) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (9) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

**The Apostle Paul tells us three times in these fourteen verses that the purpose of the Triune God in our salvation is that we should be to the praise of his glory. One reason given why we should desire his glory is given in these words** – “*That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*”

## **THE COVENANT**

Our heavenly Father entered into a covenant with his Son on our behalf before the world began for the saving of our souls. In Hebrews 13:20, it is called “*the everlasting covenant.*” Frequently it is called the “*new covenant.*” This covenant was made in eternity, between the triune God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and Christ our Mediator and Surety; but it was made for us. **In so far as the benefits and blessings of it to us are concerned, it is an unconditional covenant.** The Lord God said, “*I will love them freely? I will be their God; and they shall be my people.*”

This everlasting covenant of grace is **a sure covenant**, a covenant which infallibly secured and guaranteed to God’s elect all the blessings of salvation and eternal life in Christ (Jer 31:3, 31-34; 32:38-40 2 Sam. 23:5).

(Jeremiah 31:3) “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

(Jeremiah 31:31-34) “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that

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I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (34) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

(Jeremiah 32:38-40) “And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: (39) And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: (40) And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.”

(2 Samuel 23:5) “Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.”

**The only condition to the covenant and the blessings of grace and salvation promised in it was the obedience of the Son of God as our Surety unto death** (Heb. 13:20). And there never was a danger of that condition not being met by the Son of God! There was never the slightest possibility of failure on his part. He was willing to obey. He was able to obey. And he did obey his Father’s will even unto death, even unto the shedding of his blood, “*the blood of the everlasting covenant!*”

(Hebrews 13:20-21) “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (21) Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

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### THE FATHER'S TRUST

**Having found a ransom for our souls in the Person of his own Son, our heavenly Father gave his chosen into the hands of his Son, as sheep into the hands of a shepherd, and trusted him with the salvation of our souls and the glory of his own great name.** In the covenant of grace, before the world began, when the Son of God volunteered to become our Surety, God the Father trusted his elect and all his purposes of grace toward his elect, into the hands of his dear Son. God the Father trusted Christ as our Surety, Shepherd, and Savior long before we did (John 6:37-39).

“All that the Father giveth me (**GIVETH ME PRESENTLY, IN REGENERATION AND CONVERSION**) shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me (**HATH GIVEN ME FROM ETERNITY, AS A TRUST INTO MY HANDS**) I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

Thus it is that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of all his sheep as being his sheep, which he must bring into the fold, long before many of his sheep were born. He spoke of the all as his present possession, though he declared plainly that they were not yet in his fold (John 10:16).

(John 10:16) “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.”

In the everlasting covenant of grace, God the Father trusted his Son, our all glorious Christ, with the salvation of his elect, and thus with the glory of his name from everlasting. **When our Savior had finished his great work of redemption** whereby he secured the salvation of all the chosen, he asked and the Father gave to him, as the just reward of his obedience, the glory he had with him before the world began (John 17:1-5; Heb. 1:1-3; 10:1-14). **But notice that the glory given him when he had finished his work is the glory he had with him as our trusted Surety before the world began.**

(John 17:1-5) “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to

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heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: (2) As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. (3) And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (4) I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. (5) And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

## **OUR TRUST**

“*In whom ye also trusted*” (Eph. 1:13). — At the appointed time of mercy, grace and love, every chosen, redeemed sinner is born again and called by the irresistible power and grace of God the Holy Spirit to faith in Christ. This God given faith is not the trust of some imaginary *Jesus* who tries to save, but cannot do so without the consent of man. Oh, no! That Jesus is an idolatrous figment of man’s depraved imagination! This God given faith is faith in the same Christ the Father trusted from eternity — **THE ALMIGHTY COVENANT SURETY WHO CANNOT FAIL!**

## **TRUSTWORTHY**

If God the Father has trusted his glory to his dear Son as our Substitute and Savior and trusted the salvation of our souls to his hands, how we ought to trust him with our immortal souls and with all that concerns us. If the Father trusted him, he is a trustworthy Savior!

**Upon the basis of this covenant, our heavenly Father accepted us and blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ from eternity** (Eph. 1:3-6; Rom. 8:28-30).

(Ephesians 1:3-6) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

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(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

## **OUR SURETY**

Let me, in the few minutes that remain, tell you about our great Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father trusted from eternity, and whom we trust today (Heb. 7:22).

(Hebrews 7:22) “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”

I want to show you what a surety is and how the Lord Jesus Christ performs the work of a surety on our behalf. They say that one picture is worth a thousand words. So let me first give you a picture of a Surety, and then try to explain a Surety’s work.

### **Illustration:** *Judah became Surety for Benjamin* — Genesis 43:8-9

Back in Genesis 42:36-38, when Reuben volunteered to be a surety for Benjamin, Jacob would not allow it. Why? Because our Surety is he who came from the tribe of Judah, not from the tribe of Reuben. He is “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah.*” Therefore, when Judah volunteered to be surety for Benjamin, Jacob agreed to it.

(Genesis 43:8-9) “And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones. {9} I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever:”

**Proposition:** As Judah became Surety for Benjamin the Lord Jesus Christ became Surety for God’s elect in the covenant of grace.

### **Divisions:**

## **WHO FIRST TRUSTED IN CHRIST?**

1. What is a Surety?
2. How did Christ become our Surety?
3. What did the Lord Jesus Christ agree to as our Surety?

## **WHAT IS A SURETY?**

A surety is one who approaches one person on the behalf of another person. He is a representative man who lays himself under obligation to another person for the one he represents. In this sense, Christ is our Surety. He drew near to his Father on our behalf, and laid himself under obligation to God for us (Ps. 40:7-8).

(Psalms 40:7-8) “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, {8} I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.”

A surety is one who strikes hands with another in solemn agreement. **Suretyship is, to a man of honor, a voluntary bondage** (Pro. 6:1-2).

(Proverbs 6:1-2) “My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, *if* thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, {2} Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.”

**When Christ became our Surety, he voluntarily placed himself in bondage to his Father until his service was performed** (Isa. 50:5-7; John 10:16-18).

(Isaiah 50:5-7) “The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. {6} I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. {7} For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”

(John 10:16-18) “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. {17} Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. {18} No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment

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have I received of my Father.”

**This is what the Lord Jesus Christ did as our Surety in the Covenant of Grace, before the world began.**

- He drew near to God on the behalf of his elect.
- He promised to faithfully perform all that God required for the salvation of his people.
- He struck hands with the Father in solemn agreement.

**God the Father entrusted his elect people into the hands of his Son as our Surety, and the matter of our salvation was then and there settled forever** (Eph. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:9-10). — *“The works were finished from the foundation of the world.”*

(Ephesians 1:12) “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-10) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, {10} But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:”

## **HOW DID CHRIST BECOME OUR SURETY?**

**We commonly think of a surety today as a mere guarantor**, a co-signer who is jointly responsible with the principle debtor for the payment of a debt. Not so with Christ!

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not merely agree to meet our obligations to God’s law if we, by some circumstance or condition, became incapable of meeting our own obligations. Our blessed Savior, as our Surety, took the whole of our obligation before the law of God upon himself.

**With men a surety may be legally forced into suretyship.** A father is legally responsible for the debts and legal liabilities of his minor children. But Christ voluntarily, cheerfully placed himself in servitude to God’s law and will as the Surety of his own elect. From the instant he became Surety

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for his people, he became servant to his Father (Isa. 42:1; 49:3; John 10:17-18). **The Lord Jesus Christ is an absolute Surety by voluntary consent.**

(Isaiah 42:1) “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.”

(Isaiah 49:3) “And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

(John 10:17-18) “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”

### **Illustration:** *The One Room School*

1. **When he became our Surety, Christ took the whole of our debt upon himself.**

He became responsible for our obligations. As soon as he was accepted as our Surety, we were released from all of our debts and obligations to God’s holy law.

### **Illustration:** *The Legal Transfer Of A Note*

As soon as God accepted his Son as our Surety, he set us free. He ceased looking to us for satisfaction. He freed us from all bondage, all curse, all penalty, and all obligation; and looked to his Son for satisfaction of our debts (Job 33:24).

(Job 33:24) “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.”

### **Illustration:** *Paul became surety for Onesimus (Philemon 18).*

(Philemon 1:18) “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account;”

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### **2. When Christ became Surety for us, our sins were imputed to him.**

By divine imputation, our sins were placed to his account, he became responsible for them. Christ was made to be sin for us when he hung upon the cursed tree. But he became responsible and accountable for sin when he became our Surety (2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 53:6; Ps. 40:12; 69:5).

(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.”

(Isaiah 53:6) “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

(Psalms 40:12) “For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.”

(Psalms 69:5) “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.”

### **3. When Christ became our Surety, we were then and there redeemed, justified, pardoned, and made righteous in the sight of God.**

God’s forbearance, patience, and long-suffering with this world is due to the suretyship engagements of Christ. God’s eye has always been on the blood. It is the blood of Christ, our Surety, that held back the hand of God’s judgment when Adam sinned.

- **The Old Testament saints** were pardoned, justified, and forgiven upon the basis of Christ’s obedience as our Surety, though he had not yet actually rendered that obedience (Isa. 43:25; 45:24-25; Heb. 11:13-16).

(Isaiah 43:25) “I, *even I, am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”

(Isaiah 45:24-25) “Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *even* to him shall *men* come; and all that

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are incensed against him shall be ashamed. {25} In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

(Hebrews 11:13-16) “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. {14} For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. {15} And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. {16} But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

### 2. **Those blessed saints of old had knowledge of and faith in Christ as their Surety** (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 32:1-4; 119:122; Isa. 38:14).

(Job 19:25-27) “For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: {26} And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: {27} Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.”

(Psalms 32:1-4) “ Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered. {2} Blessed *is* the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile. {3} When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. {4} For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.”

(Psalms 119:122) “Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.”

(Isaiah 38:14) “Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with* looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake (be Surety) for me.”

**The Lord Jesus Christ became our Surety by his own voluntary will.** And he was accepted as our Surety in the Covenant of Grace, before the world began. God, as it were, trusted him to be the Surety of his people (Eph. 1:12-14; John 6).

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(Ephesians 1:12-14) “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. {13} In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, {14} Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

### I. **WHAT DID THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AGREE TO AS OUR SURETY?**

When Christ became our Surety, he made certain promises in the name of his covenant people that he is honor bound to perform. These promises were voluntarily made, without any constraint or force, except the constraint of his love and the force of his grace. But now, having made those promises, he is bound to perform them, bound by his own honor. What are those promises? What did our great Surety agree to do? — Basically, our eternal Surety agreed to do two things:

#### A. **He agreed to meet and perfectly fulfill all our responsibilities to God.**

Standing as our Surety, in an absolute sense, Christ did not simply assume part of our responsibility in a given area. He became absolutely responsible for his people in all things.

1. He agreed to render that **perfect obedience to the law**, “*establishing righteousness for us*,” which we were obliged to do. He worked out a legal righteousness for his people. — “*I have finished the work.*”
2. He agreed to **satisfy the penalty of the law** as our Substitute. — “*It is finished.*”

By his perfect obedience, in life and in death, our great Surety magnified the law and made it honorable (Heb. 10:5-14).

(Hebrews 10:5-14) “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: {6} In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast

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had no pleasure. {7} Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. {8} Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; {9} Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. {10} By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. {11} And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: {12} But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; {13} From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. {14} For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”

**B. Christ, our Surety, agreed to bring all his elect safe to glory** (John 6:39-40; 10:16).

(John 6:39-40) “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.”

(John 10:16) “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.”

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ became responsible to bring God’s Benjamins safely home. — “*If I bring them not unto thee, and set them before thee, then let me bear the blame forever.*” It is because of his Suretyship engagements for his elect that our Lord says, “*Them also I must bring.*” What our Surety has sworn to do he must do (Heb. 2:13).

(Hebrews 2:13) “And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.”

1. He reconciled us to God in his sin-atonement death.
2. He entered into Heaven as our Covenant-Head and claimed our eternal inheritance in our name, as our Surety.

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3. He will, in the last day, present all of his elect faultless before the Father's glory with exceeding great joy.
- In that day, he will appear without sin.
  - We will appear without sin.
  - His Father will say again, "Well done!"

**Illustration:** *Rowland Hill's Dream*

**John Jasper** – "He'd lose mo' den me. I'd lose my soul; but he'd lose his glory!"

**Hebrews 7:22** "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."

**Isaiah 42:1-4** "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, *in whom* my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. {2} He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. {3} A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. {4} He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."

**Christ alone is the Object of the Father's trust, and Christ alone is the Object of our trust.**

“Christ exalted is our song,  
Hymned by all the blood bought throng;  
To His throne our shouts shall rise,  
God with us by sacred ties.

Shout, believer, to thy God,  
He hath once the wine press trod;  
Peace procured by blood Divine,  
Canceled all thy sins and mine.

Here thy bleeding wounds are healed,  
Sin condemned and pardon sealed;  
Grace her empire still maintains;  
Love, without a rival, reigns.

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In thy Surety thou art free,  
 His dear hands were pierced for thee:  
 With His spotless garments on,  
 Holy as the Holy One.

Oh the heights and depths of grace!  
 Shining with a glorious blaze;  
 Here the sacred records show  
 Sinners black, but comely too.

Saints dejected, cease to mourn,  
 Faith shall soon to vision turn;  
 Ye the kingdom shall obtain,  
 And with Christ exalted reign."

**Be sure you do not fail to grasp the teaching of Holy Scripture regarding the matter of our acceptance before God.** Our acceptance is in Christ our Surety. Our acceptance is from everlasting to everlasting. Our acceptance is absolute and unconditional. Our acceptance means that God the Father, our heavenly Father, looks upon us in Christ as perfect in him, and has done so from eternity. He declares, "*It must be perfect to be accepted!*" Being "*accepted in the beloved,*" our heavenly Father has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ from eternity and has promised to bless us forever for Christ's sake (Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 1:9). The Lord God commanded Aaron, his high priest, to bless his people symbolically (Num. 6:23), because he had sworn from eternity, for Christ's sake, saying, "*I will bless them*" (Num. 6:27). Bless us he has; and bless us he shall, because our Surety is a faithful Surety, a Surety worthy of the everlasting trust of the Triune God (Eph. 1:11-14).

(Ephesians 1:11-14) "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

## **WHO FIRST TRUSTED IN CHRIST?**

Children of God, we are in the grip of God's grace; and we have been from eternity. Therefore, he would not let us go, and will not let us go.

**Illustration:** Some years ago on a hot summer day in south Florida a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house. In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks and shirt as he went. He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore. His mother—in the house was looking out the window — saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, she ran toward the water, yelling to her son as loudly as she could. Hearing her voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his mother. It was too late. Just as he reached her, the alligator reached him. From the dock, the mother grabbed her little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs. That began an incredible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go. A farmer happened to drive by, heard her screams, raced from his truck, took aim and shot the alligator.

Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the animal, and on his arms were deep scratches where his mother's fingernails dug into his flesh in her effort to hang on to the son she loved. The newspaper reporter, who interviewed the boy after the trauma, asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs. And then, with obvious pride, he said to the reporter, "But look at my arms, I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my Mom wouldn't let go".

You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars, too. No, not from an alligator, or anything quite so dramatic. But the scars of a painful past. Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But, some wounds, my friend, are because God has refused to let go. In the midst of your struggle, He's been there holding on to you. You are in the grip of his grace. He did not and will not let you go.

**WHO FIRST TRUSTED IN CHRIST?**

Amen.