

The Herald Of Christ's Kingdom

November/December 1999

Basic Bible Doctrine

EDITOR'S JOURNAL

"If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."—1 Timothy 4:6

Doctrine has been likened to the bone structure of the body of Christ. It forms the framework around which the Christian character is built. As true science reveals the mechanical workings of the Creator, so true biblical doctrines gives us an insight into his moral character.

Psychiatrists have long shown that when children reach their adult years, they tend to mimic their parents. Thus abused children often become abusive parents; those raised with a strict father become strict with their children; those with indulgent parents have a tendency to spoil their offspring.

In a similar vein, Christian behavior is based largely on the individual's concept of God. It is little wonder than the inquisitors of the past burned heretics at the stake or that Hitler fomented the Holocaust in twentieth century Europe. The credal God they accepted as their model was a deity who punished disobedience with an eternity of torture. They were only mimicking their caricature of Jehovah.

Fortunately, there has been a tendency in recent years to revise these demonic doctrines of past centuries. In 1950 the United Church of Canada became the first major denomination to rid itself of the doctrine of inherent immortality, a doctrine which forced the believer to consign unbelievers to a place of eternal torture and punishment for their failure to accept Christ. In recent years the Episcopal Church has followed suit and, just this year, Pope John Paul II has similarly stated that hell is not a place, but a condition.

From the very early days of Christianity, there has been much discussion on the nature of God. When the Nicean Council, in 325 AD, determined on the trinitarian formula which was never so expressed in the Bible, the debate was far from over. In the century that followed the official doctrine of the church swung back and forth between Arianism and

that expressed in the Athanasian Creed. Over the centuries, and even today in many Christian churches, there are those who sincerely dissent with the trinitarian expression.

In this issue of **THE HERALD**, a number of these basic doctrinal issues are treated in some detail. It is best to start with an overview of God's plan. This has been depicted graphically by Charles Taze Russell in his book, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*. A copy of his chart, along with an article covering the concepts it is meant to convey opens our issue. This article is simply entitled *The Plan of God*.

The nature of God is dealt with in the succeeding article—*Mystery or Confusion?* The author deals not only with the scriptural evidence for a concept of oneness, but the origin of the trinity doctrine as well.

The verse-by-verse Bible study is on the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Entitled *The Resurrection of the Dead*, this study investigates the detailed reasoning of the apostle Paul on this important subject.

The central role in God's plan is that played by Jesus at his first advent. Calvary has correctly been described as the crossroads of time. This theme is dealt with in length in the article entitled *Ransom and Restitution--How Long?*

The work of Jesus in man's salvation is closely connected with that of his church. In *One Redeemer, Many Saviors*, the author distinguishes between the function accomplished by Jesus alone and those in which he associates his bride, his church.

The results of the salvation process will eventually produce life on two planes of existence. *Salvation--Heavenly and Earthly* delineates the promises of God for each of these groups and the roles they are to eventually play in God's plan.

The final article answers a frequently asked question: *Where Are the Dead?* This question requires an examination of the nature of the human soul. In treating this subject, the author deals with the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. One of the editors of this journal, in a dissenting opinion, offers an alternative explanation in *On the Other Hand*.

While there are many more basic Bible doctrines which deserve discussion, we trust that the space given to these will be profitable to our readers as they search the Scriptures to see how God deals with his human creation.

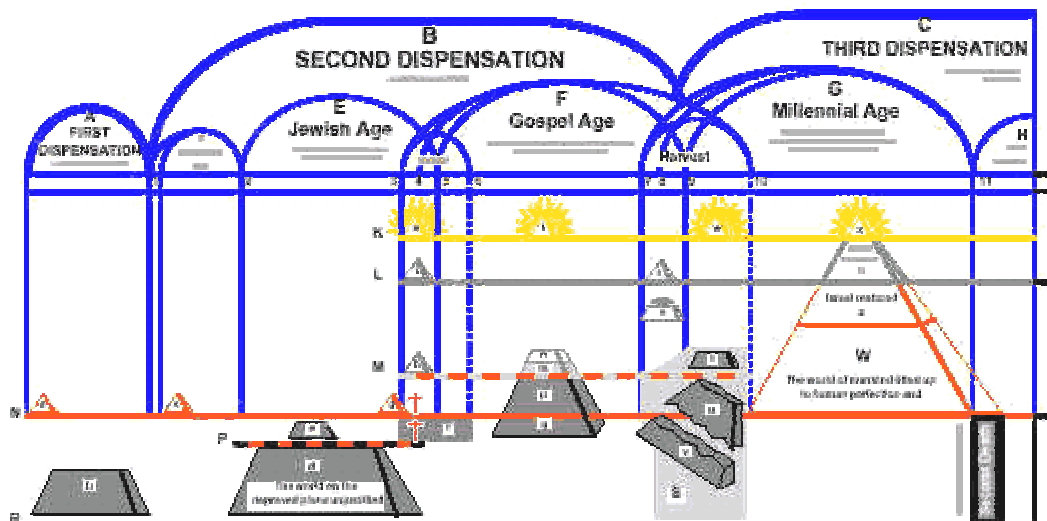
The Plan of God

In due time Christ died for the ungodly.—Romans 5:6

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.—1 Timothy 2:5,6

Peter Knapp

What is the significance of the phrase "due time"? It implies, as Ecclesiastes chapter 3 affirms, that God has a time for everything, even the acting out of his plan. Why was there a right time, or a wrong time, for Christ to die? Why should there be a right time, or a wrong time, for Christ to be made known to all mankind? How can there be a **wrong** time to save men from evil? The answers lie in God's treatment of



time.

To Bible Students, the most well-known illustration of the Bible is the "Chart of the Ages," as promulgated by Charles T. Russell. As with any good, visual tool, the chart's power resides in being able to communicate numerous, complex concepts in a concise and effective manner. The effectiveness of its communication, though, depends on one being familiar with the biblical concepts it purports to express. The chart is a historical representation and does not yield any self-evident truths. In order to understand what the chart symbolizes, one must be knowledgeable of biblical history.

The chart presents a two-dimensional representation of the Bible: **time** on the X axis and **choices** on the Y axis. The uniqueness of Russell's chart is two-fold: first, his handling of time; second, his collation of previous dispensational views into a coherent framework. He divides time according to **activities**. God has chosen to deal with man inside the bounds of specific time periods (ages and dispensations) and the constraints of specific relationships (covenants). Those time periods, and the covenants which define them,

outline the choices which God has placed before mankind at various times, and they provide a backdrop to mankind's relationship with God throughout history.

Paul's statement regarding God's **due time** (1 Timothy 2:6) encapsulates the uniqueness of the dispensational approach to biblical interpretation. Biblical interpretation is not unlike a musician reading a page of music. Many musicians can read music with proficiency, but most are unable to explain the structure behind the music they play—the page is simply a string of notes. However, when the theory behind the music is understood, the notes become part of a larger structure of scales, chords, and a hierarchy of compositional relationships. These features can affect the perception and interpretation of the music, as well as make it possible to distinguish historical differences particular to various time periods: Beethoven is different from Bach, who is still more different from Brahms. So it is with God's word. Rather than being a stream of disconnected and arbitrary incidents, the events of the Bible converge into a focused and directed goal—the recovery of mankind—within clearly defined historical periods.

Three Worlds

In 2 Peter 3:5-13 we find three main divisions of biblical time: "the world that was" (before the flood), "the present heavens and earth," and "the world to come" (the kingdom). Obviously, the flood makes a logical demarcation between the first two worlds, but it also places the emphasis on the role of the angels and their offspring, the Nephilim. That transgression represented one of the grossest violations of God's order, the mixing of natures. The state of affairs which had developed indicated the extreme lawlessness which was threatening human morality. To put it briefly, there was no formal system of Godly law before the flood, there were only individual relationships.

Paul explains a principle which summarizes the situation: "Where there is no law, there is also no violation" (Romans 4:15). The biblical world before the flood was characterized by a society based on patriarchal control. As far as we are informed, the worship of God by Adam and his descendents extending to Noah, depended on the sparsest fragments of information regarding God's expectations; they were presented with remarkably few choices. God was cultivating the individual relationship during the first dispensation. No matter what the formal arrangements, God has always, ultimately, sought the individual.

Whereas the first dispensation depended solely on an individual's relationship with God for instruction, the second dispensation, particularly during the Jewish age, is marked by broader laws and formal order. It demonstrated, unambiguously, the nature of God's law and mankind's sin, and further provided a means wherein every individual could eventually find God. Ideally, though, this law must be taken to heart, as Jeremiah states: "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" (Jeremiah 31:33). This will be the goal of the third, and final, dispensation: God's universal law made personal for all mankind.

This broad framework of the three worlds needs details. Within the second and third dispensations, there are numerous, significant changes in how God dealt with, and will deal with, mankind. The first dispensation was relatively brief, and requires no further discussion. However, it does provide the crucial clue to deciphering God's many and varied actions during subsequent dispensations.

In Genesis 3:15, God promised a deliverer, a seed to crush the serpent. This promise is a chain; it stretches through history from Eden lost, all the way to Eden restored. Often lost or forgotten, but never broken, this chain represents the development of the promised seed. It is the common link, the guiding and overarching goal of every endeavor, every punishment, every blessing, and every cursing. All of God's acts have been linked to this chain—to the rise of **this** seed.

The development of the promised seed provides the philosophical underpinning of the chart. It can be demonstrated that all of God's covenant arrangements are related to this seed, upon which depends the salvation of the world. Consequently, mankind's options have been limited by the time period in which they lived, and the covenant which defined it.

God presented Abraham with a choice: follow me, inherit an unknown land, bless all of mankind, or stay (Genesis 12). With Abraham, we have the beginning of more personal, more specific covenants, specific to the seed. Noah had been called to save a remnant of the world, whereas Abraham had been called to save all the world. Again, consider how exceptionally few, real choices mankind has had. At this time, only Abraham held **the** choice. At any time throughout the chart's history ask, "What options are open to a person?" The paucity of choices is informative because it underscores God's singleness of purpose.

A Nation Developed

Through Abraham, God set in motion the beginning of a nation. The struggles and challenges which faced Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob foreshadowed the great struggles their seed would face as a nation. In Egypt, the seed languished in slavery. What purpose could be served in enslaving his people? It is said that the best wine comes from grapes which have struggled to find water, struggled to grow, struggled to bear fruit. Mankind's struggle with evil is not lost on God. He has responded by creating a seed born of adversity.

Eventually, the seed became a nation, but the lessons and trials of developing into a Godly, discerning people were more than Israel could bear as a whole. The privilege, yet weighty responsibility, of being God's covenant people took a demanding toll. Through the period of the judges and the kings, Israel suffered more often than they prospered, all because they broke the covenant. In spite of their numerous wanderings, God never let the promised seed die. He preserved the seed even through destruction and captivity.

Having been sanctified by the law, Israel was separated into stars and sand, spiritual and earthly. Paul's argument in Galatians concerning Sarah and Hagar is clear about this. The law covenant leads to Christ through consecration, not by regulations, but by the separation which they exact. The law divides clean from unclean, holy from profane, Jew from Gentile, priest from layman, and, as expressed in the spirit of law, spiritual from earthly. It is interesting to consider that if Israel, or at least enough of them, had fully realized the implication of consecration, their history would have been quite different.

The close of the old testament begins the period of time called the "silent years." After God spoke "to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways" (Hebrews 1:1,2) he stopped speaking altogether for over 400 years. The covenant, the people, and the seed continued, although dormant. God had planted, watered, nurtured, pruned, and uprooted his people, his seed; now, it lay buried, waiting to be revealed in his son.

Jesus, the True Seed

With the advent of Christ, the seed finds its truest, most real, and most important fulfillment. In the words and life of Jesus are seen the real beauty of the seed, that is, not simply in its saving power, but in its ability to empathize as it saves. This concept is carried further by Paul when he argues that the body of Christ is not one member, but many (1 Corinthians 12:14). He further asserts that "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (Galatians 3:29). In both Christ, and his followers, mankind will find the true priesthood.

The covenant opened by the death of Christ, which allowed "strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12), to be one with the Son of God is **the** opportunity, **the** choice. In due time, mankind will hear the testimony of Christ and decide if they wish to become part of this seed, the sands of the sea. Israelites indeed will have the privilege of helping mankind, in that final covenant, meeting the challenge of their opportunity, **their** choice. That is what the plan of God is about: the right time for the right choice.

The limited choices which mankind has had throughout history should not be viewed as a shame, a missed opportunity. Life is always a gift. When Paul lists his heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, he is not simply delineating a group of people who happened to be in the right place at the right time. He is focusing on men and women who had an unshakable vision of faith. They did not lament what could have been; they took what was in their hands and bent it to their wills. They saw the time and the choice, and never looked back. That is what we should do.

The Chart of the Ages shows every facet of God's character harmonized and unadorned. It is most powerful when seen in its simplicity. The plan pictured by this chart demonstrates God's willingness to take responsibility for his actions, his choices. In spite of man's failings and stubbornness, God has, time and again, acted as both just and the justifier (Romans 3:26). He has satisfied his justice in every respect, yet he has also shown grace and mercy at every opportunity.

The Doctrine of the Trinity

Mystery or Confusion?

There is but one God, the Father.--1 Corinthians 8:6

David Rice

All who consider the issue agree that the doctrine of the Trinity is incomprehensible. Its most ardent proponents suppose this to be a strength--that as we cannot comprehend the majesty and glory of the infinite Creator, so we cannot fathom his nature and being. Not so. The Creator has explicitly revealed himself through his word as a mighty, unitary being, the great first cause of all things, having no equal, no predecessor and no successor. He is Jehovah by name, and God by title. For 4000 years those who worshipped him and trusted him had no hint, no surmise, no suggestion that he was other than the single, unitary God he declared himself to be. "Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). "Know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD" (Isaiah 43:10, 1).

Christ--The Long Awaited Messiah!

The Jews were aware that God would send a Messiah (Hebrew) or Christ (Greek)--one anointed by God as his prophet, his servant. Moses told them, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). Isaiah said, "Behold my servant, whom I

uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him" (Isaiah 42:1).

These prophecies--and many more like them--consistently describe Messiah as a highly honored subordinate of God Almighty. Jesus was that promised Messiah. He was no ordinary messenger. He was in fact the very son of God, so termed 47 times in the New Testament. Jesus performed every duty faithfully, and has now been exalted to the "right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:9). Jesus, always an obedient son to his heavenly Father, now exalted above all others, is still a devoted son and subordinate of the heavenly Father. He does not assume his honor, glory or service on his own. On the contrary, he receives these at the hand of his Father and superior, God himself. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God ... So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son" (Hebrews 5:4,5). "The Son of man came ... to the Ancient of days ... and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:13,14).

What is the Trinity?

The Trinity is a doctrine formulated in the fourth century to describe the view of some leading churchmen concerning the nature and relationship of God, Jesus and the holy Spirit. It was enunciated in a series of creeds: The Nicene Creed (325 AD), The Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 AD), and the Athanasian Creed (around the fifth century AD). It took various forms and used multitudes of words so complex and enigmatic it is incomprehensible.

Some Christians consider "trinity" simply to imply belief in God, Jesus and the holy Spirit--a broad platform all Christians can endorse. Differently, but still quite simply, the first use of this word in early Christian writings referred merely to the existence of "God, his Word, and his Wisdom" (Theophilus of Antioch, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 2, page 201). But as the doctrine evolved in the fourth through the sixth centuries, it became much more mysterious. It asserted that God is actually composed of three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all coequal and co-eternal.

The Scriptural truth, on the other hand, is neither mysterious nor incomprehensible: God is one person, his son Jesus is a second person, and the holy Spirit is not a person at all. It is the spirit, power and influence of God. Jesus is subordinate to his heavenly Father. God existed from eternity, but there was a time before the creation of his son Jesus when God was alone. However, let us examine four essential components of the Trinitarian view, closely, against the scriptures.

Who is God?

It is customary in Trinitarian language to speak of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These are assumed to be proper titles, and used extensively. Yet in the Scriptures only one of these appears, "God the Father," and that not as a title, but an expression denoting that God is the Father. "There is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things ... and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things" (1 Corinthians 8:6). The term appears 11 times in the New Testament. By contrast, the terms "God the Son" and "God the Holy Spirit" do not appear at all.

The word "God" appears about 1200 times in the New Testament. Nearly all of these refer to God himself. Not once does this word refer to the holy Spirit.

However, as a word, "god" has a variety of applications. For example the Old Testament Hebrew word "elohim" (god) can describe any high dignitary (e.g., Abraham—Genesis 23:6). In the King James translation it is rendered angels, God, gods, great, mighty, judges. Its Greek counterpart "theos" likewise has a broad usage. Strong's Concordance defines it as: "a deity, especially ... the supreme Divinity; fig. a magistrate." If this word can describe a magistrate, then it can certainly describe Jesus, and it is so used six times in the New Testament (John 1:1,18; 20:28; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1). It is

used in John 10:35 of the worshippers of Jehovah. Once it even refers to Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4).

None of these uses should confuse us about who is really the one and only supreme God of the universe, the one both Jews and Christians naturally and freely term "God"--Jehovah, the Almighty God of all. However two texts, frequently cited in support of the trinity, deserve special attention: John 1:1 (discussed separately later), and John 20:28. The latter text records the startled exclamation of praise and adoration by Thomas on seeing the resurrected Christ: "My Lord and my God." Does this mean Christ was verily great Jehovah himself? Of course not. Theos (god, magistrate) is the term of great respect, awe and worship Thomas attributed to his Lord and Master. Indeed, in the very same chapter, Jesus explained to Mary Magdalene that he had not yet ascended "unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). Clearly Jesus recognized almighty God as distinct from, and superior to, himself. God is, as Paul declared, "the Father." No scripture uses the expressions "God the Son" or "God the Holy Spirit"!

Are Jesus and God Co-Equal?

According to the Scriptures, they clearly are NOT equal. In every case, where God and Jesus are referred to in the same context, Jesus is subordinate, and the Father is superior. Here are some of the many texts on this issue: "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, that is, God" (Luke 18:19). "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). "The Head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). "[Jesus] sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). "Then shall the Son also himself be subject ... that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28) Perhaps most telling of all is that Jesus recognizes God as his own God--his superior, to whom he renders adoration, worship and praise (Matthew 27:46; John 20:17; Ephesians 1:17; Revelation 1:6). No scripture says Jesus is co-equal!

Are Jesus and God Co-Eternal?

In the sense that both will always exist, yes. But that is true of angels and saints and all the obedient. The intent of Co-Eternal is that they always existed eternally from ages past, neither preceding the other. This is not true of Jesus. The Scriptures affirm that Jesus was "the beginning of the Creation of God" (Revelation 3:14), and the "firstborn of every creature" (Colossians 1:15). Therefore he had a beginning. There was a time before that when God was alone. Proverbs 8:22 says of Jesus, "The LORD created me the first of his works long ago, before all else that he made. I was formed in earliest times, at the beginning, before earth itself" (Proverbs 8:22,23, NRSV). No scripture says Jesus was coeternal!

Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

Ordinarily there would be no question about this. The holy Spirit of God anointed Jesus at Jordan, who received it not "by measure" (John 3:34). It is "poured out" and "shed" on others (Acts 10:45; Acts 2:17,33; Joel 2:28; Zechariah 12:10). Persons are not "poured," "shed" or "measured," but the spirit, power and influence of God is properly described this way. The holy Spirit of God is variously described in Scripture as the spirit of Truth, Holiness, Life, Faith, Wisdom, Grace, and Glory. The Scriptures also speak of an opposite spirit of Jealousy, Judgment, Burning, Heaviness, Whoredoms, Infirmary, Divination, Bondage, Slumber, Fear, Antichrist and Error. No one would suggest these are persons.

The Scriptures speak of the spirit of Jacob, Elijah, Tiglath-Pileser, the Philistines, Cyrus, Princes, the Medes, Zerubbabel, and Joshua. Of course these spirits are not persons.

Why, then, would any suppose the "holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30) was a separate being? Actually no one would (and no one did) until the time mysteries and philosophies began to enter Christian dogma. But today, centuries later, some suppose a support for the personhood of the holy Spirit because of the pronouns used for it in the New Testament. For example, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Of the Comforter Jesus said, "I will send him unto you" (verse 7). It sounds like a person because of the pronouns "he" and "him." A little examination into the Greek explains the issue. When "comforter" is meant, the pronoun is masculine, but when "spirit" is intended, the pronoun is neuter. Literally it could be translated "it will guide you." It is simply a matter of grammar, not of personality. The Greek word for "comforter" is a masculine noun, and that for "spirit" is a neuter noun. Therefore the pronouns necessarily follow the gender of the noun. (Actually the genders in verse 13 are supplied by the Greek verbs rather than by explicit pronouns.) No scripture says the holy Spirit of God is a person!

John 1:1

The only passage which even comes close to teaching the Trinity is 1 John 5:7,8. But today it is commonly accepted that the essential parts of this passage were not original scripture. The words at issue are an embellishment added to the text by an over-zealous scribe centuries after John died. No reputable modern version even includes them.

For this reason the focus of attention has turned to John 1:1. Clearly this verse does not teach the Trinity per se, because it does not even mention the holy Spirit, and one cannot have a "trinity" without three parties. But it does say "the Word was God" (King James translation), and this is close enough to one part of the Trinity to create interest. What did John mean by this?

There are three popular views:

1. He meant Jesus really was "God himself"; 2. He meant Jesus was "God-like"; 3. He meant Jesus was "a god."

Trinitarians are naturally drawn to the first view. But this view is in danger of proving TOO MUCH--that Jesus and God are the same person. Indeed, many Trinitarians assert this without recognizing this is more like the heresy of Sabellius than the orthodox trinity.

The problem becomes apparent when one compares John 1:1 with 1 John 1:2. Both texts are from the same author, about the same time, and express the same thoughts. John 1:1 says the Word was "with God," 1 John 1:2 says the Word was "with the Father." Clearly John intends that "God" was "the Father." Thus if John intends that the Word was "God himself," he must mean the Word was "the Father"--a conclusion no orthodox Trinitarian can embrace. For this reason the majority of translators, including Trinitarian translators, do not hold view one! Barclay explains View 2: "When John said that the Word was God he was not saying that Jesus is identical with God; he was saying that Jesus is so perfectly the same as God in mind, in heart, in being, that in Jesus we perfectly see what God is like" (William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1, page 17). In this camp are William Barclay, Martin Vincent, J.P. Lange, Robert Young, Brook Foss Westcott, Kenneth Wuest, George Turner, Julius Mantey, H.E. Dana, Moulton and Moffat. Typical of this view is the REB translation: "The Word was in God's presence, and what God was, the Word was." It is possible that this was John's point. However, View 3 fits the context even better. As many Bible students are aware, the words "a" and "an" (called indefinite articles) do not exist in the Greek language. If one wished to say "I saw a tree," in Greek it would be, "I saw tree." Everyone would know the intent is "a" tree. Therefore a translator would automatically supply it. This is done everywhere in the New Testament where the English word "a" or "an" appears.

In John 1:1 the text actually says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was [a?] God." Should the translator supply the intended "a" or not? That is the question. Contrary to many vocal claims on this issue, it is a sound and reasonable thing to do. C. H. Dodd, the driving force of the New English Bible, acknowledges, "As a word-for-word translation it cannot be faulted." (Technical Papers for the Bible Translator, 28, Jan. 1977, page 101ff, cited from James Parkinson, "The Herald," Sept-Oct 1996, page 23). Notice that the translators of the King James version had no hesitation in using "a god" in Acts 28:6 where the context makes it obvious. (It also belongs in John 10:33, as the logic of Jesus' reply shows.)

A very good reason for adding "a" in John 1:1 is John 1:18, but the point is hidden in the King James version. Today it is generally acknowledged that the better, earlier Greek manuscripts of this verse refer to Jesus as "the only begotten god" (see the NASB for example). John there says no one has ever seen "God," but "the only begotten god, which is in the bosom of the Father," has appeared to declare what God is about. First it is clear that by "God" John means "the Father." Second it is clear that John has two gods in mind--God himself, the unseen, and the son of God, Jesus, who in his own right is also a

mighty being, "a god." Since John 1:18 distinguishes two mighty beings, it is apparent that John 1:1 also distinguishes two mighty beings.

The Origin of the Trinity

Where did this doctrine come from? When did it come? For what Reason? How did it take hold? Probably it developed as an over-zealous response to the vital gnostic heresies which began to surface even in John's day, and afflicted the church for about two centuries. Gnostics proposed that Jesus was not actually the Messiah. Some say he was an apparition, or a materialization, others a simple man possessed for a time by the Christ. But all agreed that the Anointed, the Messiah, the Christ, did not suffer and die on the cross.

This fundamentally undercuts the truth of Christianity, and against such views were John's strong warnings in 1 John 1:22,23, 4:1-3, 2 John 7. Indeed, these epistles of John and even the Gospel of John, read with the backdrop of these heresies in mind, take on a fresh and deeper meaning than ever before. It is for this reason that John was forceful in affirming that the very Jesus "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (1 John 1:1) was the very Word of life who existed from ages before with the Father, the agent of all the Father's creative work from the beginning. This very one did indeed suffer and die on the cross for our sins. John was there when it happened, a first-hand witness: "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (John 19:35).

As John passed from the scene the gnostic heresies grew in strength, causing a severe pressure within the early Christian community. In combating this error, and in emphasizing the significance, uniqueness and importance of Jesus, the very Son of God himself, it was natural to attach more and more weight to him, even over-emphasizing his office and majesty beyond that allowed in the scriptures. Little by little a greater and greater image of him was put forward, resulting in such erroneous views as Sabellius put forward in the third century, claiming that Jesus was but an expression of the one God, and not a lesser though glorious separate being. This was generally rejected, but in the end a sad compromise was reached which left distorted the real verities regarding Christ, the highly honored Son of the Most High God.

The early affirmation of the Church fathers that Christ was both created and subordinate gave way to new theories, until the old adherents were moved to a staunch defense. The great Arian controversy erupted as a result, philosophy was argued in the name of Christian doctrine, and a great rift formed in the fledgling body of Christ.

Jesus was in fact the Son of God. He was made flesh, dwelt among us, and gave his life in death so that Adam and his race could be freed. He gave the ransom with his own flesh. In due course he will introduce his kingdom among men, all evil will be restrained, and a kingdom of righteousness established worldwide. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ... that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:24,28).

The Resurrection of the Dead

But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.--Luke 20:35,36

A verse by verse study in 1 Corinthians 15 Few chapters in the Bible are more appreciated than the apostle Paul's dissertation on the resurrection of the dead in 1 Corinthians 15. The resurrection concept sets Christianity apart from the other major religions. Particularly notable in this chapter is the order of the resurrection, with both spiritual and earthly phases.

The Gospel--Verses 1 through 4

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

The gospel, or good news, which Paul preached was the same which had been "preached before unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed" (Galatians 3:8). This was the good news of salvation. There is no other path to eventual salvation than through belief in this gospel as characterized in the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, the "seed of Abraham" (Galatians 3:16; Acts 4:12).

Paul identifies the two essential elements in this gospel, namely, that Jesus both died and was raised from the dead. Jesus' death provided the ransom price for Adam, and thus the entire race in his loins. Important as that was, however, it required Jesus' resurrection to place him in a position to use that price and apply it for the raising of the human race from the dead.

Proofs of the Resurrection--Verses 5 through 11

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

Paul condenses the eleven post-resurrection appearances to three, probably considering these sufficient to prove his point. He highlights the first appearance to an apostle, Peter; his appearance to the entire group of apostles, including Thomas (using the term "the twelve" as a title since obviously Judas was not present); and to a group of 500. This number does not appear in the writings of the evangelists, but is probably a detail omitted in the account of Matthew, where he appears in a mountain in Galilee to "his brethren" (Matthew 28:7,10,16). Tradition places this mountain as Mount Tabor, a mountain which many consider to be the Mount of Transfiguration, where Peter says that he was "an eye-witness of his majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).

Paul proceeds to add himself to the list of witnesses. Although modestly calling himself "the least of the apostles," he defends his apostleship with the zeal with which he prosecuted that office. However, he concludes, the office was not the relevant matter. What was of real import was that this was preached by the apostles because of their strong conviction that the resurrection of Jesus was a verifiable reality.

The Importance of Jesus' Resurrection -- Verses 12 through 19

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

The doctrine of the resurrection was not new to the Jewish religion in the days of Jesus. It was, in fact, the dividing issue between the two major sects of the time. The Sadducees did not believe in it, while the Pharisees did. The Pharisees admitted that the resurrection would occur because of their Messiah. Paul is carrying their argument one step further--your Messiah has come. He is Jesus of Nazareth. His resurrection, which you cannot logically dispute, is proof of the resurrection of all. Conversely, if you deny the fact that he is raised you are denying the fact that any will be raised.

Beyond that, he states that their witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus would all be false testimony. This is why it was so important to call over 500 witnesses to the stand to testify to this resurrection. Luke makes the same positive assertions, calling attention to the "many infallible proofs" of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:3). It was for the same reason that Peter, mistakenly feeling that the brethren must select a successor to Judas, insists that the candidates for such an office must be "a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:22).

Not only would the fact that Jesus had not been raised make a mockery of their resurrection hopes, it would undermine the very principle on which such a resurrection

would be based--the cancellation of Adamic sin. They would remain under the death penalty for this sin.

While the term "they which are fallen asleep in Christ" seems an obvious reference to his followers, the Christians, it need not be limited to them. The hopes of all--Christian and non-Christian--lie in the fact that they are under the ownership of the Messiah. Many Christians may contest Paul's last statement in this section. They can testify to the fulfilling nature of the Christian life. Many might state that, if there were no resurrection, living a life by biblical principles is the very best and happiest way to live. But this does not negate Paul's arguments. One of the most fulfilling aspects of the Christian life is having a message of comfort to give to those who have died. If Christ be not risen from the dead, this entire message of comfort is false and misleading.

The Order of the Resurrection--Verses 20 to 28

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

The word translated "resurrection" in this chapter is the Greek *anastasis*, literally meaning to stand anew. The word does not refer to such resuscitations as that of Lazarus, or even of the awakening from the dead in the kingdom of Christ. It refers to a full standing, a reaching of perfection, mentally, morally, and physically. All men are guaranteed an awakening from the dead merely by virtue of being part of the Adamic condemnation. Man does nothing to merit this awakening. But those who attain to the "resurrection of the dead" must be "accounted worthy" so to do (Luke 20:36).

Herein lies the distinction between verses 21 and 22. In verse 21 we see that one man, Adam, introduced a lifestyle of sin. Such a lifestyle would be reversed by the work of one man, Christ, in his kingdom. Verse 22 looks at the means of arriving at such a resurrection--the redemption of Adam guaranteed an awakening from death to all his posterity. The word "firstfruits" is used in two senses in the New Testament. It is used of Jesus alone and it is also used of his followers (James 1:18; Revelation 14:4). In this chapter Paul is placing his emphasis on Jesus alone.

This passage is parallel to 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with

a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The indication is that not even the followers of Jesus would experience their resurrection change until the Lord returns at his second advent. Bypassing the work of Christ's thousand-year kingdom, Paul jumps to the end of that time with the simple statement: "Then cometh the end." The "end" here spoken of is the end of that kingdom when mankind shall have reached perfection. Christ, having achieved his objective, relinquishes the earth and the perfected race to the grand sovereignty of God, that he may be all and in all.

In the book of Revelation we find that when that kingdom shall be completed, Satan will be loosed for a "little season" (Revelation 20:7-10). The purpose of this "little season" is to give the resurrected and educated race a final test of fidelity. While many believe that this final test follows the turning over of the kingdom to the Father mentioned in our text, some of us are more comfortable with the thought that it precedes that transaction. The "little season" forms a type of quality control demonstrating which members of the redeemed race will remain loyal.

It does appear, however, that the office of Mediator will no longer be in force during this testing time. It will be in this short period that the greatest enemy mankind has ever known, Satan, will be destroyed forever.

Practical Application--Verses 29 to 34

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

An active belief in Christ's resurrection means much more than the acceptance of the fact as a reality. It means a commitment to that belief. Paul describes this involvement as a baptism for the dead. This is the same baptism Jesus referred to in answering the plea of the mother of James and John that they could be at his right and left hand in the kingdom. "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able" (Matthew 20:22).

This is not a baptism into water, but the reality which that act symbolizes. It is, as Paul phrases it, to "die daily." It involves a willingness to put personal life in jeopardy for the sake of the gospel. It is a commitment to sacrifice. This sacrifice is not without purpose. The experiences of the church, like those which Jesus endured, are to train them to be a

sympathetic high priest to help the human race in their walk from imperfection and sin to perfection and holiness (Hebrews 2:17,18; 4:15,16; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

Paul's fighting with the beasts at Ephesus does not refer to his being placed in the sports arena with literal beasts, but refers to his disputations and persecution at the hands of those of beastlike disposition in that city (Acts 19:23-41).

The conclusion that he might as well take the attitude of "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die" is purely rhetorical. To ensure that his readers understand this, he follows with his warning against such an attitude saying, "be not deceived." It is just such evil conclusions which dilute the Christian's focus. Rather, he incites them to "awake to righteousness" and to the proclamation of the resurrection of Christ, for "some have not the knowledge of God."

The Manner of the Resurrection -- Verses 35 through 50

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Paul's chief concern in his letter to the Corinthians is the church of Christ. Therefore he concentrates on the heavenly or spiritual resurrection. His initial illustration is that of the seed. The seed that is planted bears little resemblance to the plant which grows from it. That seed must die as a seed to give life to a new and better form. Although many seeds look similar, their end products vary widely. Yet each seed has the same genetic makeup as the plant which springs from it. So with the Christian; the character makeup which he forms now will become the nucleus of what he is to become. He is advised to "lay up treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

The Christian is to experience two different bodies--the present terrestrial or earthly one and the resurrection body of a celestial or heavenly nature. Not only will the celestial bodies be more glorious than their earthly counterparts, but even they will differ from each other as one star does from another.

Returning to the theme of redemption, Paul again reverts to the comparison of Adam and Christ, calling Jesus "the second Adam." The first man was made with life, the second with the power to restore life. The first was made of the "dust of the earth" (Genesis 3:19), the second became a glorious heavenly being. Therefore the Christian must share this human body in order to acquire the spiritual one. What that body will be like we are not informed, except as the apostle John writes, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

In the Last Days--Verses 51 to 57

Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Trumpets were a familiar sound in Israel. There were trumpets of alarm, trumpets of assembly, the feast of trumpets, the trumpet of jubilee, and many others. Paul, however, appears to reference one particular trumpet by calling it "the last trump." If the epistles to Corinth had been written after the book of Revelation, one might be tempted to believe that he was alluding to the last of seven trumpets found in that book. However, Corinthians was written first and therefore cannot draw on Revelation for reference.

There was one series of trumpets, however, with which the Jews were familiar. These are found in the account of the fall of Jericho when Israel first began to conquer the promised land (Joshua 6:1-16). It is probable that both John and Paul drew their pictures from this event. These were trumpets of judgment; they were also trumpets of victory.

Many Bible Students feel that the seven trumpets of Revelation are parallel in time with the seven churches and seven seals. They also express the thought that the last of this series begins with the return of Jesus Christ. This is supported by 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." It is this trumpet which heralds the final judgments of God and also the victory of those who were "dead in

Christ." It is then that these dead saints are raised to meet their Lord "in the air" and to be joined, as they individually die, by those "which are alive and remain." Paul seems to refer to two classes who will be "changed" in this resurrection: the corruptibles who put on incorruption and the mortals who put on immortality. This must be taken as either a poetic repetition of one event or, more probably, as referring to the same two classes mentioned in the Thessalonians text. If that is the case, the "corruptibles" would refer to those who have already died, the "dead in Christ" who rise first; while the "mortals" refer to those who "remain," the living saints, who will be changed at their death to immortality.

When this resurrection is complete "death will be swallowed up in victory." This is a quotation from Hosea 13:14 and appears to be one of many examples where an Old Testament text is quoted, not for its contextual meaning, but for the significance of the words themselves.

In harmony with the disputes concerning the law at the first advent, Paul adds that "the sting of sin is the law," that is, by identifying sin the Israelites who remained subject to its commands could identify the guilt which would bring their death. "Thanks be to God," exults Paul, they would have victory over the law by coming into Christ.

The Lesson--Verse 58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Now Paul reveals the real purpose of the whole chapter. Jesus did rise from the dead. Their faith was not in vain. This knowledge should give them fresh impetus to carry on their missionary work. Because their faith was not based on idle speculation, but the verifiable truth of the resurrection, they should redouble their efforts. And so should we, dear brethren, since we know that because he arose, we too shall arise if we are faithful to the commandments of our Lord and to the proclamation of his word.

Ransom and Restitution -- How Long, O Lord?

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:19-21

Richard Doctor

"My claim is that, like all other apes, humans are not the work of God, but of thousands of millions years of interaction among highly responsive organisms." So asserts Professor Lynn Margulis of Amherst College, 1996 keynote speaker at the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual convention.[1] This claim may not seem naive to those who advocate the operation of blind evolutionary forces in nature. But can this claim be proven by the scientific method?

The answer is no. This pronouncement serves no purpose but to diminish God while elevating unconscious process. If man came to his present state through the blind operation of evolution, there is no God providentially watching over him. Restitution—a restoration to what was lost in Eden—clearly would not be a blessing.

We should welcome the marvelous progress in the life sciences. However, the province of science must properly be limited to determining the "how" of nature's workings. We must turn from science to other and higher sources for the answers to "why" of nature's workings. From this perspective let us examine several "why" questions related to the Bible's claim that perfection and peace with God on earth under conditions of blessing once were man's natural possession.

Adam—Connected to the Life of the Earth

Why is "Adam" named after the redness of the soil from which he is formed?[2] "The [red] blood is the life" (Deuteronomy 12:23). Might it be that the redness shows that man in his very nature is connected to the earth and all the living creation entrusted to his care? As Professor Margulis admirably points out, man is one of the threads woven into the tapestry that draws together "the series of interacting ecosystems that compose a single huge ecosystem at the Earth's surface." [3] But these are not blindly woven threads; man has a God-given purpose—that of the wise and loving dominion over the earth:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them."—Genesis 1:26,27

All the promise and potential for the beauty and blessing of the interconnected life on earth was placed into Adam's care. The living creation and man share a common design, common genetic make-up, and common biology. Today, even for the inorganic creation, we speak of it being knit together with life in "biogeochemical" cycles. Man and earth are inseparably linked. Man is blessed with a consciousness of himself and, at the same time, spiritual yearnings that transcend the temporal: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? . . . For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor . . . thou hast put all things under his feet"—Psalm 8:3-6.

The apostle Paul adds an important footnote to this psalm. He observes that it contains as yet unfulfilled earthly promises of restitution: "But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"—Hebrews 2:6-9.

The scriptures in Genesis 3 record that life, the fellowship between man and his Creator, and mankind's dominion were lost through deliberate and unwise disobedience to God. Indeed, we would remain aliens from God were it not for God's own dear son dying as our ransom (1 Timothy 2:5,6). In the broadest sense, the humiliation, pain, suffering and ultimately death that our Savior endured held forth a promise. Through Jesus there is peace with God and life to all who are willing. However, in the most technical and narrow legal sense, the apostle Paul explains that the ransom—the purchase back of a perfect human life with a perfect human life—is the payment of Christ for "Adam," the "red-man" linked to the life-blood of the earth (Romans 5:17-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22).

Paradise Recovered—Our Common Hope

Why does Paul say, "the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God?" (Romans 8:19-23). Could this refer to the misty remembrance of both the fall and the promise of restitution permeating world cultures? After tracing the belief in restitution through the mythology of the ancient world, and then across Africa, Asia, and Polynesia, noted University of Chicago Historian of Religion, Mircea Eliade observes that mankind is obsessed with this promised restoration. He summarizes his observations this way: "[Mankind] desires to live in the world as it came from the creator's hands, fresh, pure, and strong . . . the religious man of primitive societies . . . is above all a man paralyzed by the myth of the eternal return [to this state]."[4]

Late in life Carl Jung, the Swiss founder of Analytical Psychology, placed the basis for a belief in restitution at a deeper level than cultural transmission. To Jung, our souls seek

for restitution with the same instinctive expectation we seek for a mother and father. That is, restitution falls into the special and select class of "collective images" which are inborn in our hearts. "Undoubtedly," he concludes, "the Christian tradition . . . found in Acts 3:21 . . . [concerning the] restitution of the origin of the world . . . [is a] collective image." [5]

Why has there been such resistance to this doctrine among Christians? The great scientist and Bible scholar Sir Isaac Newton observed nearly three hundred years ago: "So then this mystery of the restitution of all things is to be found in all the prophets: which makes me wonder with great admiration that so few Christians of our age can find it there." [6]

Is it the craving for the spiritual above all else that explains the exclusive focus on the heavenly promises? Is it the belief that, "The Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23)? Let us all take a delight in the earthly creation as did our Heavenly Father when he made it. God's promises through all his holy prophets for making the earth glorious are sure through the ransom of Christ Jesus and the restitution blessings that will flow from it (Isaiah 60:13).

Why the delay?

Before the restitution blessings linked to Christ's ransom sacrifice can come, the call and development of the church is necessary. The church's call places special demands upon the ransom merit—that is, the value of the ransom entrusted to the Father's hands. If this were not the case, restitution blessings could well have begun at Pentecost. The church's call is not to give an additional ransom-price, nor to add to that which Jesus gave. The church's invitation is to demonstrate that they have the same spirit and disposition that Jesus had. This disposition seeks to do the Father's will at any cost—even unto death. Those sanctified in Christ thus may be accepted of the Father as members of a Royal Priesthood, of which Jesus is the Head. [7]

Daniel 12:4 speaks of both the blessings and tribulations of this tumultuous "Time of the End." Both prophetic and secular evidence supports the view that mankind entered these times in AD 1799 at the dawn of the industrial revolution. God is preparing the hearts and minds of mankind for the kingdom blessings—though these be ushered in through judgments against wrongs of the religious, political, social, and economic systems in the great troubles of our day.

The fifty-year Jubilee feature of the Law in Leviticus 25 was intended for the renewal and restoration of the land. As such, it served as a figure for the Times of Restitution. While Israel found itself without the strength to keep the Jubilee feature of the law perfectly, the Lord had already foreseen their weakness and employed the Jubilee system to point forward to the great work of restitution—Earth's Great Jubilee. [8] The method of reckoning this Great Jubilee opens wonderful results to us. They assure us that we have the correct key and are using it as was intended by him who formed it. Fifty times fifty years gives the long period of twenty-five hundred years ($50 \times 50 = 2500$) as the length of that great cycle.

We know that such a cycle *must have begun to count* when the type ceased. If not one jot or tittle of the Law could pass away without a fulfillment at least commencing, then the Jubilee type, which was far more than a jot or tittle, indeed it is a large and important feature of the Law, would not have been permitted to pass away until the right time for its antitype to begin. Hence, the 2500th year, which would be the great fiftieth Jubilee, must be the antitype, the real Jubilee or Restitution. The testimony of the Jubilee cycle points to October AD 1874 as the beginning of the Earth's Great Jubilee.[9]

Chronology, Justice, or Grace?

Yet while the finger of chronology points forward to our day as the dawning of the long-awaited restitution epoch, has restitution begun?

Since A.D.1874, the dramatic regathering of Israel in preparation for the future pouring out of God's spirit is certainly an element of "restoration" (Acts 1:6), where the same Greek verb is used that is translated "restitution" in Acts 3:21. At the same time, the giving of law with its blessings and curses was an act of Grace not linked to what was lost by Adam in Eden (John 1:16-17, NEB). In the narrowest sense, from the standpoint of God's justice, evidences which point to the restitution blessings should be considered as manifestations of God's grace. These should be a source of joy and encouragement. God's divine acceptance of the Great Atonement Day sacrifice, when justice is satisfied, shall be manifested to all. Then shall the blessings freely flow:

"And there came fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat, which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces"—worshiped. This is the same thought expressed in another form. The fire symbolized God's acceptance; its recognition by the people showed that the world will realize the sacrifice and its value in God's estimation as the price of their liberty from death and the grave, and when they realize it they will worship Jehovah and his representative, the Priest.

That this is not yet fulfilled is evident. God has not yet *manifested* his acceptance of the great Atonement Day sacrifice, by fire; the people have not yet shouted and fallen on their faces in worship of the Great King and his representative.

No, the world still lieth in wickedness (1 John 5:19); the god of this world still blinds more or less nearly all mankind (2 Corinthians 4:4); darkness still covers the earth—gross darkness the people (Isaiah 60:2). Nor need we look for the great restitution blessings prefigured in this type until all the members of the Church, the "Body" of the great High Priest, shall have first gone beyond the Second Veil (actual death), *into* the Most Holy, by resurrection change. Nor will this "blessing" of the type be fulfilled until after the great time of trouble. Then, chastened, sobered, humbled, the

world of mankind will very generally be "waiting for" and "looking for" the great Christ, the Seed of Abraham, to bless them and lift them up." [11]

In examining the question of restitution, many of the Lord's dear people focus on the exactness of God's justice. Others focus on the exactness of God's chronology. Both are correct, yet both need to broaden their vision to see that the outworking of God's grace knits together ransom and restitution, chronology, and God's justice into one harmonious whole.

This is reasonable for even before the ransom was consummated on Calvary and the precious merit was deposited in the hands of justice, evidences of grace were sufficient in answer to the Lord's dear ones. These manifestations of God's grace were not the outworking of justice. "Are you the promised Messiah, or should we look for another?" queried John the Baptist from prison: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."—Matthew 11:4-6. The things reported to John are only a tiny foretaste of the great restitution blessings that will be to all people in Christ's coming kingdom.

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One Redeemer, Many Saviors

And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's.--Obadiah 21

Carl Hagensick

Jesus of Nazareth is the central figure in the Bible's plan for man's salvation. Closely associated with him in the work of uplifting the human race is his bride, the church. There are many roles which they, as supporting actors, carry out together with him. There are certain roles in this drama that he and he alone can play.

Redeemer

The word "Redeemer" is only found eighteen times in the King James Bible, all in the Old Testament. While usually referring to Jehovah as the author of redemption, there is at least one exception In Isaiah 59:20, "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD."

The Hebrew word *gaal* from which it is translated is rendered with eight different English words and is frequently referred to in Messianic prophecies. Specifically, the term refers to the right of purchase of a family inheritance by the next of kin.

In the New Testament, the words "redeem" and "redemption" are used many times and taken from a variety of Greek words including *lutrosis*, *apolutrosis*, and *exagarazo*. All relate to a purchase being made for a price.

Thus the concept of redemption or redeeming is a legal and economic one. It refers to a specific price being paid for a person or object. In the Greek, it is closely related to the nouns *lutron* and *antilutron*, signifying a corresponding price, an exact equivalent. The only use of *anti-lutron*, translated ransom, is found in 1 Timothy 2:5,6: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

The price of redemption or ransom, as a corresponding price, is supported in 1 Corinthians 15:21: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." This principle is based on the Mosaic law of strict justice which required "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Exodus 21:23-25).

Paul's equation in the text above is simple: one perfect life, Jesus, for one perfect life, Adam. This transaction is legal and just. It requires no addition. It is paid by Christ and Christ alone. As the hymn well phrases it:

*Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owe.*

Saviors

Savior means deliverer or liberator. The prophet seemingly applies this title to Jehovah alone in Isaiah 43:11: "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior." Yet, in a prophecy of Jesus' triumphal ride into Jerusalem, we read in Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Even the very name Jesus comes from the Hebrew *yasha*, or Joshua, meaning "Savior." When he was thus named, the angel said the reason for the name was that "he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The word is yet broader. Moses was the prototypical deliverer, saving Israel from their Egyptian bondage (Acts 7:35). In this act of deliverance he was a fit picture of Jesus (Acts 3:22,23).

The beginning text from Obadiah is still broader. It mentions "saviors," plural, on Mount Zion judging the mount of Esau. There is a parallel text in Revelation 14:1: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

The Revelator leaves no doubt as to who these are. In Revelation 14:4 we read of them: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

This group has five characteristics which identify them as the church, the bride of Christ:

1. They have the Father's name written in their foreheads. (More reliable manuscripts add the phrase "his [Jesus'] name" as well as the Father's name.
2. They are "virgins," pure ones.
3. They are footstep followers of the Lamb
4. They are redeemed **from among** men.
5. They are the firstfruits of redemption.

These, then, are the "saviors" of Obadiah's prophecy. What is their role as saviors? Obadiah defines it as "judging the Mount of Esau."

Judges

The Apostle Paul concurs with the use of this title for the church in 1 Corinthians 6:2: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world." The prophet Daniel, in his vision of world empires as four beasts, makes a similar statement: "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Daniel 7:22).

A still more thorough description of this work is given in Malachi. After describing how the Lord gathers those who fear him as a man gathers precious jewels, he concludes: "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18).

This text assures us that wicked men as well as righteous ones will be in God's kingdom. Jesus said as much: "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good [deeds] to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil [deeds] to a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28,29, NAS).

The Greek word here translated judgment is *krisis* and has the same meaning as our medical term "crisis," namely, that point in a disease where the outcome can go either favorably or unfavorably. Putting these texts together, we see that all the good and the bad will come forth from the tomb and that there will be a judgment, eventually rendering a decision, on those who have had an evil record. This work will be shared by the church with Christ.

In contrast with even the best of judgments today under imperfect men dealing with incomplete evidence, we are assured that the judgments of that day will be completely just. "And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness" (Psalms 9:8). "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Today an accused may plead insanity or ignorance of the law. The judgments of that day will be preceded by an educational program in which none will be able to make such pleas. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

Priests

The educational training of that kingdom will be done with the utmost of compassion as is shown in yet another title shared by Christ and his church: Priests. Many biblical verses speak of this role. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Revelation 1:5,6).

"Thou hast made them [to be] a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth" (Revelation 5:10, NAS); "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

Jesus is the great High Priest over this order of priests. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). His distinguishing feature in that role is compassion learned through sufferings common to others. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17,18). "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15,16).

The same compassionate understanding must be learned by the church. The experiences of the present life are for the purpose of fitting and training them to identify with the sins which fallen men experience and the consequences of those sins. The apostle Paul says of their experiences: "Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out" (1 Corinthians 10:13, TEV).

Another function of the ancient priests of Israel, specifically the high priest, was to be an intermediary between the people and God. This was done through the use of the "Urim and Thummim" (see Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21; 1 Samuel 28:6; Nehemiah 7:65). The priesthood was the link between God and man in a theocratic society.

A similar function is ascribed to the church as part of the "new heavens" in earth's future society. The prophet Hosea describes this role, picturing God as not speaking to the earth, but dealing with them through the new heavens. "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth" (Hosea 2:21). The same thought is expressed by David in Psalms 50:4-6: "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself."

Kings

Another role shared by Christ and his church is that of kings. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Timothy 2:11,12).

In Israel the role of a king combined the legislative and executive roles of government. Kingship was a position open to temptations of corruption. Unfortunately, the majority of Judah's kings and all of those of Israel fell to the corruption of absolute power. On the other hand, a king truly interested in his people could produce powerful benefits. This was illustrated in the reigns of such righteous kings as Asa and Josiah.

Earth's new dominion will be of the most righteous sort. It will combine the strictness of rigid enforcement of kingdom rules with the compassionate understanding of man's inherent weaknesses. It is for this reason that the training of these future kings is, as Paul phrased it to Timothy, by being "dead with him," by a course of sacrificial suffering.

Summary

Each of these roles--saviors, judges, priests, kings--is a part of God's redemptive plan for man's salvation. As saviors we see the militaristic function of deliverance. As judges, the emphasis is on the judicial aspects and the righteous adjudication of mankind's problems with sin. Priests serve in the intermediary capacity of connecting earthly man with his heavenly Creator. Kings assist in the execution of the laws that will govern man for all eternity.

Each of these roles is a part of God's great sin eradication project. Each helps to bring mankind back from their present sinful state to absolute righteousness. Each is a stepping stone on the "highway of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8-10). The present sacrificial offerings of the church prepare them for these glorious future activities. It is for this reason that many Bible Students see these experiences as "an offering for sin," while distinguishing them from the legal aspects of redemption which reside in Jesus alone in his unique position as the world's Redeemer.

The Resurrection of the Dead

Homer Montague

The Biblical declaration respecting Adam and Eve is that they were created in the image of God, blessed, admonished to be fruitful, and certified as being "very good" or perfect like all the Creator's work (Genesis 1:27,28,31; Deuteronomy 32:4).

Had the first pair remained faithful and obedient to God's instructions, the intimation is there would have been no death in the human family but instead a perfect race of mankind would have developed and maintained the image and likeness of the all-glorious Heavenly Father.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve in eating the forbidden fruit caused them to be condemned to death (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:17-19). History confirms that this death sentence has been transmitted to all of Adam's posterity. Even though the Bible records instances of some living for several centuries, they all died eventually. Today the average life span is sufficiently low that special acknowledgment often is made about the comparatively few individuals who reach the age of one hundred. Nevertheless it is only a matter of time before they, too, succumb to the inevitability of death.

Despite creedal errors which emerged during the dark ages, mankind does not possess an immortal soul nor are sinners tortured eternally. The Scriptural declaration is, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4). Other biblical verses make it abundantly clear that the state of death is unconsciousness (see Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5,10).

Were it not for the Heavenly Father's mercy there would have been no future hope for mankind to live again after going into the tomb. But in due course, God sent his son to earth for the purpose of becoming the redeemer for humanity. We read, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

This text implies four things:

1. None of humanity could have attained eternal life before Jesus died.
"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, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:9,10).

2. Salvation cannot be obtained except through Christ. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12).

3. It is God's will that each individual be given an opportunity to benefit from the death of Jesus. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:3-6).

4. Those who have gone into the grave will be awakened at some future time from the sleep of death. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28,29, RSV).

The rendering of John 5:29 in the King James Bible speaks of the resurrection of damnation. However, the Greek word *krisis* properly denotes judgment which follows a trial. If the purpose for awakening sinners from the grave was simply to damn them again (they are already under condemnation--see Romans 5:16,18), they would have no opportunity to benefit from the death of Christ. How hollow would be the meaning of the text, "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" (John 3:16).

Nearly two thousand years ago a heavenly message was given which still awaits fulfillment: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:8-11).

These good tidings were for all people including past, present and future generations. Not fully grasping the import of what the Bible teaches, some well-meaning Christians believe one must obtain salvation before death or forever be lost as part of the wicked. The Scriptures indicate that Jesus not only died as a satisfaction for the sins of those who already have accepted him as their Savior, but also for those who have not. We read, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1,2).

The Bible teaches a heavenly reward is offered to faithful Christians during this age. Human perfection is set forth for the rest of mankind who will lead righteousness lives in God's kingdom here on earth. Let us examine these two aspects of salvation.

Heavenly Salvation

The Bible abounds with references where the faithful followers of Christ are promised a heavenly reward. Here are a few:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:19,20).

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

During his earthly ministry, our Lord Jesus in obedience to his Heavenly Father's will, humbled himself to the death of the cross and provided an opportunity for all mankind to be resurrected from the death sentence which came upon humanity because of Adam's original sin (Philippians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:21,22). Furthermore, it was God's desire that there be a class of individuals redeemed from among mankind comprising the Church or the Bride of Christ who would be associated with Christ Jesus in blessing all the families of the earth.

Those who would be disciples of Christ have been invited to follow a course of righteous living and self-sacrifice. In extending this invitation, we read, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24,25).

The rigorous process of devoting one's life to such a regimen helps to explain why few are chosen from among the many who are called (Matthew 22:14). There are comparatively so few that they are styled a little flock (Luke 12:29-32). These saints will be associated with our Lord, the Lamb of God, in vanquishing all unrighteousness and establishing God's kingdom; they are the called, chosen and faithful Christian believers (Revelation 17:14).

An important future task is judging the world in righteousness which the Father has committed to Christ Jesus his son (John 5:22; Acts 17:31). Faithful Christians also will share in this work for we read, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2). This process of judging by Christ and his saints for the purpose of

instructing mankind in the ways of righteousness will require a thousand years (Revelation 20:4,6).

As the captain of all true believers, Jesus led the way to this heavenly salvation for his church by setting an example of self-denial and enduring trials even unto death (Hebrews 2:9,10). The path of discipleship is a difficult one at this time because it requires following in the master's footsteps and involves suffering and persecution (Matthew 7:14; 1 Peter 2:21). A high reward is promised to all who persevere faithfully in doing God's will despite any opposition received because we read, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17,18).

In Revelation 7:9-17, reference is made to a Great Multitude who come out of great tribulation, wash their robes and serve God in his temple. This highly symbolic language seems to refer to a secondary spiritual class redeemed from among humanity who will render service before the throne of God, but will not be among those who live and reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:6).

Another allusion to this Great Multitude is found in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. This text first describes the Little Flock which builds with the precious stones of Divine truth and promises thereby developing an approved character meriting a crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4). Then the Great Multitude is depicted as building with the wood, hay and stubble of human traditions, thereby developing an unstable character. Those of this class who yield to the refining influences of fiery experiences which God permits, ultimately will be saved, even though they will receive a lesser heavenly reward than that of the Little Flock.

Earthly Salvation

Most of the promises relating to humanity's future involve an earthly salvation. Mankind was made to live on the earth as we read, "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:18).

All that has been lost because of sin is to be restored and there will be a universal opportunity provided for human salvation here on the earth, allowing the righteous to live and the wicked to be destroyed as a result of God's established kingdom.

The Bible asserts this is a prime objective of Christ's second presence as we read, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord

your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:19-23).

It will be during the thousand-year reign of Christ and his Church that the day of judgment will be in operation (Isaiah 26:9; Acts 17:31). During this period Satan will be bound (Revelation 20:1-3). It will be a favorable time for mankind as the new covenant will be in effect and everyone will know God and his righteous laws (Jeremiah 31:33,34). The condemnation which fell upon Adam originally and passed to all his posterity will be lifted because of Christ's sacrifice. Only those who willingly choose to disobey God will be destroyed (Jeremiah 31:29,30).

Presently, there are many evils that afflict humanity which God has promised to eradicate, followed by the turning of mankind to the Lord for blessings (Zephaniah 3:8,9; Habakkuk 2:14). Isaiah 35 speaks of how every imaginable illness, woe and condition of despair will be removed and replaced by rejoicing in the kingdom.

God's ultimate purpose for humanity is to have them worship him in spirit and in truth. A test is now being applied upon true Christians who will receive a heavenly life if they prove faithful in their path of self-sacrifice and obedience to God's will. At the end of the kingdom when Satan is released after being bound for a thousand years (Revelation 20:7-9; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28), all members of the human family who prove obedient and loyal to God will receive eternal salvation here on earth and evildoers shall be destroyed.

How wonderful it will be when the new Jerusalem (the Church in its heavenly glory under Christ's headship) blesses the human family as God's instrumentality for eradicating all sorrow, evil and death (Revelation 21:1-4). This grand fulfillment of the heavenly and earthly salvation promised will testify to the majestic grandeur of the Heavenly Father's attributes throughout all eternity.

Where Are the Dead?

'If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.'—Job 14:14

Robert Davis

The nature of life after death is of primary interest to all mankind. A loving God has given us such a beautiful life, even with the shortcomings of its fallen condition, that most of his creation would like it to continue forever. But the plain fact is that all people die and the condition beyond death is not perceptible. Near death experiences of a peaceful feeling and a bright light at the end of a tunnel are the same sensation experienced by test subjects facing high gravitational loads. It appears that blood draining from the brain creates euphoria and the light/tunnel visual effect. Although this may be a wonderful part of our nature to lessen the pain of death, it cannot be trusted as an indicator of experiences beyond death.

Philosophies and religions have tried to fill the gap in understanding. Four alternative views have prevailed in an attempt to define what happens after death:

1. Death ends all hope for life in the future..
2. Life carries on in cycles from one body to the next throughout eternity.
3. Life in the form of an immortal soul goes to its eternal good or bad destination after death.
4.
 1. Life ceases to exist at death, but is restored in a recreated body, preserving the personal identity of the individual

Since this discussion assumes the authenticity of the Bible and faith in its message, we can exclude the first two views which have no basis in Scripture. The third view is held by those who believe in an inherent immortal soul and eternal torment. Though some suppose an argument can be made from Scripture regarding this thought, the overwhelming evidence of Scripture favors the fourth view--the resurrection of the dead. Therefore we will discuss the scriptural validity of only the last two views.

What Is the Soul?

The key to understanding the state of the dead is to understand the nature of the soul. Does the soul live on after death or does it cease to exist? Is there any sense or comprehension after the body dies?

The answer to these questions starts with the creation of man as described in Genesis 2:7. Note carefully these three elements: (1) "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, (2) and breathed into his nostrils the breath [or spirit] of life, and (3) man became a living soul." **Body + spirit = soul.** The opposite of this process is described in Psalm 104:29: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." **Body – spirit = death, annihilation.** (See also Job 34:14,15.) A good analogy is the combination of electricity with a filament within a light bulb to produce light. If the electricity is withdrawn or the bulb breaks, the light vanishes. In like manner it is necessary for the animating energy from God (his spirit) to act in a bodily mechanism for sentient life (a soul) to exist.

When the Bible speaks of a soul, it refers to life. The Hebrew word for soul is *nephesh* (Strong's 5315), meaning a vital, breathing creature. All animals are souls: "And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is **life** (Hebrew: nephesh—**soul**), I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so" (Genesis 1:30). Therefore, contrary to the common misconception that man HAS a soul, a living man IS a soul, as are all animals.

Conversely, when the Bible speaks of death, it refers to soul death. The Scriptures speak clearly and often about death and destruction of the soul. Here are some examples:

Matthew 10:28—"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to **destroy both soul and body** in hell."

James 5:20—"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall **save a soul from death**, and shall hide a multitude of sins"

Psalm 56:13—"For thou hast **delivered my soul from death**: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

Ezekiel 18:4—"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die.**"

Isaiah 53:12—"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his **soul unto death**: and he was numbered with the transgressors."

Haggai 2:13—"If one that is unclean by a **dead body** (Hebrew: nephesh—**soul**), touch any of these..."

For additional Scriptures see Psalm 30:19; 40:14; 78:50; 63:9; 89:48; 116:8.

The wisdom of Solomon declares that men and animals die in similar fashion, that (in a natural sense) man has no preeminence over beasts when it comes to death (Ecclesiastes 3:19). They all are animal souls that cease to be souls upon death.

The Wages of Sin

Romans 6:23 states that "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." Note how Paul contrasts death with eternal life. A sinner after death could not suffer eternal torment without some form of eternal life--yet eternal life is only a reward for the righteous. Critics of this straight forward interpretation of Paul's statement prefer to define death abstractly as a separation from God. They use the curse upon Adam and Eve "in the day that thou shalt eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" as proof that death means separation from God (being expelled from the garden) and not actual dying since they did not die within 24 hours of eating the fruit. However, Adam having lived 930 years did die within a 1,000 year day (Psalm 90:4). This illustrates how many who claim to hold the fundamental truths of Scripture tend to allegorize the broad and basic principles of the Bible, and conversely take literally Scriptures that are obviously symbolic in nature, such as are found in parables and prophecies.

Having established that cessation of life in any form is the natural consequence of death, it is wonderful to behold a loving God who does not intend to let his intelligent creation perish forever. In fact his instrument of salvation, Jesus Christ, is the most important evidence we have of life existing after death. Over 500 people witnessed the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). This information was then conveyed directly from them to many others during the rapid expansion of the early church; written accounts in very early documents from these second hand accounts attest to this. We have direct knowledge from eye witnesses who gained no material benefits for their efforts, but rather suffered in many ways for saying this. Well-documented first and second hand accounts verify that a resurrection can indeed happen through God's power. As recorded in Acts 1:3, the resurrection of Jesus was attested by "many infallible proofs." The bleak, naturally-occurring condition of no life after death is overridden by the miraculous intervention of God's power in the resurrection of the dead.

The Scriptures aptly call the period between death and resurrection a sleep. The nature of the word reinforces the concept of the unconscious or insentient condition of the dead with the hope of a future awakening. Sleep describes the condition of the dead in the following Scriptures. Note how they apply to both bad and good individuals:

Psalm 13:3--"Sleep the sleep of death."

Daniel. 12:2--"Many that have slept in the dust of the earth shall arise."

Deuteronomy 31:16--Moses sleeps with his fathers.

2 Samuel. 7:12—David sleeps with his fathers. See also 1 Kings 2:10; 11:21.

Job 3:13; 7:21--Job wishes to sleep in the dust.

1 Kings 22:40--Ahab slept with his fathers.

John. 11:11-14--Jesus clearly defines the symbolism of sleep when referring to Lazarus' death.

1 Corinthians 7:39--"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband **be dead** [Greek: **sleep**]."

1 Corinthians 15:6,51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:14,15—Saints slept in death.

1 Corinthians 15:20,21--"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Christ himself slept in death (for a little over 24 hours), being the first to rise out of that condition.

See also 2 Peter 3:4; Acts 13:36.

The psalmist argues for an unconscious state of the dead such as:

Psalm 146:4--"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

Psalm 6:5--"In death there is no remembrance of thee."

Psalm 115:17--"The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."

That men have the prospect of a resurrection which animals do not, may be implied by the contrast in Ecclesiastes 3:21. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" The identity of each individual will be preserved in the resurrection, recreated from the memory of God, just as the identity of our Lord was preserved when his life was transferred from above, as the Logos, into the womb of Mary, later to be born and named Jesus. An analogy would be of a computer file, which can be inserted into another computer, to exactly reproduce the file.

As plain as the Scriptures are concerning the state of the dead, a few Scriptures are used to prove that life continues on eternally, either in heaven or in a burning abode of torment. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is most notable, with Revelation 14:11 and 20:10 also linking punishment with fire and eternal torment. Other Scriptures link punishment with fire, but in the sense of its destructive aspect: "For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). (See also Deuteronomy 4:24.) "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff" (Isaiah 5:24). "For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns" (Isaiah 9:18).

The Fire of Gehenna

The old English word hell is translated 12 times in the New Testament from the Greek word Gehenna (Strong's 1067). The word literally means the valley of Hinnom, located on the southern outskirts of ancient Jerusalem. It is here where bodies of criminals and animals were placed in a perpetually burning fire dump. Josephus records that the dead were deposited here after the siege of Jerusalem. It was originally the location where children were passed through the fires of Molech. It became such a reproach that it was first turned into a cesspool and apparently later a dump. Brimstone (sulfur) was added to the fire to increase its temperature and thus consume less combustible items like corpses. Therefore, Ge-henna becomes a fitting picture for a place with continual, effective means of **destruction** for the wrong doer. The worm that dieth not in Mark 9:44,45 is a companion thought to the destructive fire, and carries with it the idea of a slow but steady and thorough consumption of dead bodies not destroyed by fire.

Gehenna is called the lake of fire in Revelation 19 and 20. This illustrates even further the fire-like destructive elements of perdition. In Revelation 20:14 the definition is still further refined by calling it the second death. This is the reality of what Ge-henna, and the lake of fire as well as all the fire imagery, represents: death that is final since it is second to the first or Adamic death from which Jesus ransomed everyone. This concept is illustrated in Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:29-31. "And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be **consumed**" (Isaiah 1:28). Even hell (Greek: *hades*—the grave) and death will be thrown into the lake of fire signifying the ending of the "grave" condition. All then will have been resurrected from the death condition and death will cease (Revelation 20:14).

The Rich Man and Lazarus *

The account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is the seventh in a series of parables starting in Luke 14:4. Jesus spoke all seven parables in the house of one of the chief Pharisees and to a number of lawyers and Pharisees. The first six parables criticize the Pharisees. In Luke 16:14 they began to deride Jesus. It was after this that the "Rich man and Lazarus" parable was given. The rich man represented the Jews, specifically the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were rich in the blessings of God and possessed his oracles. Lazarus represents the Gentiles who were poor because they did not have these blessings. Abraham's bosom represents the Abrahamic covenant which the Gentile Christian converts attain and the Jews lose. The five brothers of the rich man are the ten other tribes of Israel (because the rich man represented two tribes, all the brothers represent the other ten). The one that rose from the dead was Jesus, whose resurrection was sufficient for the development of faith in any Jew. Substituting these symbolic representations into the parable reveals the harsh lesson Jesus was conveying to the Pharisees: Israel was soon to lose its favored position as the recipient of the Abrahamic covenant to Gentile Christian converts.

The word parable means "to cast beside." A parable is a lesson drawn from a story. The lesson is cast beside the story to make the point intended. The story is never meant to be

the point, rather it is the lesson that is the reason for the whole exercise. Those who wish to prove eternal torment by this parable make use of the story and give little notice to the lesson much like eating the husks of an ear and throwing away the corn! Parables are not always drawn from real life. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, for example, tells of the wedding arrangements of one groom to ten virgins which is highly unlikely. Strong defines parable (Strong number 3850) as "a fictitious narrative."

The biblical tenets of death and resurrection discussed above have always been held by Judaism. Maimonides made the resurrection of the dead one of his Thirteen Articles of Jewish Faith and states that "Concerning this [the resurrection], there has never been heard any disagreement in our nation, nor does it have any [allegorical] interpretation [other than its literal meaning]. Nor is it permissible to rely upon any individual who believes otherwise." Furthermore, the early church fathers held this belief to a large degree. The Bible tells us clearly where the dead are located. The vast majority are in their graves, silently awaiting the call to come forth. Praise God for his love.

INTERESTING FACTS

- God defines himself as a soul. (See Jeremiah 9:9; Hebrews 10:38.)
- The phrase "immortal soul" is not found in Scripture.
- According to Maimonides saintly men will rise immediately after the Messiah's arrival and a general resurrection would follow at a later date.
- Contrary to popular opinion—if Revelation 20:10 is to be taken literally—Satan will be the tormented one, not the tormenting ruler of hell.

*** On the Other Hand**

Suggesting that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus predicts a future change in status of the Jews (rich because they had the oracles of God) and the Gentiles (poor because they did not have God's blessing) can be supported by pointing to what happened eventually. However, those who heard this parable would certainly not understand it that way. How would they understand it?

One clue is the name Lazarus. This is the only parable where one of the characters has a name. That name is found only in this parable and in John 11 and 12 where Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. In the parable "Abraham" says, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). The actual raising of Lazarus from the dead probably took place only a few weeks after Jesus gave this parable. Perhaps it was then that some of the Pharisees and most of the disciples remembered the parable and realized that the rich man referred to those who

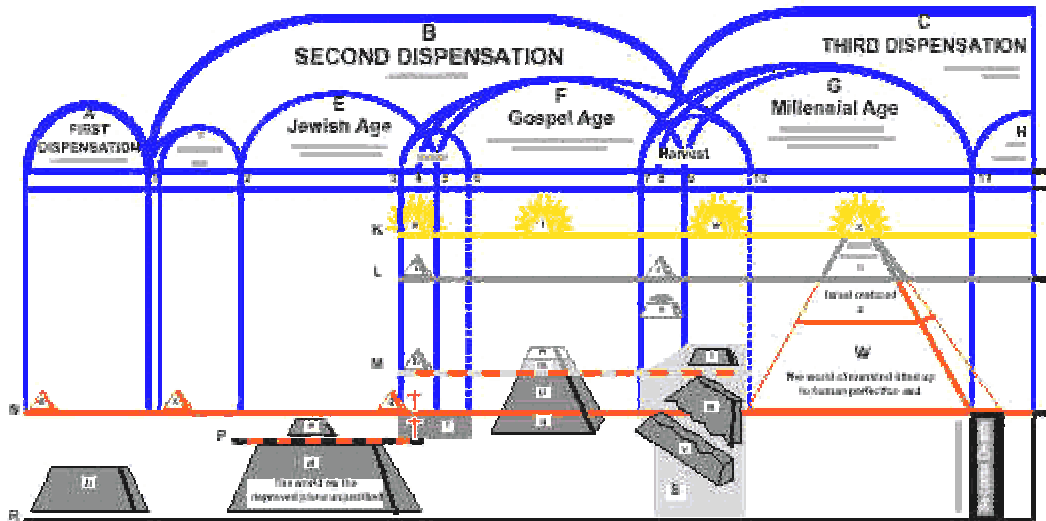
were literally "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." Would such people be convinced by someone who came back from the dead? No! After Lazarus came back from the dead and more people began to believe on Jesus, we read, "The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death" (John 12:10).

The brothers of the rich man "have Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16:29). Those who claimed to have Moses and the prophets were the scribes, lawyers, doctors of the law, Sadducees, and the like. They not only would not believe Jesus was the son of God after he performed miracles, they tried to discredit him because of the day when he performed them (John 5:16). They boastfully said, "We are Moses' disciples" (John 9:28).

The Pharisees understood enough about the meaning of the parables to know Jesus was criticizing them. Luke 16:14 reads, "The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him." If they did not understand the parables at least superficially, they would not have derided him. They would have shaken their heads and walked away muttering, "Who can understand this man's cryptic sayings

Michael Nekora

Alphabet of the Ages



A Memory aid to remember the pyramids on the Chart of the Ages.

- A = Adam**, created perfect in Eden
- b = Bad People**, condemned in the fall
- c = Chosen ones**, ancient heroes of faith
- d = Depraved world**, uncleaned by the flood
- e = Examples**, of Israel through their types
- f = Fall of Israel**, dispersed throughout the world
- g = Good Jesus**, born perfect and without blemish
- h = the Holy Spirit**, descending at Jordan in the form of a dove
- i = Immortality**, gained at Jesus' resurrection
- k = Kingship**, acquiring a race by purchase
- l = Lord**, as head of his church and bride
- m = a Multitude**, overcomers but falling short of the chief prize
- n = New Creatures**, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ
- p = Passive Christians**, believers but not motivated to sacrifice
- q = Quacks**, false Christians who feign belief
- r = the Return of the Lord**, to set up his kingdom
- s = Saints**, awakened from the sleep of death
- t = Tribulation Saints**, washing their robes in a time of trouble
- u = Upset Christians**, seeing Christianity in collapse
- v = Very Upset**, false Christians losing all pretense of faith
- w = Wedding**, the union of Christ and his bride
- x = eXcellency**, of the divine nature for the church
- y = Yearning ones**, not quite faithful but raised by God's mercy
- z = Zion**, natural Israel restored
- W = World of mankind**, raised on the earth to enjoy eternal life

Worth Meditating On

Every day of our lives, we will encounter or hear grief and pain. Loved ones snatched away by the great enemy death: babies from their mothers' arms; husbands and wives, fathers and mothers; aged ones, leaning on one another, depending on one another suddenly parted by death; bringing sorrow and crying to the lonely survivor. How appropriate for us, who know the plan of God, who know the reason for it all, to close our eyes and meditate for a moment on that glorious day now near at hand, when, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

Whenever we see the lame, the halt, and the blind; those with physical deformities and diseases which Jesus described as those "whom Satan hath bound" (Luke 13:16), we can fervently breathe the prayer, "Thy kingdom come!" knowing that this is the answer to all earth's problems. Perhaps this will lead us to meditate upon the glorious prospect before us, that if we are faithful, we will have a part in the healing of the nations! Think of it! How often, when you have seen sickness, suffering, and deformity, have you longed to have the power to relieve it, to be able to say, "Take up thy bed and walk!"? You will have that power, if faithful, and much more than that: to grant not only physical healing and perfection, but life everlasting to the obedient. That is something to mediate over!

Discourses of Robert Seklemian, "The Shepherd Psalm"

Breaking the Power of Death

Like the Niagara, sin comprehends each missing of the mark, ten million drops each moment of man's day, a mighty fall indeed. Vast energy is wasted, countless ages lost, the total of innumerable lives away from God, as blinded minds forsake creation's Source and plunge to that abyss oblivious of all meaning to life's course, for they deny its Cause. These on their swift descent, without relent, pursue their flight from things above, and yet cannot escape redeeming love.

When we survey the scene, that darkness try to probe that fills this earth, we fail to sum the tears, assess the weight, the total burden tell of human grief, the legacy of sickness, pain and loss, but man's Creator knows, and man's Redeemer took that load. Can it be turned, this tide? Can earth be cleansed of sin? Can countless myriads like the sand be washed? Can any change of heart thus wrought in man by any scheme, teaching of righteous ways, or course of holiness, the reaching of those deep emotions of man's heart, can any change of mind achieved change also that deceit of heart, that fickleness of loyalty and love, that trend to infidelity so deep ingrained within the human soul? Can this as well be changed?

We see no profit, though a thousand years be spent transforming guilty ways of man to innocence, unless each step along that upward path of holiness be one of permanence. The trend to sin that now controls man's path, a prison for man's ways, how humanly impossible to break through cold steel bars, those solid walls. Perhaps at time some soul may glimpse another world beyond it cannot reach, and powerless to attain falls back. As gravity decides the downward pull upon each body, so does sin, and from its hold none can break free.

Yet greater far the heavenly force the sun exerts upon this earth controlling in its course each planet that would wander from its path. Nor does it let go hold, or each would make its headlong plunge through depths of space. Such is the greater power than sin, that from its mighty Source above will grip this earth and draw each heart, each intellect, to influence all thought and overwhelm with love divine. When stars that "turn to righteousness" shall shine, their holy power will mightily combine to beam into this darkness with a grace reflected from the heavenly Father's face, to captivate and thus forever hold each human mind, and reach the "blind", the "deaf", and loosen tongues now tied that cannot tell His praise. Oh may that joy be mine!

Donald Holliday, "The Gathering Home of Saints"

NEWS AND VIEWS

Pastoral Bible Institute News

PBI News

"God's Millennium"

The Chicago Bible Students recently published a new booklet entitled "God's Millennium" which is especially suitable for witnessing at this time when many are concerned about the turn of the century digits from 19 to 20. We have enclosed one for your review. Those who want more copies should contact the publisher at 1-800-GODS-PLAN. Note that the PBI does not have extra copies of this booklet.

"The Bible as a Rising Civilization"

Dr. Paul Mali has written an extensive treatise on the world's future based on the teachings of the Bible. (Please see the book review on page 20.) An enthusiastic reader of this book contacted us and offered a generous subsidy to make it more affordable for others. As a consequence and for a limited time we are pleased to offer this book at half the usual price. Please see the enclosed four-color flyer for more details. Be sure to use the special order form if you want to take advantage of this special price.

Letters

I am very grateful to come in contact with those of like faith. Although I am not a Bible Student proper, I am a Bible student with close beliefs, but I differ on a few understandings. My wife and I run a motel and I am in a good position to leave booklets on Bible questions . . . to further the ministry of the wonderful Ransom Plan of our Lord and Savior. I am always short on good literature to place in the rooms. Many I'm sure are thrown away, but who knows how much good information is getting out to those in need?

—Roger Medlin, Missouri

Over the years I have been greatly blessed reading The Herald. The messages are very helpful and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart. God has blessed me with [an understanding of] his divine plan for now and the ages to come. We have a blessed Lord. Your journal and the Dawn magazine over many years has helped me to understand the scriptures. We wait patiently for the [time when] all people can be blessed and enjoy peace, joy, and everlasting life on this wonderful planet earth.

Around the World

Russia has postponed—indefinitely—a national census scheduled for this year. It would have been the first full census since the breakup of the Soviet Union and was expected to confirm demographers' worst fears: that Russians are dying off so fast and giving birth so infrequently that the population may shrink by nearly half in the next 50 years. In the last ten years . . . the death rate has climbed from 11 deaths per 1,000 people in 1991 to 15 per 1,000 last year. Meanwhile women are giving birth at a rate far below the population maintenance level: For every 15 people who die, only nine are born. The result is that Russia's population has been dropping steadily since the 1991 Soviet collapse.

—Los Angeles Times, 8/21/99

Eritrea and Ethiopia have been set back years by their bitter border war. More than 300,000 Eritreans have been drafted into fighting since May against an enemy they believe has annexed their territory. On the other side, Ethiopians are equally adamant that Eritrea invaded their country in May 1998. To outsiders the war is a family feud between former allies who together toppled the Derg regime in Ethiopia. It appears to be an act of pure folly by two leaders who have been hailed as pioneers of the African renaissance. However the situation is resolved, both countries have been set back years. No one is clear how many people have died but the carnage of battles suggests staggering casualties in the tens of thousands. The economic cost has also been high. Factories have lost much of their workforce and 300,000 people have been displaced.

Israel

The cataclysmic earthquake in Turkey and its attendant human tragedies, of an unprecedented scale in our tremor-prone region, provide an opportunity to consider the implications of one of those mantras intoned by many peace-minded Israelis: that we need to integrate ourselves more fully into the region in which we live. The main lesson we must learn is that we are already fully integrated in the system of geological faults that crisscross our region. Geologists have long been warning that we in Israel are overdue for an earthquake of 6+ magnitude on the Richter scale.

—Jerusalem Post 8/23/99

In the first half of 1999, some 12,000 Russians arrived in Israel, more than double the number during the same time the previous year. Driven by the crash of the ruble, dim job prospects in major cities and a nasty resurgence of Russian anti-Semitism, nearly 100 immigrants from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok arrive every business day. The spike in Russian immigration to Israel this year is the first since the colossal influx of Soviet Jews in the early 1990s. With this new wave of immigrants, about 1 million Israelis—roughly one in five Jews in the country—now speak Russian, and the vast majority of them have arrived since 1990. Religious Israelis and older immigrants from North Africa in particular see the Russians as a threat to the long-term cohesion of Israel's already

Balkanized society. The Russians tend to seek nothing more complex than a better life for their children. However, nearly one-third of those arriving this year cited another reason—increased anti-Semitism in Russia. There has been an increase in attacks on synagogues and Jewish cemeteries and shrill broadsides against Jews in nationalist newspapers. Unlike Russian immigrants of the early '90s, many of whom were ardent Zionists, the latest arrivals tend not to care much about building a Jewish state. Just two in five people in the current wave say they were motivated to come to Israel by a wish to be among the Jewish people.

—Washington Post, 6/28/99

Islam

The earthquake in Turkey has revealed the dearth of independent civil organizations in Turkey and many are now questioning what price the state has paid for the clampdown on Islamists and other groups seen as a threat to state power. Hundreds of efforts to bring food to the devastated country were hampered by lack of civil organization. Piles of bread have rotted in the streets. The vans delivering the supplies have clogged local roads, making travel difficult for ambulances and other emergency vehicles. In many places, frustration has translated into an almost revolutionary desire to start afresh with barriers on Islamic government activities removed.

—Financial Times, 8/23/99

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) urged Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who met in Washington with PA official Abu Mazen on Friday, to pressure him to publicly retract his claim that the Nazis did not murder six million Jews. Abu Mazen whose real name is Mahmoud Abbas, is the author of a book, "The Other Side: The Secret Relationship Between Nazism and the Zionist Movement," which argues that the Nazis may have really killed less than one million Jews and that "the Zionist movement was a partner in the slaughter of the Jews." Other senior Palestinians have also engaged in Holocaust denial in recent years, notes ZOA President Mort Klein.

—Arutz-7, 8/27/99

Pope John Paul II's scheduled December visit to Iraq is a triumph for President Saddam Hussein according to diplomats in Jordan's capital city. The visit should help the Iraqi leader attain greater international legitimacy and "open the way for dialogue to put an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people," said one diplomat. Iraqi children under five are dying for lack of food at more than twice the rate they were a decade ago in what's become a humanitarian emergency according to the UN.

—Bloomberg News, 8/27/99

Fighting between Christian and Moslem farmers in the southern Philippines has left nine people dead and forced more than 600 villagers to flee their homes. Clashes were

triggered by a land dispute between the farmers in Tagoloan town in Lanao del Norte province. Fighting worsened when Moslem rebels and Christian cultists backed the warring sides. "Nine people were massacred by the Moslem farmers and a woman was taken hostage," said Lorna Inot of the provincial office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. According to military intelligence reports, Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels backed the Moslem farmers after the Christian Ilaga cult sided with the Christian farmers.

—Deutsche Press Agentur (DPA), 8/16/99

Christendom

Duke University researchers reported that those 64 and older who attended weekly religious services were 46% less likely to die over a six-year period than those who went less often. Doctors think that those who attend benefit in several ways from having a larger social network. They are less likely to suffer from depression. And any new ailments they develop will probably be noticed earlier by family and friends and thus be treated more quickly.

—Time, 8/2/99

The Kansas Board of Education rejected evolution as a scientific principle. The 10-member board, ignoring pleas by educators and scientists, voted new standards for science curricula that eliminate evolution as an underlying principle of biology and other sciences. Kansas' six public universities had written a letter to the board saying that the new standards would "set Kansas back a century and give hard-to-find science teachers no choice but to pursue other career fields." Tom Willis, director of the Creation Science Association for Mid-America, which helped write Kansas's curriculum proposal said that evolution misleads students. "You can't go into the laboratory or the field and make the first fish. When you tell students that science has determined evolution to be true, you're deceiving them."

—Washington Post, 8/12/99

U.S. Lutheran leaders passed a historic union with Episcopalians, enabling the two churches to recognize each other's members and sacraments and making their clergy essentially interchangeable. Slightly more than two-thirds of the bishops voted in favor of the union. It will take effect following approval by the Episcopalians, who are scheduled to meet in July, 2000, but have already approved an earlier draft of the document. The agreement makes Lutherans a bridge between divergent traditions of the Reformation churches that broke away from Catholicism in the 16th century, with the more traditional, hierarchical Episcopalians on one end, and the more progressive United Church of Christ—with whom the Lutherans have a similar agreement—at the other. Ecumenicism has taken on more urgency in the last few years as mainstream Protestant denominations realize they are fast losing members to evangelical churches. By banding together, many church leaders believe they can regain some of their vitality.

—Washington Post, 8/20/99

Economics

Billions of dollars in loans have propped up an unproductive socialist monetary system in Russia. To date, it has gotten \$16.5 billion from the International Monetary fund. Millions have been spent to show ex-communists how to be good democrats and capitalists. The results have been a handful of fabulously rich Russians amid widespread misery and corruption. Unemployment has reached 14%. The dollar value of the ruble has sunk to 4 cents. "The reforms have left many Russians worse off than before the breakup of the Soviet Union, and many blame the Western aid and advice," said Janine Wedel, research fellow in Eastern European studies at George Washington University.

—Investors Business Daily, 8/11/99

Science

Global water shortages, aggravated by wasteful irrigation practices, will worsen in the next 25 years and affect food supplies, according to a new study by a private environmental group. Current irrigation practices in many arid countries are unsustainable, Worldwatch analyst Sandra Postel said. "Some 40 percent of the world's food comes from irrigated cropland, and we are betting on that share to increase to feed a growing population," Postel said. As some countries run out of water for irrigation, food imports could become more expensive as nations compete for those crops. Today 500 million people live in "water stressed" areas and the number will rise to 3 billion by 2025, Postel said. Other experts disagree. "The problem of depleting water solves itself," says Dennis Avery, a farm expert with the conservative Hudson Institute. Market forces will come into play as the water costs increase, forcing farmers to use it more efficiently, he said. "We've seen an unprecedented food abundance in the last 250 years, and I see nothing to alter that," Avery said.

—Reuter's, 7/20/99

Scientists using a novel computer technology have found no sign of alien life forms despite enlisting the help of over one million enthusiasts. Officials at the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) said that since the May launch of their scheme to allow idle computers to crunch deep space data collected from a radio telescope, over 1 million people in 223 countries signed up to participate. According to experts the phenomenal sign up rate makes the SETI screen saver the largest computation ever. But though the 1 million users have racked up over 50,000 years of computing time so far, there has been no sign of extra-terrestrial life, said Dan Werthimer, a research physicist at the University of California's Space Sciences Laboratory in Berkeley.

—Bloomberg News, 8/18/99

Scientists observing X-ray emissions from swirling gasses in a galaxy 100-million light-years distant found direct evidence of a black hole sucking matter into it, NASA said. A black hole is a region of space where the force of gravity is so powerful that nothing, not even light, escapes its pull. NASA said the use of an X-ray satellite launched in 1993 detected emissions from iron atoms in gasses swirling around a central dense object. The gas was heated to millions of degrees under the force's gravity. Buried in the emission spectrum was a "rare glimpse at a red-shifted absorption" feature that suggested matter was moving away at the rate of some 10 million kilometers per hour.

—DPA, 8/16/99

Book Review

The Bible as a Rising Civilization, Dr. Paul Mali. Horizon Publications, 1998. 726 pages

Paul Mali is well known in business circles for his management skills and ability to advise companies on organization effectiveness. He has been a consultant to Fortune 500 companies as well as small start-up businesses. A prolific writer, his management books have been used in both the classroom and as material for business seminars. Within smaller circles, Paul Mali is recognized as a thoughtful expositor of Bible truths.

In his first religious-oriented book, Dr. Mali combines his business logic and his biblical background to produce an interesting treatise on the history of man. *The Bible as a Rising Civilization* could be described as a brief history of the spiritual condition of the world. Beginning with the basic question, "What is the true meaning of life?" Mali explores mankind's quest to find meaning in his limited existence. Mali defends the Bible as the only true source of life's answers and shows how biblical principles and characters have influenced the course of man's existence on the earth. Scientists, archaeologists, philosophers and religious leaders have all attempted to construct some meaningful logic to the world and its progress, yet only the Bible provides a concrete logic to show that the transformation of civilization has not been random nor without purpose. Continually integrating the writings and prophecies of the Bible with history, Mali documents the progress of man in his quest for the ultimate truth. In each major segment of history, progress has been limited by man's inability to find a true meaning and purpose to the world.

At stops along the journey through civilization, we discover the probable location for the Garden of Eden, the geological evidence for a universal flood, and the likely route of the Israelite exodus. All this reaches a climax in the historical evidence of the person of Jesus Christ, not only as a real person, but also as the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God.

The exploration of early Christianity forms a big part of the development of Western civilization. A key understanding is that evolving Christian thought soon lost the real sense of the person of Jesus and gave its loyalty to the corrupt Roman State. Important to our understanding of truth, there is significant evidence that Christianity eventually incorporated multiple pagan ideas such as the tripartite constitution of human nature (body, soul, and spirit) and a trinity of gods. Eventually Christianity took on the nature of the state and went from persecuted to persecutor and finally became the empire itself embodied in the form of Roman Catholicism.

The Reformation movement that emerged in the 16th century, so important in the development of the late period of Western civilization, unfortunately receives almost no analysis. Shifting from the corruption of the church and modern Christianity to our own time, Mali's most intriguing analysis is on the modern movement of globalization. Put in a biblical framework, this reconsideration of Marshall McLuhan's "global village" concept is an excellent summary of the emergence of the one-world economy.

The lengthy treatise closes with a look at the biblical philosophy of man's existence, finally posing an answer to the very questions asked at the beginning of the book: Who are we and where are we going? Although long and containing some typographical errors, the book is a well-documented presentation of man's existence on earth written in a friendly and easy-to-read style. It is obvious that the author writes from a sound base of social, economic and biblical knowledge. The book makes an ideal gift for witnessing to those who normally reject writings of a purely expository nature.

—Len Griehs