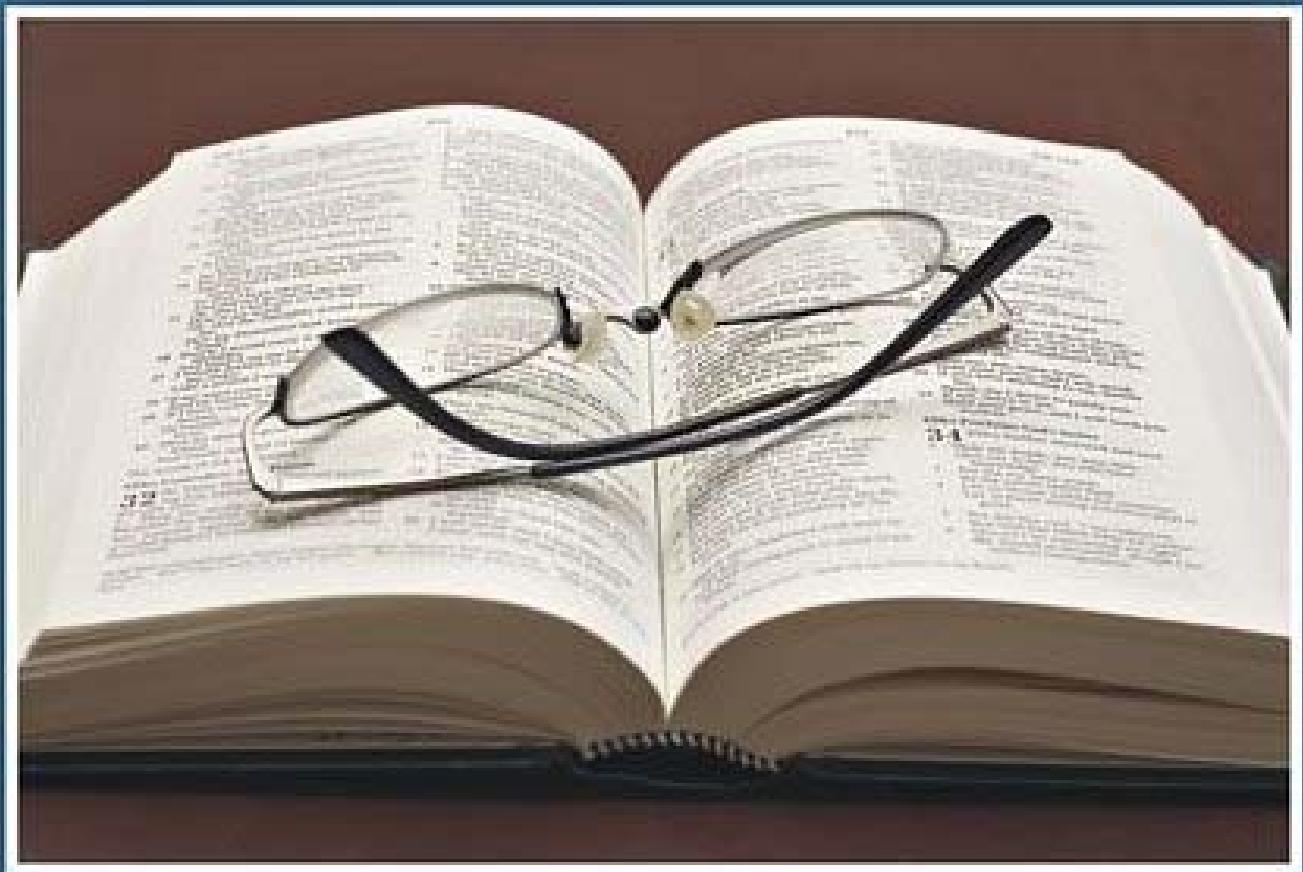


November/December 2006

The Herald

Of Christ's Kingdom



Doctrines to Develop Christian Character

Creation • Original Sin • Promise Covenant

The Law • Ransom • Christ's Example

Sin-Offering • Resurrection

The Herald

of Christ's Kingdom

This journal brings you 192 pages of spiritual reading material each year on a variety of biblical subjects. Each issue also lists many Bible conventions and conferences where you will find Christian fellowship. Included in every issue is News & Views, four pages of current events, letters to the editor, and information on the operation of the Pastoral Bible Institute. It is published bi-monthly by:

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Editorial Committee

This journal is supervised by an editorial committee of five, at least three of whom have approved for publication each article appearing in these columns. While responsible for articles published, the committee does not endorse every expression herein. The present editors are: Carl Hagensick, Homer Montague, Michael Nekora, James Parkinson, and David Rice.

The committee and the directors agree that the journal's value to its readers is dependent upon contributors being free to present their thoughts, provided such are generally in harmony with our chartered character and purpose for the dissemination of Bible truths. Annual subscription price is \$5.00. This journal will be supplied free upon written request.

This Journal and Its Mission

Chartered in 1918, the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc. was formed for the promotion of Christian knowledge. Its journal, The Herald of Christ's Kingdom, stands firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated—redemption through the precious blood (1 Peter 1:19) of “the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all” (1 Timothy 2:6). Building upon this sure foundation the gold, silver, and precious stones of the Word of God (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Peter 1:5-11), its further mission is “to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which . . . has been hid in God . . . to the intent that now . . . might be [made] known by the church the manifold wisdom of God”—“which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed” (Ephesians 3:5-10).

It stands free from all parties, sects, and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken—according to the Divine wisdom granted unto us to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatic, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust to be used in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may or may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. We not only invite, we urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word, to which reference is constantly made to facilitate such testing.

To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

- ◆ That the Church is the “temple of the living God”—peculiarly “his workmanship”; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come “to all people” and they find access to him (1 Corinthians 3:16,17; Ephesians 2:20-22; Genesis 28:14; Galatians 3:29).
- ◆ That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin progresses and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium (1 Peter 2:4-9; Revelation 15:5-8).
- ◆ That the basis of hope for the Church and the world lies in the fact that “Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” “in due time” (Hebrews 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:5,6).
- ◆ That the hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be “a partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir (1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4).
- ◆ That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age (Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 1:6, 20:6).
- ◆ That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed (Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35).



In the Beginning

The Bible teaches doctrines. Doctrines are to teach us how to change ourselves from what we are to what we should become. We should become in the character likeness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The universe, life, and human existence all testify to the power and wisdom of God, our Creator. *Our Responsibility to the Creator* delineates our consequent responsibility to him.

Trusting the Righteousness of God examines the Book of Romans to show us how our consciousness of personal sin should prompt us to repentance, and to patience with others.

How the Lord's Promise to Abraham Should Change Us emphasizes that God swore to the blessings which are yet to come to all peoples; so now we should bless and not curse.

The Ten Commandments remain a reliable standard of Christian practice today, as we are reminded in *Holy, Just, and Good*.

Christ Died Once for All, and Our Gratitude outlines justification by faith from the dark ages to the present, and how grateful we must be to God and Christ.

Jesus is even today the pattern to which we are to conform Christian character. Two practical approaches are given in *Jesus' Example, Our Character*, and *How Christ's Example Should Change Our Character*. We must learn to love our enemies now if in Christ's kingdom we are to bless them.

While the faithful church has no merit to add to the sin-offering, personal and cooperative self-sacrifice now can qualify us for joining with Christ in the Millennium in offering his ransom merit to cancel sin for the whole world. That is the message of *The Sin-Offering and Christian Sacrifice*.

Resurrection and Faithfulness unto Death calls to our attention there is one cure for all our woes, and for those of the whole world of mankind. That cure is the resurrection. Thereby faith trumps fear!

A doctrine is not an intellectual concept to separate us and our friends from "bad people." Doctrine is to be applied, and applied to self. Let every one of us seek out the application of each doctrine, and then do it.

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Accountable

Our Responsibility to the Creator

Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. You turn man back into dust and say, "Return, O children of men."—Psalm 90:2,3¹

Kent Humphries

Today as we read through our newspapers and watch our favorite television news programs, we come to realize an underlying theme. No one is facing up to his or her own duties and responsibilities! Nowhere is this more prevalent than in national politics. Why is it so hard for people to face up to their actions? This should not be the case with Christians.

Turning to the first book of the Bible, we find the answer. Adam replied to God, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12). Here we have the first excuse ever recorded in history. And from this point we can read through the Scriptures and find excuse after excuse, until we reach our modern day. So it is no surprise, that the human family is immersed in deceit and disobedience.

Responsibility means to be "answerable or accountable, as for something within one's power or control." There is an account given in the Book of Luke of a young boy who understood fully the burden of responsibility that had been placed upon his shoulders. The following example should be burned, as it were, upon every action that motivates us! This is Jesus' response to his mother when questioned by her as to his whereabouts: "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49, *KJV*). And the same applies to us. We have been given a charge that is greater than any commission given to man! Jesus expresses the great responsibility that has been placed upon us at the Father's will: "To you has been given the mys-

tery of the Kingdom of God; but those who are outside get everything in parables" (Mark 4:11).

The seriousness of this revelation is again expressed by Jesus: "Take care what you listen to; by your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and more shall be given you besides. For whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him" (Mark 4:24,25).

What we have received is only because of Christ! Our righteousness is as filthy rags, but now his robe of righteousness covers us! In the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul teaches us the example we should exhibit as a result of this gift that has been given us by our heavenly Father: "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints." (Ephesians 5:1-3) He goes on in verses 14-17, "For this reason it says, Awake sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Are we appreciative when we are given a gift from a loved one? How much more should we be to the Father whose gifts and calling are irrevocable (Romans 11:29). The example of Jesus in the giving of his life is incorporated in

1. Scripture citations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, except as noted.

the apostle John's thoughts: "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). It is possible that this might be one of the last tests in our walk in this narrow way, for so it was for our Lord. Not only did he give his life, he did it willingly, in obedience to God!

Paul expresses what the heavenly Father desires from us as we walk in the path of his light: "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1,2).

From Paul's admonition we deduce that this is the **least** we can do! Our Father is not expecting us to do something impossible; we are to heed his instruction to be one with him. Sometimes we get the impression that by sacrificing continually we can obtain the prize, but this is not true. The answer is clearly given in the book of Samuel. In his conversation with Saul, Samuel explained the basic tenet of how to please God: "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Samuel 15:22). There is no other way to sacrifice than to heed his word, to be obedient to the instructions he has given us in his holy word.

In this racecourse for the prize of the high calling which we share with those of like precious faith, we must be extremely careful not to stumble those who walk in the same light! Though from time to time we may disagree with some that do not perceive as we, we must not let Satan use this as a wedge between us. We are not only responsible to God, we are responsible to one another, for we share the same gift from him who called us out of darkness. In the Fifty-fifth Psalm, David in his wis-

dom calls to our mind the trust and hope that binds us together. As is the case with so many Scriptures, it has a two-fold meaning, a meaning that in our case is especially applicable to today! We read beginning at verse 12: "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear it; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend; we who had sweet fellowship together, walked in the house of God in the throng."

Are we satisfied with our accountability to God? We are to make a daily assessment of our actions and our deeds to call upon the mercies of God through prayer. We are nearing the last hour of this classroom time. There will be no other opportunity to render sweet obedience to the giver of every good and perfect gift. We have been called to be priests with Jesus, to sit upon thrones in the presence of God. We are to judge men and angels, and to dispense blessings to mankind according to the will of God. It is our responsibility to make sure the instructions from God's word are burned within our hearts, to be a reflection of his mercy. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you." (Philippians 4:8,9).

Returning to the words of the apostle Paul in Romans, the eighth chapter, we see that our responsibility to our Creator is so important, that so much depends on the faithful completion of our calling and election. Beginning at verse 22: "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of child-birth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:22,23)

This is our responsibility to our Father in heaven.

*Are we
satisfied
with our
accountability
to God?*



Trusting the Righteousness of God

The righteous shall live by faith. —Romans 1:17, ASV

Richard Kindig

Romans is the foundational doctrinal book of the New Testament, boldly answering the weightiest questions that humans face about death and life, sin and righteousness, unbelief and faith. As we follow the apostle's teaching, we discover the concept of "original sin," that all humans are fallen by nature, born under a hereditary curse of sin and death. The burden of this book is to show both the personal redemptions and corporate deliverances that reveal the reasons why God has placed mankind under the curses of Genesis 3. It is in Romans that we can learn about God's righteousness, a benevolent, thoughtful, fatherly commitment to the human race's long-term education and prosperity.

The Joyful Message

Paul focuses on the joyful message and recognizes that it represents the power of God with respect to salvation to each individual who receives it (Romans 1:16).

What power is contained in a message such as this! God's mighty power was demonstrated when he raised Jesus from the dead, and by the various miracles of Jesus and the apostles. Yet Paul calls our attention to the power from God that accompanies the joyful message. The power of God with respect to salvation is a gentle combination of influence from the outside and an intentional unlocking of the inside which allows a person to make a connection with God.

This principle is taught by Jesus: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Or as in John 1:12, 13, the authority to become the children of God comes not from ourselves—but from God.

Paul gently hints of this order of things when he writes: "After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God" (Galatians 4:9).

We do not come to know God so much as he chooses to know us. And knowledge about God is not nearly as important as personal knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10; John 17:3; Jeremiah 9:24). We sought because God stimulated the motivation we lacked; we found because God opened our eyes in his due time. It is his power that is expended with respect to salvation (Ephesians 2:3).

However, this is not all the saving power that God will ever exert. Everything ever done in the first advent or the Christian era will be dwarfed by the "greater works" of the Messianic reign (John 5:20). It will become totally unnecessary to say to one's neighbor, "Know the LORD," because all will know him (Jeremiah 31:34). God's judgments will be in the earth, and the entire world will learn righteousness directly from his teaching (Isaiah 26:9).

The Wrath of God

Paul continues his argument in Romans 1:18, 19. The wrath or judicial anger of God has been revealed to all. Everywhere we look, we see death. Sodom and Gomorrah experienced the wrath of God (Jude 7).¹

Has anyone seen a fiery "hell"? Clearly not. That cannot be the wrath of God Paul refers to because it has not been revealed "to all." The wrath of God must be viewed as his judicial treatment of sin in this life: each person's hereditary struggle and ultimate death. Everyone can see that if there is a God, he is angry.

Yet only a few have had the righteousness of God revealed to them. Only these can see that in spite of sin and suffering, God is good. And it is only from faith—from God the faithful author of righteousness and redemption—that human faith springs. Faith in the righteousness of God is God's gift of grace (Ephesians 2:7, 8, *Amplified*; Romans 3:22; Colossians 1:9, 10).

1. Note that in Ezekiel 16:55, God promises a return of the people of Sodom to life on earth. In Matthew 11:23 Jesus indicates that God had not expended all his power with respect to salvation on their behalf.

“When They Knew God”

The remainder of Romans chapter 1 shows that God was fair in his initial decision to “curse” the entire race of Adam through heredity. To make this point, Paul states in verse 18 that God’s wrath has been revealed against all ungodliness.

He refers to times in human history when a group of people had known God: “When they knew God” (verse 21), they did not glorify him as God. At that time they were not thankful, did not honor God, but became vain in their imagination, and their rebellious heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, (becoming intellectually autonomous), “they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image” (verses 22,23) or icon (an idol). Men who knew better chose a material conception of God, not a spiritual conception of an invisible, but personal, deity.

When did men know the identity of the true God? Certainly the first generations who lived among Adam, Seth, and Enoch knew God. Yet most humans at that time rejected God and became darkened in their hearts. In verse 25 Paul states that they changed the truth of God into the lie, the lie of Satan: “You will not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). And instead of worshiping the Creator, they chose to worship the creature, Satan, who deceived the human race in Eden and since.

After the flood Noah’s family certainly knew God, yet the simple story of the flood became twisted into all the religions of today with their demigods and idolatry. History records God’s intervention to scatter the human race and mitigate its power for evil. Josephus summarizes that rebellion: Nimrod persuaded mankind not to ascribe their happiness to God, but to think that his own excellency was the source of it. (See Genesis 10:8, 9; Josephus, *Antiquities* I, iv, 2.)

A third time when a large group of people knew God was when Israel experienced its miraculous deliverance from Egypt. In this case idolatry and licentiousness emerged while Moses was yet in the mountain receiving God’s law (see Exodus 32).

These occurrences would fit Paul’s statement in Romans 1:21 that “When they knew God” humans chose not to retain God in their knowledge. At most times and places in human history, however, untold numbers live and die without ever knowing God. They are described

in Isaiah 60 as being totally in darkness. Yet these are not lost to all hope; Romans 1 describes the general condition of the human race, prior to the glorious deliverance, described later in the book of Romans.

Trusting Righteous Authority

Romans 1:28 reveals much that we can apply personally in our walk with God. God’s way of dealing with those who knew God but “did not like to retain him in their knowledge” was to “give them a reprobate mind.”

The meaning of “did not like to retain God in their knowledge” hinges on the Greek word *dokimazo*—to “test, examine, prove, or scrutinize, to see whether it is genuine or not” (Thayer). Most translations seem to miss Paul’s point, that when people knew God, they put God to the test and decided that they would prefer to live outside of his authority. God’s response, according to Paul, is to give them an *adokimizo* mind. In other words, God gives the rebellious, autonomous soul a non-approving mind that cannot accept any authority. If people find God’s leadership unacceptable, God creates discontent in their soul. Pascal called this the “God-sized hole” in each person’s heart.

Whether we look at the world with its mad pursuit of self-fulfillment, or at our own personal excesses, addictions, romanticized notions, or self-will, the common thread is an inability to recognize and submit to the righteous authority that is available to us. The result, according to Paul, is a slippery slope of misbehavior all the way from parental disobedience to the most perverted moral outrages.

Paul states that “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23). If we want to enjoy the “hundredfold” blessing (Mark 10:30) which Jesus promises to the willing and obedient in this life, and eternal life in the next, we will need to pay careful attention to this principle. We will submit to God’s righteousness and take advantage of the grace extended to us by God through Christ. We will approach nearer to God by quickly acknowledging our sins, and yet boldly trusting in the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19,20).

Having proper awe and appreciation for God’s righteous authority will make a big impact on the way we relate to our brethren. When differences arise, we will resist our human tendency to draw back from those whom God has also chosen, and instead we will

*We will
approach nearer
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our sins.*

engage more closely in dialog, mutual listening and sharing of what God's spirit has revealed to each of us.

Finally, if we choose to approve of righteous authority, we will become more effective in our family relationships. We will honor our spouses, our parents, and our children by acknowledging their personhood. And as parents, we will firmly yet gently teach our children while they are young that their key to happiness and true success in life will be to learn to approve of righteous authority—whether wielded by God, parents, spouse, employer, or governmental authorities.

“They Are Without Excuse”

Does verse 18 mean that all people are deserving of hell if they do not respond to the gospel? In fact no mention of hell occurs in Romans 1. The entire chapter refers to consequences that people experience in this life, ending in their death. Further, the judgment of God is the one that all are now experiencing, the original condemnation of Adamic death. After listing many human sins, in verse 32 Paul emphatically states that the judgment of God is that all these things are worthy of death (c.f. Romans 6:23). There is no mention of eternal existence in hell.

Human Missionary Efforts Are Failing

According to the World Christian Encyclopedia 2001 and World Evangelization Resource Center's 2002 report, the people of the world spend \$300 billion on Christian causes (1.8% of total income). \$17 billion is spent on Foreign Missions (5.7% of giving to all Christian causes). Interestingly, \$18 billion is spent by churches on “Ecclesiastical Crime.”

According to the report, the average ministry cost in US dollars for each convert's baptism ranges from \$1,400 per conversion in Mozambique to \$61,000 in Asia, \$145,000 in Latin America, \$993,000 in Europe, and \$1.5 million in the United States.

Since four billion people remain un-Christian, and therefore headed for eternal misery according to traditional teachings, God would need to provide hundreds of trillions of dollars if he wanted to reach all the people living today.

Fortunately God has a much better plan than this “missionary work.” The humbling experiences depicted symbolically as “fire” in 2 Peter 3 and Zephaniah 3:8 will prepare people to receive instruction. And as Jeremiah predicts, “it will no longer be necessary to say, ‘know the LORD,’ because they will all know him, from the least to the greatest.”

When Paul says that all are “without excuse,” he is not saying that the masses of mankind will not one day enjoy the blessings of God's grace and redemption through Christ. He is saying that their dying condition at the present time is not unfair. He is also warning religious people not to sit in judgment of the less fortunate and less knowledgeable.

Those who live in the world can see vestiges of God's character and deity in the world around them. They can look up and see stars, they can watch the faithfulness of sunrise, the miracle of life every spring, the joys and pleasures of even a fallen existence, and wonder about the Power that created all these things.

In the Christian age there have been many examples of individuals who have sought and found God in the midst of darkness. God's arm is not short; he is quietly selecting a “people for his name” (Acts 15:14), and the rest of the world is quietly learning that God is no appeaser of sin and depravity. How glad we are that God's plan is not completely summarized in Romans 1.

Romans 5 explains God's universal provision of bringing “justification of life” to every man who experienced the hereditary curse of Adam. Romans 8 reveals that the whole creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption when the sons of God (developed during the Christian age) are revealed. And Romans 11:26-32 shows that even the Jews who rejected the “suffering servant” will have their ungodliness turned away by the deliverer, Christ and his church. Oh, the depth of the wisdom and righteousness of God!

Summary

In Romans 1 we are given the most basic principle of God's plan: that man fell, that God was fair in ordaining the hereditary curses that he placed upon mankind, and that no person in the human race has an excuse for the sins he commits. However, God has sent a shaft of light into the darkness, the knowledge of his goodness through Christ. It is a goodness that during the Christian age reaches those whom God selects. And it is a goodness that will soon release **all** mankind from the bondage of hereditary sin, disease and death. In the end, all mankind will be able to see the goodness and righteousness of God. Praise God for his righteousness, which will yet be revealed to all the children of men! (Psalm 107)



How the Lord's Promise to Abraham Should Change Us

In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves.—Genesis 22:18, ASV margin

James Parkinson

When God called Abram to leave Haran and his older brother, Nahor, He promised: “Get thee out of thy country ... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3)¹. He promised that [not some, not most, but] all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

But after Abraham demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice his son, his heir, the Lord enhanced the promise again: “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves” (Genesis 22:18, ASV margin).² God promised this phraseology, and he swore he would do it. Then he repeated it to Isaac—the type of God’s own son Jesus, who was sacrificed to be the substitutionary atonement for Adam, who had sinned and brought death upon all of us, his posterity. Thus, we may confidently proclaim that in Christ [in his thousand-year kingdom] all the families of the earth will be there, that The Christ will bless all the families of the earth, and that all the families of the earth will finally learn to bless one another.

All bore Jesus witness “and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4:22), as he proclaimed the coming release for the captives of death, healing for the blind and bruised, and already in the Gospel age an acceptable time—a day of salvation—to develop the faithful church to live and reign with Christ in his thousand-year

kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

The sworn promise of God is to have a sanctifying effect on every faithful member of the body of Christ. We are already now required to learn to love even our enemies, so that in Christ’s thousand-year kingdom we will be prepared to bless them. And again, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith” (Galatians 6:10).

Seven Sons and One Heir

As Hagar fled into the wilderness, and later when she and her misbehaving son Ishmael were expelled, so the Law Covenant went into Babylonian captivity as a forewarning; later Israel was dispersed among all nations. As Isaac was Sarah’s son and Abraham’s heir, so consecrated Christians are now children of a Promise Covenant. Abraham gave gifts to Ishmael and to his sons by Keturah when they were sent east; likewise God will bless all the families of the earth through a New Covenant forever (Genesis 21:10-14; 25:5,6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Galatians 3:17,29; 4:28). Even so, our training is not to curse others, but to learn to be merciful to them and to bless them (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-31,35,36; Romans 12:14,20; 1 Corinthians 4:12,13).

1. Quotes are from the *Revised Versions*, unless otherwise noted.

2. The case of the Hebrew verb in chapter 12 is passive, but in chapter 22 it is reflexive, as in Rotherham, and as noted in the margin of the *American Standard Version*. Technical note: The quote of the promise in Acts 3:25 is not precisely that of either the Hebrew or the Greek Septuagint of Genesis 12:3, 22:18, 26:4, or 28:14. Acts emphasizes “in thy seed” (by putting it first in word order), rather than “shall be blessed”; otherwise it is the Septuagint text of 12:3 but with “in thy seed” substituted from 22:18, as might also be justified from 28:14.



The Law and the Christian

Holy, Just, and Good

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.—Romans 7:12

David Rice

When Moses received the Law from God, he received a treasure from the Divine Courts. It has provided a standard of conduct that has enlightened civilized peoples for millennia. Its principles have permeated our culture, even though, sadly, the modern world sometimes turns away from acknowledging its debt to it.

There are lessons in the Law for the New Creation also. Our Lord said the Law was embodied in two great commandments. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40; compare Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18). A law of this grandeur is worthy of our focused attention.

The principles of the Law—the Spirit of the Law—apply to us. “The righteousness of the law [is] fulfilled in us, who walk ... after the Spirit” (Romans 8:4). God has graciously “made us able ministers ... of the spirit [and] the spirit giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:5,6). By this means we may “serve him [God] without fear, in holiness and righteousness ... all the days of our life” (Luke 1:74, 75).

The Ten Commandments

The essence of the Law was given to Israel briefly in the Ten Commandments. These were inscribed by the finger of God on tablets of stone, and later inscribed a second time by Moses, on a new set of tablets prepared by Moses at God’s direction (Exodus 31:18; 32:16; 34:1,28). The first inscribing may represent the giving of the Law by God during the Jewish age. Those tablets were broken because of Israel’s rebellion, representing that Israel failed to keep the law properly; so this arrangement was “broken” at the end of the

Jewish Age. The second inscribing may represent the work of Christ during the Gospel Age, writing the law within our hearts, preparatory to our administering its principles to mankind during the Millennium, after the present age closes.

But before these commandments were written even the first time, Israel heard them audibly from a booming voice emanating from heaven. (Compare Exodus 19:25, 20:1, 19, Deuteronomy 5:4, 22.) The occasion was so imposing and awesome the people subsequently asked Moses to intervene for them, receive the words of God himself, and then communicate the precepts of God to them.

So as we approach our Heavenly Father, we perceive an imposing wonder and awe and grandeur that we feel we cannot comprehend or properly respond to. But our Lord Jesus is appointed to teach us, instruct us, and plant the precepts of God within us, so that we can receive them, apply them, and be transformed by them, “that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

The Arrangement of the Commandments

There are two recitations of the Ten Commandments, one in Exodus 20 that records the original episode, another in Deuteronomy 5 which is Moses’ later recollection of the experience while addressing the Israelites near the end of the forty years in the wilderness. We will follow the Exodus account.

There is a reasonable order in the sequence of the commandments which is part of what Divine Wisdom committed to us through the Israelites. The first five commandments pertain to our worship and duties to God, the second set of five are specific prohibitions of sins against our fellows. That there were two tablets used to record the Law, in itself highlights this

topical segregation of the commandments into two parts.

If it has been some time since one has read through the account, we recommend reading it from the Scriptures again. It is remarkably brief for such riveting content, a mere seventeen verses, opening the twentieth chapter of Exodus. It is simple, elegant, and the loftier for its brevity. Yet it still makes room for some lovely nuances, and even a welcome promise attached to the fifth command in particular.

Below is a brief summary in list form to make it easy to remember the commands in sequence. Some bemoan the fact that even such a list is not generally memorized by people today. We agree, and encourage all to put these brief commands, in sequence, into memory.

- ◆ Have no other gods before Jehovah
- ◆ No graven images for worship
- ◆ Do not take the name of God in vain
- ◆ Do keep the Sabbath holy
- ◆ Do honour thy father and mother
- ◆ Do not kill
- ◆ Do not commit adultery
- ◆ Do not steal
- ◆ Do not bear false witness
- ◆ Do not covet

The sequence within the second set is most reasonable; these five prohibitions of conduct against our neighbor are ranked according to the seriousness of the offense. They are stated so succinctly in Scripture that we can easily quote the passage “Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house,” wife, servants, animals, “nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Exodus 20:13-17).

All of God’s people, without exception, observe these commands. Even if by fault or slip they are transgressed, the conscience of the brother or sister overtaken in the fault would surely drive them to the throne of grace. They should also make amends for the misdeeds, and to “make straight paths for [their] feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but ... it rather be healed” (Hebrews 12:13). At least so with the gross sins heading this second portion. But what about the sin of coveting? This goes to the mind where transgressions are

not so visible. Here a Christian recognizes a greater challenge on the battlefield of experience.

Then we turn to the words of our Lord, and recognize that even the grosser sins have subtler forms that the more readily can ensnare us. Might we think ill of our brother and speak unjustly against him, slaying his reputation or stealing his honor? (Matthew 5:22) Might our gaze and thought fix upon a pleasant subject and engender an impure thought? (Matthew 5:28) We then have cause for appreciating the counsel of James: “The wisdom that is from above is ... pure ... peaceable ... gentle ... easy to be intreated ... full of mercy ... without partiality [or] hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

The First Set

The first set of five have priority since they pertain to our worship of God; they are given at substantially greater length and comment than the latter five.

The first two seem straight forward: no false gods and no idol worship even if the idol is supposed to represent Jehovah (such as the golden calf). Imagine if Israel had observed these two simple but fundamental rules through the centuries, how much heartache, anguish, and destruction they would have avoided—from the apostasy of Jeroboam, to the treachery of Jezebel, to the burning of Jewish babies to an idol of Molech, to escaping the ravages of plunder, captivity, and death brought by heathen armies. What sweet counsel are the words of the psalmist: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom ... to him belongs eternal praise” (Psalm 111:10, *NIV*). And the words of the aged apostle, closing out his first epistle: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

“Do not take the name of God in vain.” This was an injunction against solemn oaths deceitfully engaged, a crime against God whose name was thus defamed. Probably few today take oaths in the name of Jehovah that they intend to break. In this respect, the command is probably seldom infringed in modern society. But the weaker sister to this sin—the profane use of “God”—is so prolific and mindless it swells to the most frequent, pervasive (and repugnant) on the list. Let none of the brethren who live to honor God so degrade the holy name as to use it for a casual exclamation!

Some sins have subtle forms that can readily ensnare us.

Are these commands not wonderfully pure, noble, and good?

The fourth command respects the worship of Jehovah. The purpose of the Sabbath was to set aside one day out of seven for holy things by refusing to engage in secular work: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). As God sanctified the seventh day, so Israel was to respect that example (verses 10, 11). In the Christian era the day of public worship and cessation of mundane enterprise is Sunday, in honor of our Lord’s resurrection. There is a tendency to violate the spirit of this blessed command by declining the advantage peculiar to this custom. Instead of infringing upon the spiritual, by the forces of common gain, let us rather expand our use of Sunday gatherings, fellowship, study, visiting, exhortation, reading, and rejoicing in the spirit. Let us circumspectly guard the privilege. (See the mellifluous counsel on this point in *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 6, pp. 388-390.)

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (Exodus 20:12). As Paul observes, this is the first commandment with a promise attached: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the

earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3). Parents represent God’s authority in the family. Thus this command is appropriate to the first set of commands respecting our worship and respect to God. Let our honor of those whose lives have been mortgaged for our interests, be not of constraint, but from appreciative and loving hearts. The older we grow, the more mellow with appreciation should we be, the more so as we learn by life’s experience the value and cost expended upon us in our youth. The principle can extend also to our spiritual fathers (1 Timothy 1:2; 5:17), but not at the expense of the former.

Pleasant Requirements

Are these commands not wonderfully pure, noble, and good? Is there anything here at all onerous? Is there any reason to shrink from the blessed directives that Divine Wisdom provided so long ago?

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19). We can “be called great in the kingdom of heaven” by observing such pleasant requirements. What a proposal to rejoice a holy heart!

Law and Health

The Mosaic Law prescribed covered sewerage in Deuteronomy 23:12,13. It was not until the industrial revolution that the world resumed the practice, and with it came an increase in life expectancy (from forty to now over seventy years).

Eating fat was forbidden in Leviticus 3:17. Modern medicine now tells us that eating fat contributes to both coronary disease and cancer.

The Law declared people who contacted dead bodies to be unhealthy, and also prescribed a soap-and-water cleansing (Numbers 19:2-22). When in 1847 Ignaz Semmelweis required hand-washing for medical personnel before each patient visit in the maternity ward, the one-in-six woman mortality rate plunged; nevertheless, he was ridiculed and lost his job (and the mortality rate soared again). Thirty years later the bacteriological basis became known, and antiseptic procedures were then required in all hospitals.

The Law of Moses was a radical departure from the medical practices of Egypt (Papyrus Elbers). The agnostic is left to ponder whether Moses was the greatest research M.D. in history, or whether the Designer and Creator gave him the information. Modern medical science is learning—just 3,500 years late!

—None of These Diseases, S.I. McMillen, M.D.

Christ Died Once for All, and Our Gratitude



For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.—1 Corinthians 15:22, NRSV

William Dutka

We are most thankful for Paul's letters to our brethren in Rome and Galatia. Although they were written primarily to clear up a controversy that existed in the early church, their contents are invaluable to our more perfect understanding of justification by faith. Even with the apostles as personal instructors, the subject of justification by faith was a difficult concept for the early church to fully grasp. We can see through the Scriptures that biblical understanding takes time, patience, study, and the holy spirit to illuminate our minds to know and understand the will of God (2 Corinthians 2:14-16; 1 Peter 1:10).

The congregations at Rome and Galatia were quite diverse, and with diversity comes controversy. Some in the church were Jews trained under the law while others were Gentiles. A contention arose about how one is accepted into the body of Christ.

Many of the Jewish brethren, trained under the precepts of Moses, had difficulty realizing that the law itself was not something to be worshipped. They did not fully grasp that its purpose was to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, to keep them strangers and aliens from the nations that surrounded them. Why should the law bring them to an appreciation and need for a Messiah? We believe that if they were rightly exercised by the precepts of the law, drawn by the finger of God, they would realize that no one except a perfect man could perfectly keep the laws of God.

Paul attempted to help them understand that when they accepted Jesus as the Messiah, they could no longer claim their righteousness was through the law (Galatians 2:21). Paul continued his argument: "O you poor and silly and thoughtless and unreflecting and senseless Galatians! Who has fascinated or bewitched or cast a spell over you, unto whom—right before your very eyes—Jesus Christ (the Messiah) was openly and graphically set forth and por-

trayed as crucified? Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the [holy] spirit as the result of obeying the Law and doing its works, or was it by hearing [the message of the gospel] and believing [it]? [Was it from observing a law of rituals or from a message of faith?] Are you so foolish and so senseless and so silly? Having begun [your new life spiritually] with the [holy] spirit, are you now reaching perfection [by dependence] on the flesh?" (Galatians 3:1-3, Amplified).

Justification was not an easy doctrine for the church through the ages to comprehend. Even the Lord's brother James seemed temporarily hesitant on the subject. Luke tells us, "When they heard it, they praised God. Then they said to him, You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs" (Acts 21:20, 21, NRSV).

We believe Paul made a concession without violating principle by following the advice of the elders at Jerusalem. Luke tells us, "So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law" (Acts 21:23,24, NRSV).

Even though Paul's understanding of the matter was correct, he agreed to purify himself in the temple. It is here that we get another glimpse of the character of Paul. If peace, without compromise, could be gained, his brethren could be gained, and this would allow the Gentile converts an equal standing with the Jews. He was willing to settle the matter at the cost of personal humiliation.

The Dark Ages

The medieval church also had its difficulty understanding justification by faith. Although it was not a controversy about being righteous by keeping the law, the medieval church thought that “works” was a means to attain salvation.

Medieval religion taught that salvation was not by grace, but acquired through penance, prayers, indulgences, or works to be performed by the penitent in reparation for sins committed. This ideology grew and became a great source of revenue and power for the reigning church at Rome. It became the heart, the lifeblood, and man’s new means for salvation.

Murderers, covenant breakers, liars, and all wicked persons could supposedly be absolved by a simple indulgence. A few coins in the coffer and one could become white as snow (but see Psalm 51:5-7). One could even pay for absolution in advance of the sin being committed (but see Romans 6:1-4; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 John 3:8,9). Oh how Jesus’ sacrifice was made null and void!

A difficulty arises in the true understanding of “good works” as stated in the epistle of James. Good works should be the conduct or demeanor of those who are in communion with God. Misunderstandings arise when one considers the “good works” as the vehicle that affords us an opportunity to have a relationship with God.

If only the medieval church could have grasped the proper thought that both James and Paul attempted to convey. Paul tells us that, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Ephesians 1:7 *NRSV*). But the church of the dark ages sold salvation as fire insurance. Bibles were unavailable. Even if one could find a Bible, or afford to purchase one, it was usually written in an unknown tongue (1 Corinthians 14:14-19).

The Reformation

As we enter the Reformation, and eagerly push open its historical door, it is as though we are transported to another place in time—a new society, a society on the brink of change. We cannot open this historical door without giving honor to those faithful ones who preceded the thunderous reformers, and paved the way: Wycliffe, Huss, Wessel, and other expositors whose writings convey the message

extolled during the Reformation. They lived during the morning of that glorious day. But the time to trumpet the message had to wait until 1517.

It is at this time, that we come face-to-face with the most prominent voice of the Reformation: Martin Luther. We believe his own personal weight of unworthiness that he felt equaled his zeal to trumpet the message he understood in the Scriptures (J. Kittelson, *Luther the Reformer*; Augsburg Publishing House, 1986, p. 56f). “Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God” (Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand, A Life of Martin Luther*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1950).

Some historians question that Luther stood before Charles V and added, “Here I stand; I can do no other. My conscience is held captive to the will of God.” (Christian History, 11, 2 [#34], p. 50). However, we believe this quotation is the spirit of the Reformation! All the reformers could do nothing but zealously bend to the will of God and proclaim the truth. This, we believe, was his sentiment, as well as of the faithful reformers and brethren of his day, whose diligence to conscience freed the bands of those minds held in bondage by the teachings of the priests.

It was the Luthers, the Tyndales, the Zwinglis, and the Melancthons of the Reformation who heralded literally in the mountains, valleys, and hills that salvation is free! (J. H. Merle d’Aubigne, *For God and His People*, p. XXV. Reprinted: BJU Press, 2000.) Paul reaffirms this thought: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life” (Ephesians 2:8-10, *NRSV*).

It seems the unfolding of the reformer’s understanding began with the phrase “righteousness of God” as that by which the righteous person lives by the gift of God; and thus, “the righteousness of God is revealed,” to refer to a passive righteousness, not requiring specific works, by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, “as it is written, The one who is

*“My conscience
is captive to the
Word of God.”
—Luther*

righteous will live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17, *NRSV*);).

This rediscovered element of truth lifted the personal weight of unworthiness off the shoulders of the Lord’s people. God covers our iniquities through the robe of righteousness, or through the blood of his son, and this mechanism gives us access to commune directly with him. We do not approach God through a church, an organization, or through indulgences, relics, special services, or the lighting of candles. We have the privilege to approach him through, and because of, Jesus’ death, the blood of his sacrifice; this is the conduit that God designed for sinful man to draw near him.

The Reformation had a remarkable negative impact on Papacy’s power. The truth, the Scriptures now published in known languages, wounded the beast. John tells us, “One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast” (Revelation 13:3, *NRSV*).

The End of the Age

It is not until we examine the history of the church that we appreciate our present understanding of God’s plans and purposes. We have the means and ability to purchase Bibles, Bible helps, and vast resources that give us greater insight into the Scriptures. We are truly rich! Our understanding of justification was made clear again at the end of the age through the pen of Pastor Russell and the labors of others.

More than our brethren who lived during other periods of the development of the church, we have a clearer understanding of the doctrine of justification: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, *NRSV*).

We are not “saved” nor safe by believing in additional “books” of the Bible, unique practices, or celebrating holy days, indulgences, attending services, or receiving special gifts of the spirit. Any additional requirements, other than through belief in Jesus, become a snare and delusion from the adversary (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). From the Scriptures we know that salvation can be obtained only one way, and one way alone, through a belief in him who died for us.

Christ’s merit (value) is essential for salvation. Our justification by faith signifies a righteous condition, acceptable to God through faith in Jesus’ sacrifice, in his merit. We must appropriate Christ’s merit, the value that was in him, to ourselves. By doing this we put on Christ, not merely by faith, but more and more we put on his character and are transformed into his glorious image. This transformation takes place in one’s mind, and the outward manifestation is in one’s actions—an index of our heart intentions (Romans 4:25 to 5:2, *ASV*).

The Redemptive Work

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned (Strong’s #1677) when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come” (Romans 5:12-14, *NRSV*). We understand Paul’s statement, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23, *NRSV*).

Though the penalty, death, was in the world before the law because of Adam’s disobedience, sin was not reckoned, for there was no law. Sin was not pointed out before the law. There was no standard; the finger of God had not set the tables of the law. Exodus confirms Paul’s thoughts: “When God finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18, *NRSV*).

Thus the Law should have been the schoolmaster to bring the nation to Christ where they could be justified by faith. Those that had a proper heart condition would realize that while born under the Law, they could not meet its high standards. They were born in sin and shaped in iniquity (Psalm 51:5). Humble servants under the Law knew that they needed a Messiah. In retrospect, the Law was but an instrument to properly develop the consciousness of one’s personal imperfections.

Some interpret Romans 4:15 to mean that if no law exists, one cannot be held accountable since one cannot be held accountable for what

Transformation occurs in one’s mind; the outward manifestation is in one’s actions.

*Our actions are
a vitalized
result of our
understanding.*

one doesn't know. But one does not escape the judgment of the law because of ignorance. The Scriptures tell us that through Adam the human race is condemned, and through the law personal sin is brought to light. In the context of Romans 4:15 we see that no one can escape Adamic condemnation, yet God is pleased by those who have faith in his promises.

Therefore, as Romans 4:22 states, there is a reckoned righteousness in faith of God's promises and a freedom from guilt (Romans 4:6-8,10). This takes place first by hearing, then by understanding, and finally by accepting the promises of God. Our actions are a vitalized result of our understanding. Our sanctification must bear fruits of righteousness because "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:14-17).

In Galatians 3:24,25 we are told that the nation of Israel was under the law and was measured by the same standard; they all had the same opportunity. Some were attentive and heard the Master's words, but most of the nation was blinded. The result was that a number dedicated their lives to the dispensational truth our Lord taught, while many experienced the wrath of the Romans years later.

Death to Life

In Romans 5 Paul designs a proof establishing the grounds to believe that Adam, through disobedience, forfeited all his rights to life and to earth; Jesus by his death as a corresponding price, paid a full and exact offset for Adam and, consequently, for all his posterity (*Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 5, p. 428).

Using Strong's concordance, consider the beautiful equality of this argument: "Therefore just as one man's trespass (#3900) led to condemnation (#2631) for all, so one man's act of righteousness (#1345) leads to justification (#1347) (unto acquittal which brings with it the bestowment of life) and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience (#3876) the many (#4183) were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience (#5218) the many (#4183) will be made righteous (#1342). But law came in, with the result that the trespass (#3900) multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so

grace might also exercise dominion through justification (#1343) leading to "eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:18-21, *NRSV*).

The Privilege of Grace

We have the privilege of traveling through the chronicles of Christian history, and reflecting on the faithful voices of the past. Those earnest seekers of truth were carrying the torch of truth. Yes, they were faithful, quiet, humble brethren who had the privilege in God's plans and purposes to act out their lives in accordance to his will. Their desire, just like the Master's, was to do the will of him who sent them (John 6:38).

There is no grander time, no grander place, and no grander opportunity than the privilege of now being workmen with Christ (2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 3:9). Although it is a reasonable service, it becomes so grand, so great that one can hardly believe we have "grace." Yes, we have been given favor to know him, touch him, hear him (1 John 1:1) not only through the pages of the Scriptures, but through each and every one of God's dear children.

Such worthless rags have we, but God loved us. He loved his human family, and trusted that his son's death would not be in vain. As we are privileged to understand in greater depth the intent of Christ's ministry and death on our behalf, and as his expression of love is cast open before our eyes, let us run, and throw aside every weight and the sin that easily besets us (Hebrews 12:1).

Let nothing, whether small or great, separate us from his precious love. May our feeding upon the word increase our affection, appreciation, for Christ's death, and increase our zeal.

We need to "redeem the time," and fix our eyes on Jesus (Colossians 4:5). Drink up the word of God, pray for wisdom from above, and allow the holy spirit to transform our conscience—the new mind. Let us not conform to the opinions, customs, or policies of this age, but live as though the New Age has begun (2 Peter 1:4; 3:13). Therefore, our prayer is that the strength and power of the Messiah may rest (yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell) upon us! (2 Corinthians 12:9).



Jesus' Example, Our Character

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.—Psalm 4:4, ASV

Rick Suraci

The effects Jesus' example should have on our characters can scarcely be measured, for they can be both numerous and profound, subtle and internal, life changing and clear. To begin to understand the depth of these potential effects, it is proper for us to do as the psalmist instructs: to stand in awe, commune with our hearts, to be still. Selah.

The meaning of "Selah" is important. Strong's defines Selah as "suspension (of music), pause." Some commentaries add: "It is held by some to mean a 'pause, suspension, or holding back,' either of the singing of the psalm for a musical interlude or of both singing and instrumental music for silent meditation. In either event, the pause was doubtless used to make the fact or sentiment just expressed more impressive, to allow the full import of the last utterance to sink in."

The import is simple: if we are to truly comprehend the impact of Jesus on our lives, we need to "consider [meditate on] him," and pause. Stop the singing, stop the music, get quiet and reflect on the whole of Jesus: his words, actions, intentions and thoughts.

"Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, and let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for Jehovah" (Psalm 27:14, ASV). We are told to wait. To help our retention of the lesson at hand, let us use that word "wait" as an acronym for exploring Jesus' example in the four major areas of our character:

Words **A**ctions **I**ntentions **T**houghts

As we pursue this line of reasoning, let us first observe that we are starting from outward manifestations (Words and Actions) of the inward activities of heart and mind.

WORDS

There is no faster method of building up, or of tearing down, than our words:

"His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity" (Psalm 10:7).

"Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah. Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue." (Psalm 52:2-4).

Words can be utterly destructive:

"Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue" (Psalm 120:2).

Here is what Jesus says about our words: "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matthew 12:33-37, ASV).

How did Jesus use the power of his own words? In the account of Jesus' experience with the centurion it is the great faith of that centurion that revealed the power of Jesus words: "And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8, ASV). He observed that no physical action was required of Jesus to heal, just his spoken word.

In the account of Jesus and his disciples on the ship during a storm, it is again mere words that caused the tumult to cease: "But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, Teacher, do you not

care that we are perishing? He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace! Be still! Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.” (Mark 4:38,39, *NRSV*).

Jesus’ words were always powerful for good, for his words were always a reflection of the will of his Father. In this we can begin to understand how his example ought to be reflected in our lives. Our words also should reflect the heavenly Father’s will. This can only be accomplished—and fleetingly, at best—if we are immersed in his word and allow his spirit to guide our tongues.

“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.”—Matthew 10:17-20, *ASV*

The challenge here, as with the other three areas of our characters, is that we are not Jesus, we are not perfect, and our judgment can easily be skewed by our fallen condition. Words can make or break us. They can be weapons of mass destruction or a soothing balm of healing. As we go about our daily tasks, we bear the responsibility of being ambassadors for Christ and that ambassadorship is often interpreted by our words. What do our words say about our representation of Christ? Do they draw others to him?

Issues such as controversy and righteous indignation are areas that require great care and will be discussed when we consider “intentions.” These areas are perhaps the most difficult for us to clearly filter our words, for emotion and ego are apt to influence what we say.

We see that Jesus always spoke words that were meant for good, to fulfill his Father’s will and to bring those to whom he spoke as close to the truth as was possible. We also should pattern our words in such a manner. Selah.

ACTIONS

The unmistakable evidences of our hearts are our actions. Jesus taught us that our actions reflect our allegiance:

“Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house

upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.” (Matthew 7:24-26, *ASV*).

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Luke 16:13).

The strength of Jesus’ actions is reflected in:

His obedience: Jesus chose to submit and thereby became salvation: “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 5:7-10, *NRSV*).

His compassion: Jesus always had time for those in need: “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” (Matthew 9:35,36).

His conviction: Jesus not only clears the temple, he then teaches its proper use: “And they came to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.” (Mark 11:15-18).

Jesus’ example shows us how to use the power of our actions for good:

*Do our words
draw others
to Christ?*

Learn of him first: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Care for one another properly: “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:1,2, *NRSV*).

Listen: We have two ears and one mouth for a reason! “You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness” (James 1:19, 20, *NRSV*).

Live selflessly: “If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, *NRSV*).

We see that Jesus’ actions were perfectly congruent with the will of his Father. He did those things which were necessary, those things which were kind and those things which were wise in his Father’s eyes. His actions defined his mission and his allegiance. Our actions, while “there is none righteous, no not one” (Romans 3:10), must be trained to follow the same path. We must daily work to do with our might what our hands find to do in his service, we must daily work to fight off the sloth and selfishness of the old man and do those things that would clearly reflect Christ in us. Selah.

INTENTIONS

Intentions are the bridge over which thoughts travel to become actions or words. It is of the utmost importance to firmly guard this bridge, for the things we let pass over it are the things that define our consecration. Jesus spoke clearly of intentions and their resulting actions and the resulting consequence or blessing: “Take heed that ye do not your righteousness

before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee. And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.” (Matthew 6:1-6, *ASV*).

Jesus’ own intentions were clear: his Father’s will, his Father’s will, his Father’s will!

“Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, Rabbi, eat something. But he said to them, I have food to eat that you do not know about. So the disciples said to one another, Surely no one has brought him something to eat? Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.” (John 4:31-34, *NRSV*).

“And the devil said to him, To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours. Jesus answered him, It is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” (Luke 4:6-8, *NRSV*).

“From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things. Then Jesus told his disciples, If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and

Thoughts travel over the bridge of intentions to become actions or words.

When our fallen intentions influence our words, we bring reproach upon the name of Christ.

those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:21-25, *NRSV*).

As for our intentions, they must be clearly understood, for their potential to wreak havoc is great. Not only must we focus on Jesus’ example of doing the right things, but we must also focus on doing those right things with the right intentions: “And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:3, *ASV*). This can only be accomplished by allowing the holy spirit to guide us. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:1,2, *ASV*).

This brings us to matters of great difficulty: controversy and righteous indignation. How, according to Jesus’ example, are we to deal with such things?

First of all, anger is not intrinsically bad; it is our use of it that gets us into trouble: “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26, *ASV*).

Let us examine an example of Jesus’ righteous anger, to see his intention, how he framed his actions and his anger to a righteous end: “And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise” (John 2:14-16).

Jesus was angry at the misuse of the temple as a place of unrighteous profit. The scourge of small cords was not a weapon to do harm, it was an attention getter. Jesus drove out the animals; these could be recovered without much effort by their owners. He overturned the tables, again not displacing any goods, just causing them to clean up. Notice what he did with the doves: he did not loose them, he simply commanded they be removed. Why? Jesus was not interested in causing harm or loss; he was interested in stopping extortion. Had the

doves been loosed, they would not have been easily recovered, causing loss to their owners and to the poor who would be purchasing them for their sacrifice. So we see Jesus’ anger framed in righteousness, wisdom, and kindness.

We see that we must only act out of godliness. The moment we allow our fallen intentions to influence our words or actions is the moment we bring reproach upon the name of Christ. “For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13, *ASV*). Let us firmly will to do what is right so we may do that which is godly. Intentions are a bridge: What do we allow to pass over it? Selah.

THOUGHTS

The seeds of all that will make us faithful or unfaithful are found in our thoughts. “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:1-5, *ASV*).

Jesus’ thoughts at the beginning of his ministry: It is Written! “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil ... The tempter came and said to him, If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread. But he answered, It is written, One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, he will command his angels concerning you ... Jesus said to him, Again it is written, Do not put the Lord your God to the test. Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; and he said to him, All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me. Jesus said to him, Away with you, Satan! for it is written, Worship the Lord your God,

and serve only him.” (Matthew 4:1-10, NRSV).

Jesus’ thoughts at the end of his ministry were Thy Will Be Done!

“And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want. Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again he went away for the second time and prayed, My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done. Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.” (Matthew 26:39-44, NRSV).

As we have come to the last area of character to seek Jesus’ example it is evident that Jesus, in all four of these areas in his life, had a complete submission to the will of his Father. As we struggle to conform to his example, let us remember that we are not fighting this battle alone, but by God’s grace we fight through his power: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). To bring our thoughts captive to Christ is our objective and this can only be

accomplished through an attitude of rejoicing, study, faith and humility.

Rejoicing leads to security, which leads to valuable thoughts, which lead to peace:

“Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Philippians 4:4-9).

We see that as surely as thoughts are seeds, we are the sowers. This means we can by the grace of God make choices as to which seeds are sown, watered, cultivated, and brought to maturity so they can be allowed to cross over the bridge of intention and become actions and words. Let us W-A-I-T on the Lord for his wisdom and let us contemplate the example of our Lord and Master to the end of greater faithfulness. “Wait on the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Wait I say, on the LORD.”

Selah!

*As surely as
thoughts are
seeds, we are
the sowers.*

For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.

—Hebrews 12:3, ASV



In His Footsteps

How Christ's Example Should Change Our Characters

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.
—1 Peter 2:21 (ASV)

Austin Williams

Our Lord's life was a true example of a prayerful life. His constant communication with the heavenly Father along the lines of adoration, thanksgiving and supplication was evident even at the cross. His prayer was toward the well-being of others and especially to sustain his disciples: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

How should our life be exemplified in regard to prayer? Do we lay emphasis on thinking about prayer or do more than thinking about prayer? Do we treat it as our vital breath and pray regularly to the Father?

The religious leaders of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees, loved to pray on street corners and in the synagogues, so that men could see them and note their piety (Matthew 6:5).

Our prayers, both audible and inaudible, should not gravitate toward eloquence and vain repetitions, but should be sincere and truthful so that they would ascend as a memorial before God. We should utilize this wonderful privilege to frequently communicate with God at any time and ask for anything, but always according to his will.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee" (Matthew 6:6).

A Life of Humility:

Our Lord Jesus, in his pre-human existence as the Logos, was a humble and obedient Son of God. He did not attempt to exalt himself, or

to seek a name higher than his own, as Lucifer did. He had no intention of making himself an equal with his heavenly Father. The apostle expresses this thought about the Logos, and says: "Who, though being in God's form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8, *Emphatic Diaglott*).

When asked by his heavenly Father to leave his heavenly home, he humbled himself and became a man on a much lower plane of existence. The Logos promptly accepted the task before him. Our Lord's transformation to a human being is akin to Benjamin Barton's analogy of picturing ourselves leaving this plane of human existence and being transformed into a roach (*Pilgrim Echoes*, p. 322).

We need to be humble about being humble and more. If not, the essence of being humble would be lost and will border along the lines of subliminal pride or intentional pride. Picture our Lord directing us by saying, "Follow in my footsteps as I am doing or did, to please the heavenly Father."

One of the most important desires the consecrated child of God should have is that he might be more faithful and pleasing to the heavenly Father. Humble-minded Christians, as Paul explains, are more prepared than others to learn the valuable experiences that are permitted to come into their consecrated lives.

"If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy com-

plete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 2:1-5, NAS.

They learn to patiently wait upon the LORD, and pray that his will may be done. God will not exalt anyone who is not of humble mind and spirit. The most submissive will receive the greatest blessing. The lesson for all of the LORD’s people in these closing years of the Gospel age is to “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).

Our Lord has shown us the course that will lead to faithfulness; so likewise all who have chosen to walk with him should strive to put on genuine humility.

A Way of Life:

When Jesus was here in the flesh he suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring men to God. When the prophets spoke beforehand of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Pet. 1:11), those sufferings included not only those of Christ, the head, but also the ones to be endured by the members of his body. We should marvel not ... if the world hate [us for we] know that the world hated [him] before it hated [us].— I John 3:13; John 15:18.

Do we have an attitude that is tailor-made for specific environments or lifestyles? How do our thoughts, words, and deeds reflect when:

... we are at our work place?

... we are driving by ourselves?

... we are with our family in the confines of our home?

... we are at meetings with our brethren?

Each one who professes to be a Christian speaks and acts in the name of the Lord Jesus. We should, therefore, endeavor to keep this fact continually before our minds, to the intent that our actions and words may properly represent our Lord and honor that name which he has permitted us to bear.

The apostle Paul tells us we are “ambassadors for Christ ... who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament [covenant]” (2 Corinthians 5:20; 3:6). If it is an honorable matter for an ambassador to represent one great nation of earth, how much more honorable it is for one to represent the heavenly kingdom and its king of kings. Keeping this thought in mind will be of great assistance in the development of the new nature and in aiding the transforming power of battling the besetting tendencies of the old nature!

“Our citizenship is in heaven,” says the apostle (Philippians 3:20, NASB). “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,” says our Master, Jesus (John 17:16). While we are still living in this world among aliens and strangers, we are not of it. We have transferred our allegiance and citizenship to the heavenly kingdom, set free through the merit of him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood (1 Peter 1:18,19). Let us keep in mind the apostle’s words: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31).

To Forgive and Forget

On one occasion, Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive one who sinned against him, suggesting that perhaps seven times would be more than enough. Jesus said otherwise, that he should forgive even “until seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:22). In other words, forgiveness should not have a limit, just as God has not limited his forgiveness of our trespasses.

After Peter’s question, Jesus gave a parable (recorded in Matthew 18:23-35) to illustrate the lesson of forgiveness. In the parable, a king began to take account of his servants. One was brought to him who owed a large sum of money. This servant begged that the king forgive him his debt. The king was moved with compassion and did so. The servant then met a fellow-servant who owed him a small amount of money; laying his hands on him violently he demanded full payment immediately. The fellow-servant similarly asked for forgiveness, even falling down at his feet. However, he would not forgive him and had him thrown into prison. The king found out what happened and was extremely angry, calling him a wicked servant

Let each regard another as more important than himself.

and wondering how he could not have compassion toward his fellow-servant after he himself had been forgiven everything he owed. “In anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt” (Matthew 18:34, RSV).

The lesson from Jesus’ parable is for each of us to be forgiving in our dealings with others, even especially our fellow servants, our brethren: “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:35).

The fact that we each have so much that has been forgiven by God would seem to imply that it should be easy to reflect this same forgiving attitude to those around us. Often it is not the case. One of the most difficult lessons for many to learn is to extend love and mercy to others, blessings that have been so amply bestowed upon us. If we do not forgive others, we should not expect to receive forgiveness from the Father (Matthew 6:14,15).

Forgiveness is sometimes difficult because it embodies a love that rises to a level above those things that others may have done to cause us harm. How often do we hear the expression, “I can forgive but I cannot forget”? The seminal aspect of forgiveness embodies the actualization of forgetting that sin was committed against us, in the way God does: “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). Forgiveness is an expression of love that does not seek vindication against wrongs, but rather seeks to draw one back into a fuller fellowship with God and his people. “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:14,15).

Practice what you Preach:

“Wist ye not that I must be about My Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). Should we not all have the Master’s spirit, expressed by these words? Of equal importance, our Lord did take heed and pay close attention to himself, for he taught us with his attitude and behavior as well as in words. We are to be examples or models of the gospel we preach, where internalizing the preaching part, putting it into practice as our Lord exemplified, is para-

mount and of utmost importance to sustain this hidden treasure.

During Paul’s ministry he discovered false teachers causing trouble in Ephesus, teaching a doctrine different from that which he taught, and that led some away from the faith. Paul counseled Timothy (1 Timothy 1:4) that Christ’s servants must practice godly living and be an example to others. Because one who is a son of God and a follower of the Savior is an ambassador for God, he has no time to make his own personal care his uppermost thought; he must be about his heavenly Father’s business. Such must show forth the praises of him who called him “out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

The effect of these new ambitions and hopes upon one’s physical health is often surprising, stimulating one to great zeal and activity in serving the Lord. Train yourself in godliness, says Paul in 1 Timothy 4:7, for while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. The new mind does not suggest carelessness of the body.

Timothy was urged to train, to exercise, himself in godliness. Intense practice is required if the body is to be developed for competition in the games. Likewise, one must approach spiritual development with the same intensity, the same consistency, because it is really much more important to train for the exercise of discipleship; for so much depends upon it, not only in this life but also in the life to come.

Timothy’s mission was to bring instruction to the people. If the words of the faith have nourished the spirit, as food and water vitalize the body, surely they will nourish the members of the congregation as well. His instruction is to consist not only in reading the Scriptures, but it is to be followed by exhortation and preaching that explains or expounds on the text, and applies it to everyday life.

This was the course Paul recommended to Timothy: that he might keep himself pure from worldly contamination, and be an example and faithful minister to others, saying: “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Timothy 4:12,15).

*If we do not
forgive others,
we should not
expect to receive
forgiveness from
the Father.*



The Sin-Offering and Christian Sacrifice

He shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.—Leviticus 16:33, American Standard Version

David Stein

In the mind of an ancient Israelite who had committed sin, the way to expiate that sin was to offer an animal sacrifice. The Law defined clearly the procedures for such sin-offerings. But the final expectation of that Israelite was removal of the sin and a consequent cleanness in the sight of God.

Generalizing, we may understand the biblical concept of the sin-offering as the procedure or means for the removal of sin. Under the Law, people attained typical cleansing. There was no actual removal of sin. As the apostle Paul wrote, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4). The Old Testament types were intended to depict a later reality where sin would truly be eliminated.

As a practical matter, there are two components to the removal of sin. Sin is a breaking of God's Law so there must be a corresponding satisfaction of God's Law. This legal aspect is the first component. Second, we note that sin has a corrupting effect. This is readily apparent in the condition of mankind today. Physical deterioration, evidenced by sickness and death, as well as mental deterioration, shown by poor judgment and wicked acts, is an effect of sin within human beings. The antitypical sin-offering must remove every vestige, every effect of sin, to cleanse the human family. So the second component is the restitution of mankind to perfection.

When we speak of ransom and restitution, we are talking about the two components of the sin-offering. The legal satisfaction of justice was provided solely by the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. That is the ransom price. With Jesus' death, Adam and his descendents may be freed from the sentence of death by virtue of

Jesus paying it with his own perfect and sinless life. But simply releasing prisoners from death does not complete the work. They must be reeducated; their hearts and characters must be restored to the divine image. This is the work of the kingdom! And the kings and priests who will oversee this work will be eminently qualified to carry it out successfully.

But how are the kings and priests qualified to do this? They go to school, the school of Christ. Just check how often the acquisition of knowledge is mentioned in the New Testament, especially by the apostle Paul: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment" (Philippians 1:9).

Learning through Suffering

The knowledge required is a knowledge of God, his character, his plan, his son, and the call to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

But the knowledge the church acquires in the school of Christ is not only head knowledge. It is also, and surely more importantly, an experiential knowledge. This type of knowledge comes when one suffers unjustly. It comes when we grieve over the sad history of sin. It comes when we see the innocent die and note the futility of life in the eyes of so many. The role of suffering as a teacher is the main reason why the church is called to suffer, just as their head: "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" (Romans 8:17).

The experience of suffering has changing power in the life of the sufferer. Certain necessary lessons are learned only through suffering. Everyone who will be part of the rulership of

the kingdom must suffer and learn something from that suffering, including Jesus himself! Paul writing of Jesus says “learned he obedience by [from] the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). Jesus’ time on earth as a man changed him! He had been an obedient servant for billions of years before coming to earth. Now, obedience cost him and he grew by the experience. Jesus was a perfect man; his integrity and moral fortitude had always been present in him. But the difficult suffering experiences deepened his knowledge of the human condition and proved his devotion to God and the principles of righteousness.

If the head must have these experiences, so must the body. The church differs from Jesus in that its members are not born perfect. Rather they partake of the same imperfection that they one day hope to remove from mankind. So their experience involves learning from failure, something Jesus did not have to contend with in his own experiences.

Consequently, when a Christian decides to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, it means presenting oneself as a sacrifice unto death and beginning the lessons associated with that sacrifice. Any similarity to the sacrifice of animals under the Law is fully intended. Enrollment in the school of Christ begins qualifying one to be part of the antitypical sin-offering. Membership in the body of Christ constitutes a life of self-sacrifice: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

Symbolic Daily Dying

One’s sacrifice, and the suffering it entails, facilitates growing into the character of Christ. That character is requisite for one to be given the honor of the divine nature. So it is imperative that one live a life of sacrifice. But how does one do that? Paul gives us a hint in the words, “I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31).

This symbolic dying emphasizes the type we are fulfilling. While our sacrifice is unto death, we are “living” sacrifices. By denying ourselves the normal and appropriate accommodations of the flesh and sacrificing our time, talents, wealth, and energy in the service of God, we not only show our love of God and our desire

to serve him, but the attendant experiences cause us to grow in the character of God and Jesus! This self-denial is a sacrificial “sweet-savor” to God: “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (2 Corinthians 2:15).

Let us reiterate here that it is the future participation of all members of the church in the uplifting of mankind for which the daily Christian life of sacrifice is fitting them. They will be intimately involved in the removal of sin from the human race, the very purpose depicted in the original typical sin-offerings! These members will do this by the wise and knowledgeable application of the ransom merit to the world. It is that same merit which is applied to them in the present Gospel age.

Practical Considerations

All church members, like the rest of the world, wrestle and struggle with sin in their lives. As we strive day by day to lay down our lives in Christian sacrifice and service, we have daily reminders of our weaknesses. But this brings us to a point of sympathy with the world of mankind which is fully in bondage to sin and death. This growth of sympathy is a direct result of our own Christian struggle and works to qualify us in the school of Christ.

Comprehending that the church members are to be part of the antitypical sin-offering enables us to understand some of the difficult teachings of Jesus. Jesus taught us to love our enemies. As we encounter such enemies in our lives we suffer because of them. Our flesh wants to hate them and teach them a lesson and get even for any and all transgressions against us. But our new minds, fashioned after Jesus Christ, are able to see these enemies in a different perspective. We can understand to a certain extent that they are products of a sinful environment. And to that extent we can have sympathy for them and, by God’s grace and spirit, be able truly to love them in spite of the pain they cause. Again, this is a practical result of our sacrifice unto death and affirms our will to participate in the offering for sin, inasmuch as we learn to exercise mercy and patience with these people, knowing that shortly in the future they will no longer hate us but love us!

Growth of sympathy is a direct result of our own Christian struggle.

Godly Philanthropy

We must develop that same perspective and attitude toward the world of mankind as Jehovah had and Jesus did. Of God's view of mankind we read: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16,17).

This shows the depth of love that God had for his human creation. He was the first and greatest philanthropist, a Greek word meaning "lover of mankind." Jesus' love for his heavenly Father as well as a corresponding love for the human family, moved him to leave everything he had in heaven and come to earth to die to pay for the redemption of mankind.

So when we consider the call of the church to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must recognize the same motivations: love of God, love of Jesus, and love of humankind. If we are to be a part of the antitypical sin-offering for the removal of sin from mankind, we must be thoroughly immersed in love. Like Jehovah and like Jesus we must become true philanthropists!

This truth helps us understand these words of Paul: "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?" (1 Corinthians 15:29).

Consequently, in living our lives day by day, we must look for the opportunities providence places before us to see how we can sacrifice for others. It is this consciousness of the need to be of service to others that sanctifies us for the purpose of God. Are we daily looking for such opportunities, or are we captured by the anxieties of our own life to the exclusion of service to others? To be servant-minded in this sacrificial way is to be like God! And God graciously gives the consecrated these opportunities for service **IF** they are faithful enough to perceive them.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). This is, of course, a matter of faith. The deeper trust we have in the leadings

of the holy spirit of God, the more we will see his hand and the greater participation we will be able to have in the sin-offering sacrifices of this Gospel age.

So each member of the church needs to review his life and ask, "Am I a lover of mankind? Am I laying my life down for the benefit of my fellow members of the body of Christ and for the world as I have opportunity?" Paul gave us this counsel: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

Whether a sacrifice for one's family, one's brethren, friends in the world, strangers in the world or enemies, all such sacrifice constitutes a godly love of right and deep desire to bring others closer to God. This is the teaching of the doctrine of the church's share in the sin-offering, the ultimate goal of which is to remove sin and all its effects. One's spiritual light is often best shone in acts of kindness and sacrifice for others. And the after effect on the recipients of these actions nearly always takes them in the direction of righteousness and brings them closer to God.

For the church, the experiences of dying daily are ultimately harvested in the first resurrection, when they are united with their head and the full process of the restitution of mankind to perfection begins. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Ephesians 1:9,10).

But as long as the members of the body of Christ are still in the flesh, the sacrifice must continue. And as the ancient Israelite was moved to slay an animal for his sin to get right with God, we must lay our lives down in death each day in matters small and great to participate in the cleansing of mankind. Let us encourage each other in the activities of sacrifice, and develop the mindset worthy of followers of Jesus. As "philanthropists" in the image of Christ, let us submit more and more to the leadings of God for his ultimate glory.

Like Jesus we must become true philanthropists!



Not a Spirit of Fear

Resurrection and Faithfulness unto Death

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things ... that I may know him and the power of his resurrection.—Philippians 3:7-11¹

Jeffrey Earl

The hope of resurrection, and our faith in it, takes away the sting of death. One of the most important doctrines in the Bible is the teaching of the resurrection of the dead. This doctrine forms the bedrock of our faith in life after death, not only for us as Christians but also for the rest of mankind. Some have asked how it is possible if someone dies to later bring them back to life? Are there examples and witnesses to any resurrections in the Bible, and if so, by whose power did these occur? Without the hope of a resurrection of the dead, is there a reason or purpose for anyone to be living on this earth? How should the hope of the resurrection affect the way we as Christians live our lives? Should we be fearful of death and what does it mean to be faithful unto death?

The word “resurrection” in the Bible is found only in the New Testament and is a translation of the Greek word *anastasis* meaning “a standing or rising up, a raising up” according to *Young’s Concordance* and *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*. While the word is not directly used in the Old Testament, it is strongly implied in a number of places.

How do we know there will be a resurrection of the dead? We accept the hope of the resurrection on faith because we have never seen anyone actually resurrected; only events in the Scriptures describe what a resurrection would be like. Many “resurrections” in the Scriptures should really be described as “awakenings” or “resuscitations” from death to life. The resuscitations in the Old Testament were performed by the prophet Elijah in the raising of the woman’s son who became ill and stopped breathing (1 Kings 17:17-24), and

later by Elisha when he raised the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:32-37). One of the more obscure instances of a resuscitation was the instance of the mourners in the process of burying a man. They were surprised by a marauding band of Moabites and in their haste to escape, the man was dropped into the same grave as that of Elisha and “as soon as the man touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood on his feet” (2 Kings 13:20,21). A possible explanation of the recording of this event was to show that it was the power of God that was doing the reviving, not the “supernatural” acts of a man, as could be claimed when Elijah and Elisha revived the dead.

The patriarchs of the Old Testament speak of their hope in a future resurrection. Hosea speaks of the dead being redeemed from *sheol* or the place of the dead (grave): “Shall I ransom them from the power of *sheol*? Shall I redeem them from death?” (Hosea 13:14). Job says, “Oh that thou wouldest hide me in *sheol* [the grave], that thou wouldest conceal me until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my release should come. Thou wouldest call, and I would answer thee; thou wouldest long for the work of thy hands” (Job 14:13-15). Job desires that God remember to bring him back at the proper time: “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then [from] my flesh I shall see God” (Job 19:25,26).

The apostle Paul in Hebrews describes the faith of numerous patriarchs of the Old Testament and their hope that if faithful to God,

1. All Scripture quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version* Bible, unless otherwise noted.

they would receive a “better” resurrection: “Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection” (Hebrews 11:35, *KJV*).

In the New Testament there were instances when Jesus raised the dead, including the raising of the son of the widow in Nain (Luke 7:11-17), the raising of Lazarus after he had already been in the tomb for four days (John 11:1-44), and the awakening of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue (Mark 5:35-43). Paul used the power of the holy spirit when he awakened a boy who fell from the window (Acts 20:9-12). All those awakened or resuscitated in these cases died again. In all these awakenings or resuscitations, the body had not yet fully degraded (though Lazarus’ was certainly the most decomposed), so there was no need to create a full, living body from just minerals or bones. While these were miraculous enough in themselves, it will be an even more extraordinary miracle to resurrect those now dead using only God’s “recorded” memory of each one’s every aspect, both mental and physical, in an earthly resurrection, as though a video and audio recording had been taken of each person’s life: “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30).

Those in the spirit realm can use the atoms of earth to appear in human form. After his resurrection Jesus took various human forms prior to his spiritual ascension. In the Old Testament angels appeared in human form to Lot in Sodom to warn him to leave (Genesis 19:1-23), and an angel appeared and wrestled during the night with Jacob. After his resurrection, the appearance of the risen Lord varied according to circumstances. During the forty days after his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples on different occasions, initially in a fleshly body as a stranger walking with two of them, later appearing in a form that was recognizable to them. He had the power to construct and to deconstruct an appropriate fleshly body at will to prove he had been resurrected. His many appearances, first to Peter then to the eleven apostles, and then his manifesting himself to more than five hundred people at one time, provided strong testimony to the fact of his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

The apostle Paul comforts fellow Christians with the resurrection hope, writing to the con-

gregation at Thessalonica about those who had died and who had a hope of a heavenly resurrection: “But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep” (1 Thessalonians 4:13,14). Paul considers those in death as being asleep, as though their state were simply temporary. Paul also explains the importance of Christ being raised: “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” (1 Corinthians 15:13,14, *KJV*). In his letter to the Romans, Paul writes regarding the world of mankind: “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Romans 8:19-21).

One test in our understanding (using the above Scriptural citations) that there will be a resurrection, not only to the heavenly realm but an earthly resurrection as well for the rest of mankind, may be in the negative reaction from many Christians to this doctrine. Their claim is that a “ransom for all mankind” gives those who don’t accept Christ now in this Christian age a “second chance,” instead of being lost forever (or worse), as many believe. This ignores the millions who have never heard the gospel preached or those too young or unable to understand “their” message (which often includes a doctrine of eternal torment for all non-believers). In fact there is nothing any one can do to deprive someone of a resurrection. Christ died for all!

This critical understanding of the earthly resurrection and restoration of the world of mankind is really the “good news” that should be preached throughout the world. Unfortunately it is not by most Christians. Though we know the admonition to “turn the other cheek” when someone harms us by words or actions, do we do the same when the hurt is from another Christian? We must be careful not to repay evil for evil regardless of who may try to harm us. We are to apply Christ’s principles in

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our actions, and not just memorize and repeat words in the Scriptures. Our actions are more important than just saying “righteous sounding” words. We should not hesitate to do what is right and good, no matter how it affects us: “Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). The readiness to suffer mental and physical persecution is the supreme test of faithfulness to the Lord.

The apostle Paul was a great example of being faithful unto death when he endured numerous persecutions at the hands of the Romans and the Jews. He was shipwrecked and imprisoned, but he felt he had “fought the good fight” and “kept the faith” to be rewarded with a “crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy 4:6-8). There have been many Christians who suffered the most severe and inhuman persecutions and trials for Jesus’ sake (e.g., Acts 7:57-60; cf. 2 Timothy 3:12; John 15:20,21). Nevertheless, our Lord chose Paul as an example for us of Christian suffering for righteousness’ sake (Acts 9:16).

The Scriptures offer first-hand evidence of the power of God to bring those who were dead back to life, and of those who had faith in God that he would do what he promised. This should further increase our faith in God that every person who has lived on this earth will get a just reward, whether it be a heavenly, spiritual resurrection for those faithful and chosen Christians, or of an earthly, bodily resurrection for everyone else.

The provision of a resurrection for faithful Christians who “present their bodies a living sacrifice,” as well as for all mankind, is an undeserved gift from God; he was not obligated to resurrect anyone. He gave us his only-begotten son as a ransom so that billions who have died—even those without a real knowledge of God—might have an opportunity to know him. Those who are consecrated to follow in Jesus’ footsteps are to be an example to others, so they can see that it is more than just a mere vocal acceptance of Christ as their savior. We are to be “living sacrifices.”

Whatsoever a Man Soweth...

I dreamed I died last night, and an angel ushered me to a symbolic heaven. As we were walking amid the trees down a beautiful boulevard, we passed a striking chateau with elegantly-crafted wood carvings all around. On the right came a mansion shining with gold and silver trim. And on the left we passed a spectacular palace studded with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. Then the angel turned us down a side street to a little tumble-down shack and said, “This is your new place.”

I protested, “With so many beautiful estates, all I get is this?” He replied, “I am sorry, but we did the best we could with the materials you sent up!”

I awoke. I am distracted no longer.



News & Views

World News



Religious

Turkish religious authorities are purging the hadiths of statements that treat women as inferior to men. The hadiths, traditional sayings that form much of Islamic sharia law, are filled with misogynistic dictates. "The best of women are those who are like sheep," reads one. Ali Bardkoglu, the president of the Diyanet, Turkey's Islamic authority, said a revised collection would be distributed in 2008. Bardakloglu also plans to send moderate imams to Turkey's rural regions to preach against backward practices such as honor killings.

—*The Week*, 7/28/2006

On a continent where belief in black magic and evil spirits is common, witch hunts are nothing new. But in the Democratic Republic of Congo, there's a new twist to this ancient inquisition. A majority of those said to be involved in witchcraft and sorcery are children, and such allegations against them are the No. 1 cause of homelessness among youths. Of the estimated 25,000 children living on the streets of Kinshasa, the capital, more than 60% had been thrown out of their homes by relatives accusing them of witchcraft, child-welfare advocates say. The practice is so rampant that Congo's new constitution, adopted in December, includes a provision outlawing allegations of sorcery against children.

—*Los Angeles Times*, 8/19/2006

An Orthodox Jew who runs a business is supposed to close it on Saturday, the Sabbath. But one who operates a business on the Internet doesn't need to close his Web business on Saturday. First he isn't doing anything, and thus isn't violating the Sabbath, and second, on the Internet, it is not Sabbath for everyone in every place. If you are an Orthodox Jew, you aren't supposed to open your computer on the Sabbath. But you can leave it running because you are not doing anything on it and thus not violating the atmosphere of the special day. You have no permission to look at it, however.

—*Rabbi Yosef Carmel, in an interview on the website www.eretzhemdah.org*

China released a bishop of the underground Roman Catholic Church after more than 10 years in prison. The bishop, An Shuxin, was given permission to

work as a priest. Beijing and the Vatican ended diplomatic relations in the 1950s. Since then, two Catholic churches have co-existed in China—an underground one loyal to the pope and the state-approved church that does not recognize the Vatican's authority.

—*Agence France Presse*, 8/26/2006



Social

A paralyzed man using a new brain sensor has been able to move a computer cursor, open e-mail and control a robotic device simply by thinking about doing it, a team of scientists said. They believe the BrainGate sensor, which involves implanting electrodes in the brain, could offer new hope to people paralyzed by injuries or illnesses. The scientists implanted a tiny silicon chip with 100 electrodes into an area of the brain responsible for movement. The activity of the cells was recorded and sent to a computer which translated the commands and enabled the patient to move and control the external device.

—*Reuters*, 7/12/2006

Working children number an estimated 122 million in Asia, or 64 percent of the worldwide total, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). South Asia, which includes Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, remains a child labor hotspot, according to World Bank statistics contained in the ILO report. In Nepal nearly 40 percent of children aged 10-14 were working, sometimes for long hours and in jobs requiring strenuous physical labor such as in mines, quarries and carpet factories.

—*Associated Press*, 8/31/2006

At least 67 people, including dozens of looters siphoning gasoline from a government pipeline, were killed in an explosion after fuel vapor was accidentally ignited by a cigarette lighter, Iraqi police and government officials said. Despite Iraq's huge oil reserves, corruption, mismanagement and the lack of security have created a severe gasoline shortage that has sent prices to \$3.20 per gallon and forced drivers to wait in gasoline lines for as long as 24 hours. Diwaniya residents punctured the pipeline. "They were filling their jerrycans until one of the looters lit a lighter to smoke his cigarette, and that resulted in the explosion," an official said.

—*New York Times*, 8/30/2006

The number of Americans without health insurance probably rose to a record in 2005 as medical costs increased three times as fast as wages, according to forecasts for a Census Bureau report. Almost 46 million people don't have insurance. Eight million of those don't have access, while 15 million of those qualify for state-federal Medicaid for the poor. Others are illegal immigrants.

—*Bloomberg News*, 8/29/2006

A severe drought has slowly sizzled a large swath of the Plains States, leaving farmers and ranchers with conditions that they compare to those of the Dust Bowl of the 1930's. Shrunken sunflower plants, normally valuable for seeds and oil, are being used as a makeshift feed for livestock. Gov. Michael Rounds of South Dakota, who has requested that 51 of the state's 66 counties be designated a federal agricultural disaster area, recently sought unusual help from his constituents: he issued a proclamation declaring a week to pray for rain.

—*New York Times*, 8/29/2006

Leading astronomers issued new guidelines that for the first time would define what is and isn't a planet. Under the new guidelines, Pluto is demoted to a "dwarf"—a step below Earth and the seven other "classical" planets. The 2,500 astronomers from 75 nations meeting in Prague voted to officially shrink to eight planets from the traditional nine. The International Astronomers' Union new definition of a planet is that it must: orbit the sun; be big enough for its own gravity to compact it into a ball; not be surrounded by objects of similar size and characteristics.

—*Fox News*, 8/25/2006

British police arrested 24 people suspected of plotting to bomb as many as 10 passenger airplanes bound for the U.S. from Britain. The planned operation called for suicide bombers to board planes while carrying liquid explosives disguised in soft-drink bottles. If successful, the bombers could have killed more than 3,000 people.

—*The Week*, 8/25/2006

There are some 650,000 HIV sufferers living in China, according to the World Health Organization. The country has been hit by outbreaks of both avian flu and SARS in recent years. About 300 million Chinese drink contaminated water with some 190 million being sickened by it each year. Experts estimate that around 400,000 Chinese annually die from breathing polluted air. Five of the 10 most polluted cities in the world are in China.

—*Barron's*, 7/31/2006

Sudan's Islamist government is refusing to reverse its opposition to the entry of U.N. peacekeepers in the Darfur region. African church leaders and analysts are urging the international community, including the Africa Union, to increase the pressure on President Omar al-Bashir's government to stop the carnage in Darfur. The U.N. World Food Program said the poor security situation had made it too dangerous for truck convoys to drive through large areas in north and south Darfur, where fresh outbreaks of fighting have occurred. More than 200,000 people are reported to have been killed and over two million have fled their homes since early 2003, when fighting erupted between African rebel groups and militias backed by the Arab-led Khartoum government.

—*CNS News*, 8/25/2006

Scientists in the US have created human embryonic stem cells without destroying embryos, a discovery that appears to get around a basic ethical objection to stem cell research.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 8/23/2006

Political

One-third of China's vast landmass is suffering from acid rain caused by its rapid industrial growth. China's factories spewed out 25.5 million tons of sulphur dioxide—the chemical that causes acid rain—last year, up 27 percent from 2000, said Sheng Huaren, deputy chairman of the Standing Committee of parliament. Environmental protection has become a prominent issue in China following a string of industrial accidents that poisoned major rivers, forcing several cities to shut down their water systems. Chinese cities are among the world's smoggiest following two decades of breakneck economic growth. The government says all of China's major rivers are dangerously polluted. Millions of people lack access to clean drinking water.

—*The Associated Press*, 8/27/2006

More than 100 government investigators have descended on Shanghai to probe possible abuses in the Chinese commercial capital's \$1.2 billion pension system, in a widening scandal that is reverberating throughout China because of its possible political and economic ramifications. The central government in Beijing has struggled to get a handle on official corruption that has accompanied the country's rapid economic growth. Shanghai holds a significant share of China's pension assets. While much of China's retirement system is poorly developed, Shanghai's is one of four with a modern, centralized organizational structure.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 8/29/2006

Afghanistan is set to produce its largest ever opium crop in 2006. The one billion dollar campaign to eradicate the crop had been “an absolute disaster” a top western counter-narcotics official said. The booming poppy crop has opened up divisions within the international community, which had given Afghan farmers an ultimatum to switch to viable alternatives to opium.

—*Financial Times*, 7/5/2006

A Chinese court issued a four-year prison sentence to an activist who has stood up against the state for its mandated family planning. Chen Guangcheng—a blind self-taught legal advocate—was named as one of the world’s 100 most influential people last spring. China’s strict population-control policies limit most urban couples to one child and most rural couples to two. Government authorities routinely force women to have abortions and sterilizations in order to carry out its policy. The case is a setback for efforts at legal reform in China.

—*USA Today*, 8/25/2006

Richard Lugar, chairman of the US Senate foreign relations committee, has urged the U.S. to adopt specific contingency plans for a potential disruption to oil supplies from Venezuela. Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez has several times warned that he would cut off oil supplies to the US if it persisted in allegedly plotting his overthrow. Mr. Lugar wrote in a letter to President Bush that “Venezuela’s leverage over global oil prices and its direct supply lines and refining capacity in the US give Venezuela undue ability to impact US security and our economy.” Venezuela ships two-thirds of its oil to the US and oil accounts for about half of fiscal revenue.

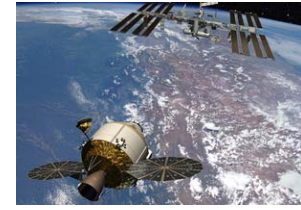
—*Financial Times*, 7/24/2006

One of the greatest crimes of the 20th century has gone unpunished for 30 years. Between 1975 and 1979, the Khmer Rouge systematically tortured, starved and smashed approximately 2.2 million fellow Cambodians, or between one-fourth and one-third of the entire population. Thirty years later, the country is still lost and broken. All the country’s flaws—from trafficking in persons to the rampant corruption that pervades every level of government—have been exacerbated by the failure to bring the leaders of the Khmer Rouge to justice. There will remain severe limitations on how far Cambodia can reform until some degree of justice is rendered.

—*Wall Street Journal* editorial by Joseph A. Mus-someli, U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia, 8/1/2006

Financial

NASA has handed the multi-billion dollar contract for the building of the Orion [manned spacecraft] to Lockheed Martin. The first prototype will carry up to six astronauts to the International Space Station, while a later version could take four astronauts to the moon where they would use a separate lander ship to reach the surface. Orion is scheduled to make its first human flight by 2014.



Orion approaching the Space Station [artist's conception]

—[London] *Times Online*, 9/1/2006

Health-care spending increases over the past 40 years are extending U.S. life expectancy according to a new study by researchers at Harvard University and the University of Michigan. Government figures show health-care outlays have risen at more than twice the inflation rate and account for 16 percent of gross domestic product. The authors examined life expectancy figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as government surveys. They found that, on average, a person born in 1960 could expect to live 70 years, whereas someone born in 2000 has a life expectancy of 77 years.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 8/31/2006

So many super-rich Americans evade taxes using offshore accounts that law enforcement cannot control the growing misconduct, according to a Senate report that provides the most detailed look ever at high-level tax schemes. Cheating now equals about 7 cents out of each dollar paid by honest taxpayers, as much as \$70 billion a year, the report estimated.

—*New York Times*, 8/1/2006

U.S. President Bush recently signed into law a comprehensive bill aimed at rehabilitating the traditional pension plans still operated by many American companies. The irony is that many companies whose pensions are in fine form probably will limit benefits anyway. The costs of maintaining so-called defined benefit plans are simply still too great. These plans guarantee retirees set monthly payments for life. The Pension Reform Bill compels many companies to fully fund their defined-benefit plans over a period of years and pay additional premiums to shore up the U.S.’s pension-insurance fund. But the bill has had the effect of adding incentives to freeze benefits.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 8/29/2006

The financial noose is tightening around North Korea as international banks sever ties with the nation. The United States has accused Pyongyang of spreading weapons and missile technology to other countries, counterfeiting U.S. currency and trafficking drugs. It wants to see the reclusive, communist-led regime financially incapacitated. Banks in Singapore, Vietnam, China, Hong Kong and Mongolia are opting not to do business with North Korea. Some analysts worry that the financial restrictions are only deepening the North's isolation.

—*The Associated Press*, 8/29/2006

An unprecedented infestation of tiny flying beetles has put the great forests of the Mountain West under siege. Tens of millions of Colorado's mature pine trees will die within the next few years. Millions more are falling in Utah, Wyoming, Idaho and Montana, and into Canada. Federal and state forest managers have conceded defeat: There is no way to stop the hungry swarm. Millions of acres in treasured national lands, including vast swaths of wilderness in and around Yellowstone National Park, will be affected. The deaths of so many millions of trees will create an enormous fire risk across the West.

—*Los Angeles Times*, 8/27/2006

Efforts to strike a global free-trade deal aimed at boosting economic growth and reducing poverty in the developing world broke down, falling victim to flawed negotiating strategies and overblown promises made when the talks were launched in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. The gulf separating negotiators was so wide that World Trade Organization chief Pawcal Lamy proposed no timetable for restarting or concluding the talks.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 7/25/2006

★ Israel

Israel's economy is in good shape to weather the cost of its offensive against the Lebanese Hizbollah movement, but the costs of compensation to the rocket-hit north, loss of tourism receipts and the blow to consumption have led analysts to downgrade this year's growth forecasts. Before the conflict erupted, Israel's budget was in surplus. There was even talk of cuts in the country's defense spending, previously a sacred cow.

—*Financial Times*, 8/2/2007

There are increasing signs from Gaza and Ramallah that the Palestinian Authority will soon be disbanded. The ongoing rift between the Hamas-led government and the Fatah-backed leader of the Palestinians, Mahmoud Abbas, means nothing is being done for the people, particularly in Gaza.

—*The Media Line*, 8/11/2006

“The clash we are witnessing around the world ... is a clash between a mentality that belongs to the Middle Ages and another mentality that belongs to the 21st century ... The Jews have come from the tragedy of the Holocaust and forced the world to respect them, with their knowledge, not with their terror, with their work, not their crying and yelling. Humanity owes most of the discoveries and science of the 19th and 20th centuries to Jewish scientists ... We have not seen a single Jew blow himself up in a German restaurant. We have not seen a single Jew destroy a church. We have not seen a single Jew protest by killing people.”—Arab-American psychologist Wafa Sultan, on Al-Jazeera TV.

—*Middle East Media Research Institute*,
July, 2006

Hebrew University's [HU] Faculty of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Quality discovered a new drug treatment for halting the growth and spread of cancer cells. The approach has been shown to inhibit malignant cells without affecting normal ones, and without the severe side effects of traditional treatments. The HU researchers' approach is based on the actions of actibbind, a protein produced by the black mold *Aspergillus niger*, a well-known microorganism used in biotech and food technology.

—*Financial Times*, 8/28/2006

In the face of Iran's race to obtain nuclear power, Israel signed a contract with Germany last month to buy two Dolphin-class submarines that will, according to foreign reports, provide superior second-strike nuclear capabilities. The submarines will be assembled in Germany and provided with a propulsion system allowing them to remain underwater for far longer than the submarines currently in the Israel Navy's fleet. According to sources close to the deal, the submarines will be operational in the near future.

—*The Jerusalem Post*, 8/22/2006

News & Views is edited by Len Griehs. Items of interest may be sent to him at 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades CA 90272, or via e-mail (Griehs@comcast.net).



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Convention Announcements

Inquiries should be sent to the individuals listed below.

Nov. 5—New Haven CT.

Italian American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven CT. Anna May Suraci 203.248.3793.

☎ r.suraci@comcast.net

Nov. 17-19—San Diego CA.

Alliant Int'l. University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego CA. David Rice 619.589.1534.

☎ DavRice@aol.com

Nov. 19—Jersey City NJ.

The Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Ave., Union NJ. Sandy Koterba, 718.961.4437.

☎ ktrbaknr@hotmail.com

Dec. 30—Jan. 1—Chicago IL.

Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove IL. Julie Vasilevich 773.774.2542.

☎ secretary@chicagobible.org

Dec. 30—Jan. 1—Phoenix AZ.

La Quinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix AZ. Janell Porcolab 602.363.2612.

☎ alexjanell@hotmail.com

Jan. 28—Los Angeles CA.

Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank. Richard Bieniak 949.457.0894.

☎ Rjbieniak@aol.com

Feb. 16-18—Sacramento CA.

Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento CA. Kome Ajise 916.756.4954.

☎ kadansar@comcast.net

Feb. 25—Rockland NY.

Comfort Inn and Suites, Nanuet NY. Dawn Shallieu 908.756.4954.

☎ DShallieu@aol.com

Mar. 3-5—Orlando FL.

Hilton Hotel, 350 So. Northlake Blvd., Altamonte Springs FL. Ernie Kuenzli 407.831.2098.

☎ ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com

Mar. 10, 11—Baton Rouge LA.

Hilton Garden Inn, 3300 Harding Blvd., Baton Rouge LA. Michael Costelli 228.861.2822.

☎ michael@simpkins-costelli.com

Mar. 11—New York NY.

Wellesley Inn, Fairfield NJ [may be renamed to La Quinta Inn by March]. Debra Szybinski 212.998.2095.

☎ Debra.Szybinski@nyu.edu

Mar. 16-18—Fresno CA.

Best Western Garden Court Inn, 2141 No. Parkway, Fresno CA. Bob Wilson 559.255.2241.

☎ bobjinn@sbcglobal.net

Mar. 18—New London CT.

Bayview Lodge, Society Rd., East Lyme CT. Mark Grillo 860.887.0706.

☎ millennialview@sbcglobal.net

Mar. 23-25—Detroit MI.

Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Road, Warren MI. Frank Nemesh 248.649.6588.

☎ NemeshF@aol.com

☩ Apr. 1 [Sunday]—Memorial

Apr. 6-8—Albuquerque NM.

Wyndham Hotel, 2910 Yale Blvd SE, Albuquerque NM.

Sandi Thomassen 505.268.8170.

☎ srbt@juno.com

July 14-19—Gen. Convention

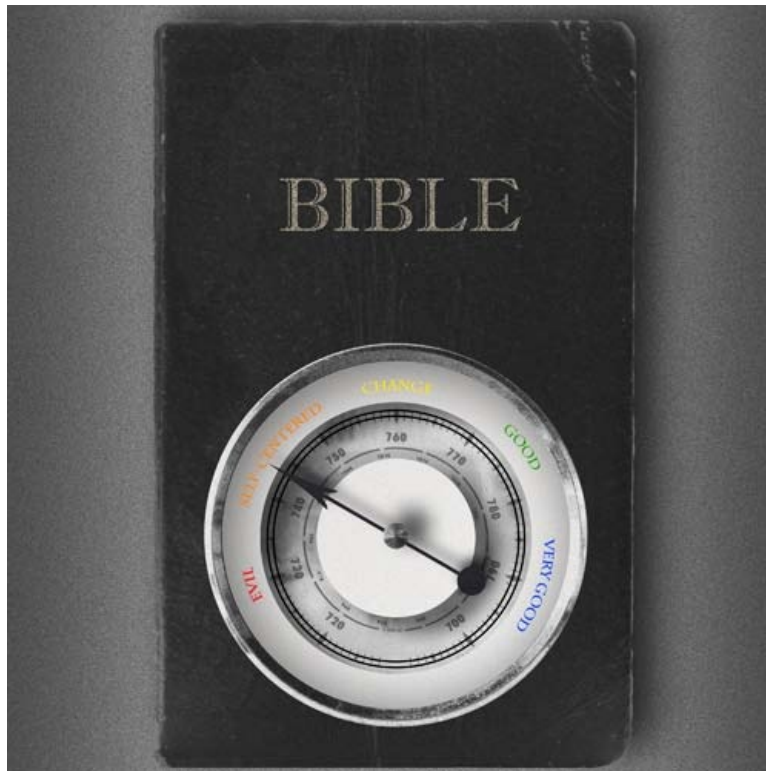
Univ. of Pittsburgh, Johnstown PA. Michael Nekora 310.454.5248.

☎ nekora@aol.com

"Gospel of the Kingdom" non-stop Internet radio:

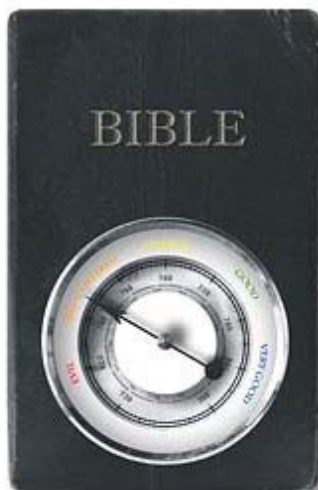
www.live365.com/stations/gospel_kingdom

And finally....



“If ye know these things, blessed are ye IF ye do them.”—John 13:17, *RV*

And finally...



"If ye know these things, blessed are ye IF ye do them."—John 13:17, *Revised Version*

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