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*The Christian's Heavenly Place and
Calling Eviscerated by Messianic Judaism*

Chapter 4

The Camp Set Aside

In the last issue we considered the allegation that Paul was a practicing Jew all his life and we saw that this was not true, but that there were certain lapses on his part, or inconsistencies, in what he did in practice. Moreover, the change that came about with his final interview with Jewish leaders, when he had arrived at Rome as a prisoner, was noted. The destruction of Jerusalem, God's judicial blow against the capital seat of Judaism, was impending. C. H. Mackintosh noted that Judaism was set aside *morally* by the cross, *doctrinally* by the Epistle to the Hebrews, and *judicially* by the destruction of Jerusalem. In the interval between the cross and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, God had patience with the Jewish believers who held on to Judaistic practices -- practices of a system that He had at one time sanctioned. (He had no patience with heathen practices.) It was a transition period. Messianic Judaism seizes on this, and on Paul's lapses, as if it is evidence of God actually sanctioning Messianic Judaism. The fact is otherwise and the time of patience with this was ending. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, with the destruction of the temple and its service, *as well as the break up of the assembly at Jerusalem*, was impending. And before that destruction and break up of the assembly at Jerusalem, Paul, then a prisoner at Rome, gave a final testimony to the Jewish leaders in Rome, consequent upon which a change took place. In prison, Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, telling them to go forth to **Christ, Who is outside the camp**. It is obvious on the face of it, that in Hebrews "the camp" is Judaism, though this is necessarily explained otherwise by Messianic Jews, as well as by Gentiles professing Christianity who are involved with elements of Judaism in their church systems.

The Epistle to the Hebrews gave opportunity to the Jewish believers to act in faith on God's Word to separate from the Judaistic practices before God's judicial blow fell upon Jerusalem and the temple. God graciously provided the Jewish believers with a wonderful sketch of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, in every respect. "The body" had **set aside** "the shadow." The idea of Messianic Jews that there is spiritual benefit for them in observing Jewish

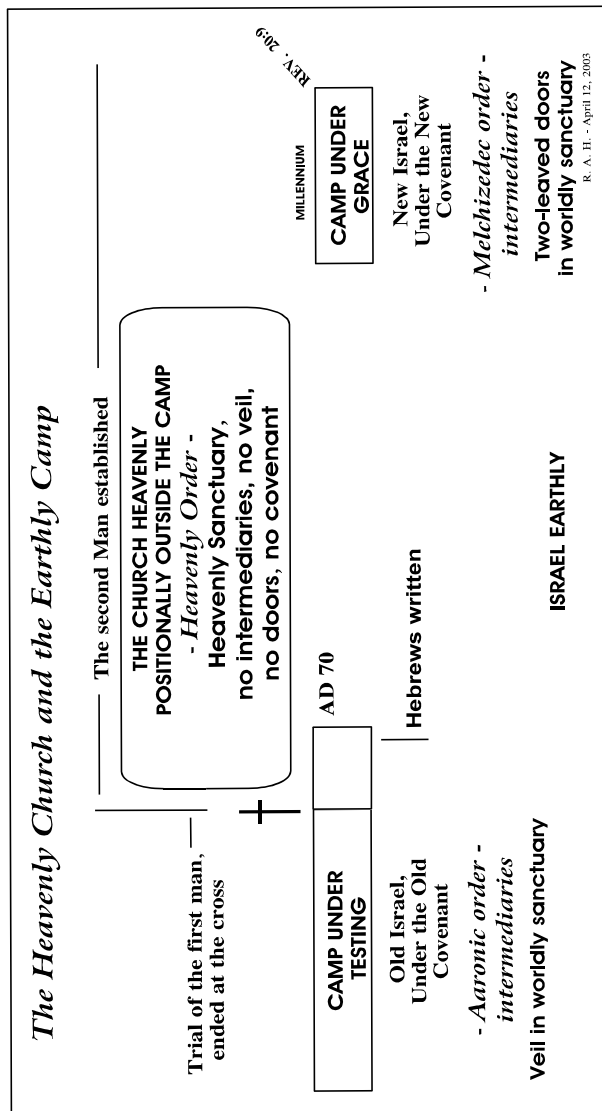
practices flies in the face of the statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the "better" things of Christianity that **displace** what they were hankering after in Judaism. Christian worship is in the sanctuary above (Heb. 2:12, 8:2, 10:19-22). The tabernacle, though a "sanctuary, a worldly one" (Heb. 9:1) was "an image for the present time" (Heb. 9:9), a shadow of things in the heavens, where Christ is "minister of the holy places and of the true tabernacle which the Lord has pitched, [and] not man" (Heb. 8:2). It is what we saw noted in Colossians concerning the "shadow" and "the body." The shadow is "worldly" and the body is heavenly. We must not mix them together. 'I have Christ, the body, but I also have spiritual benefit by observing ordinances that are shadows' is false. Moreover, it is a patent pretense, for there is no tabernacle service and there is no temple and its service, in Christianity, nor do Messianic Jews have those things. The temple and its service was there until AD 70. The "Messianic Jews" of today do not have that available to them. But a Messianic Judaistic system is set up anyway ¹ -- in order to preserve Jewish distinctives, with *spiritual benefits not available to Gentile believers!* It is spiritual pretension, false and inherently divisive; a system that lowers, hides, and distorts what we have "in Christ," namely, a heavenly position, outside the camp, illustrated on the chart below. Rev. 20:9 speaks of the camp and its city -- which is Jerusalem, of course. It becomes once again the object of hatred of the Gentiles at the end of the millennium when the divine restraint is removed.

It is instructive that it is called "the camp of the saints." It had been the camp of the mixed company of Jews before the cross, but could not be the camp of "the saints" while the first man was under trial. But all wherein man fails, Christ makes good to the glory of God. "The camp of the saints" indicates this result of Christ's coming in power and glory to glorify God in the establishment of God's purpose in government in the earth.

1. In the winter 2003 *Arial Ministries Newsletter*, p. 1, Dr. Arnold Fructenbaum, a Jewish believer and a Scofieldian, speaks of "Dispensationalism" as "the most pro-Jewish, pro-Messianic theology." He laments that many "in the Messianic Movement" attack dispensationalism. He wrote that "there was a time when Messianic Jews were known for their sound theology. That is no longer true since so much of the movement is being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine . . ." Does he include Arno Gaebelein in this phrase "Messianic Jews"? How about Alfred Edersheim? Would C. I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer approve of this mixture of "Dispensationalism" and Messianic Judaism?

And where does Scripture authorize Dr. Fructenbaum to suggest a recipe under the title "Passover Lamb" having "One boneless leg of lamb (5 to 7 pounds; serves 6-8 people)" "for your next Passover Seder"? Why not also have a pretended day of atonement (Lev. 16) also?, etc.

I am aware that he seeks to ground *his form* of Messianic Judaism in the Abrahamic Covenant, including the circumcision of all Jewish boys. Circumcision for a non-spiritual reason is one thing, but placing present day Jewish believers under the Abrahamic covenant, as Jews, is utterly *undispensational*.



Before considering Hebrews and the direction to go unto Christ outside “the camp,” the following article, written in 1876, would be profitably read.

The Camp as it Was and Will Be, And Christianity as Distinct from Either

(From *The Bible Herald*, June, 1876, pp. 66-69)

2 Pet. 3 gives us the outline of God’s dealings with creation in three divisions. There are the heavens and the earth *that were*, which have been destroyed by water -- the flood; the heavens and the earth which are now, which are reserved unto fire; and the future, or the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. These will last for ever.

We are not to speak of the heavens and the earth which have been, nor of those which are to be, but of the heavens and the earth which now are. With these we have specially to do, and we find them again divided into three distinct parts: the camp that *was* established on earth, embracing the days of Judaism; the camp that will be, spoken of in Rev. 20:9; and Christianity, which comes in between these periods. It is with it we have to do -- not with the camp as it was, nor as it will be. We are in the days of Christianity.

Scripture is most plain in defining these things, and if one is but simple and obedient, he may know the truth and how to walk in it.

I will now seek to trace the establishment of the camp as it was, when God set it up at first -- i.e., of the system or order of things, technically called Judaism (Gal. 2:14). Leaving the false religious systems which man has built up may be mistaken for “going outside the camp”; but when the camp was first instituted, it was not a false human system, but a divine one. The camp, was, then the only right, the only blessed place on earth, so that the thought of leaving the systems of man for liberty of ministry or the like, does not necessarily touch the kernel of the truth. For, you may leave all these and carry with you the spirit of the thing you profess to leave, and rear it up again in your very midst. The camp was the proposition by a God-given machinery for the improvement of the first man -- man in the flesh. The camp was God’s meeting-place with man in the flesh. Christ is now the only meeting-place between God and man; but it is with the Christian, and not with man in the flesh. The history of man in the flesh came to an end in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s dealings with him are over, and it is unto Jesus we go forth -- the man on the other side of death: who was in death, but is now in glory. God now only recognizes Christ the second man. It is outside the camp you meet Him. He “suffered without the gate” (Heb. 13:12). Christianity has reference to Christ and to man *in the spirit* {sic, **Spirit**}, not in the flesh in any way. The apostle says,

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more (2 Cor. 5:16).

The flesh, therefore, must be ignored by the one who goes forth unto Jesus outside the camp.

Let us look at the camp as instituted by God at the first. What was it then, and what has its history been? As instituted by God it was beautiful, but in man's hands it became horrible. It was the most beautiful place -- a scene of beauty and order, and designed to be so by God. To prove this, I refer you to Num. 5:2, 3,

Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: that they defile not their camps, *in the midst of which I dwell*.

Then in Deut. 23, we have fuller instruction as to the character to be maintained in the camp.

If there be among you any man that is not clean, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: for the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

If obedient to this the Lord promised to deliver the children of Israel from their enemies (vv. 9-14). The camp was the dwelling-place of God and His parade ground. God walked there, so there must not be a speck of defilement in the camp; and if purity had been maintained, this Scripture tells what God would have been to Israel. The camp was the place where God, so to speak, took man in hand, to train him, and prove if by a Divine institution and His own commandments anything could be made of {the fallen first} man. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ tells what the result of this trial was. The Jews, spite of all these privileges, preferred the robber Barabbas to the Son of God.

The first break-down in the camp we find recorded in the Ex. 32. When Israel made a calf of gold and worshiped it as God, Aaron, that he might be a popular man, fell in with the desire of the people. Man's will worked -- that was the root of the evil -- the foundation of everything went, and Israel dishonored God *in toto*. Instead of the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," the word went through the camp, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which *brought thee out of the land of Egypt*." This was the break-down before God, and "the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made," but His mercy endured towards Israel, and Moses proclaimed,

The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sin;

and thus the system was kept going. God by this means kept the camp together, in order to show that, with man in the flesh, nothing could be done. Corruption and failure went on till, in Amos 4:10, we read,

I have made the stink of your camps to come up in *your* nostrils.

It had alone so in the nostrils of God in Ex. 32; but, in Amos 4 the wickedness is so great that it is abhorrent to the very people who corrupted it. There is no capacity in man to recover himself. You may put a fine gloss upon corruption, but that does not remove the root of the evil. It is there still. Man in the flesh is utterly bad; death must be his portion, through death recovery by Christ. The death of Christ has ended the history of the first man, and out of His death has arisen the man that can bear fruit to God. Israel's fall was complete, but they would not own it, nor turn to God. Had they done so, He would have had mercy on them and set them right. They were a stiff-necked people. He gave them laws, and said if they would do them they should live in them but it was to no purpose. There was no good in man, nor any ability to do good. It is the same still; and if God has failed {rather, demonstrated the impossibility} to improve man in the flesh, need we spend time trying to so? Christianity begins with Christ the second man. His death ended the {standing before God of the testing of the} first man, and death must be written on the flesh and all its workings by those who believe in Him and go forth unto Jesus now.

But the camp will again be set up. Of this we read in Rev. 20:9. Then {in the millennium} the camp will stand and not fall as did the camp of Israel {under the Mosaic covenant}. Though even then it will not be a perfect order of things, yet integrity will be maintained by the manifested glory of Christ, not by the beauty or perfection of man in the flesh. For a thousand years it will be so, and then Satan will again come and seek to destroy the camp. Speedily he carried his point in the camp of Israel, but when he comes with all the strength he can command against "the camp of the saints," he will himself be destroyed. The glory of Christ will be the victory that day.

There are two verses in Lev. 16 which reveal to us the means by which God could keep the camp of Israel going, after it had broken down before Him. We should not have been able to tell their meaning had not the Spirit of God interpreted them for us in Heb. 13. On the great day of Atonement, Aaron offered the bullock and the goat for the sin-offering *without* {outside} *the camp*, and their blood was brought into the holy place. The verses I refer to are Lev. 16:27, 28, and, but for this ordinance, the whole Jewish system would have collapsed from its first failure. It was a failing system, but kept together by virtue of that which took place *outside* the camp. This went on till the antitype of the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the saving ordinance, whose efficacy affected all the camp of Israel, was offered outside the camp, so the Lord Jesus, the antitype of this, "suffered outside the

gate.” That which preserved the camp in its existence, was an act done outside its precincts, and it pointed to Him who should suffer the cursed death on the cross, that death which is to be the basis of everything when righteousness will reign in the camp of the saints, and the glory of the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, will be manifested {Col. 3:4; Rev. 19}. Am I then to go back to that system which has come to an end (Heb. 9:26), or reintroduce principles and shadows which found their fulfilment in the cross *thereon* and the work of Christ?

Christianity gives us a heavenly, not an earthly, order of things. The cross of Christ is the end of the system that was, and through it are introduced the things that now are. It puts me outside the camp and all its types, but it puts me also inside the veil, where Jesus is, who died on the cross. It is with Christ, in the glory of God, I have to do. I am by the Holy Ghost linked up with Him.

You may try revivalism, teetotalism, anything you like, but these have to say to the first man. You will find all such things fail. Do not seek to recover the man God has ceased to deal with, on whom death is stamped and not recovery. God went fully into all that which people are now in vain seeking to do. He used a divine system when He made trial of man, and it failed. Will you succeed better, when you have only human means at your command? You must fail, and the sooner you believe it the better. You must begin at the cross of Christ, and from thence go on with Christ and Christianity.

Christianity begins with Him who glorified God on the cross, and by whom God was more glorified as to sin than if sin had never been in the world. As a Christian, I am outside the camp with Jesus, the One suffered for sin without the gate. I must bear His reproach. There must be reproach. I must share Christ's fortunes. If I am linked with His glory, I must accept His rejection. From man, or for man in the flesh, I must seek nothing. But is this the spirit of the Church in general at this moment? The moral features of apostasy which crept in to the Jewish camp until it reached the picture in Amos 4:10 (2 Thess. 2) are flagrant now in Christianity. They exist in the generation that is, as they did in the generation that is past (Psa. 78). You may call the people Jewish or Christian, it is all the same -- you find similar principles at work.

The professing Church has not set aside that which God judged on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first man is rampant even in Evangelicalism: God's judgment on man in the flesh is not accepted by it as a system. The forgiveness of sins they are glad to have, and this gives peace of conscience but this is not holiness. Nothing will give holiness but that which sets the flesh aside and brings in Christ. In Rom. 5 you have forgiveness, but there is not a word about holiness; but in Rom. 6, where death with Christ is brought out, you find holiness enforced.

He that is dead is freed from sin.

Let not sin reign in your mortal body.

Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.

Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

It is important to see that, till death is accepted, and self seen to have no place, there cannot be holiness; happiness there may be, but Christianity is more than that. “It is *Holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12). It does not say, without happiness. There should be happiness, but holiness is the thing that is sought. God looks for this in His people, and it is inseparably linked up with the acceptance of death on self and the workings of the flesh.

Let us now see how the Church departed from this line, and how failure came in.

In Acts 15:5, there is manifestly the desire to bring in that which recognized the flesh as having place in the things of God. It was believers who did the mischief.

Then rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

It was Gentile Christians upon whom those burdens were imposed; but how does the apostle act with reference to the proposal? Verses 10 to 19 show. He treats it as seeking to subvert their souls. The departure began with the introduction of that which was Mosaic adding Moses to Christ; and to add thus was to spoil. This could not be tolerated by the apostle; but mark, it was *believers* who did it, and it is believers to-day who are diverted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Epistle to the Galatians shows how the evil worked, and in what strong language it was condemned. It is even called another gospel, this mixing up of Moses and Christ. It is this spirit we have to watch against in our own day. The little sprout soon grows into a luxuriant branch. You may say there is no fear, but there is every cause to fear. If you fear, then there is no fear; but if you do not fear, you will fall most certainly.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Our God is a consuming fire.

Moses' God was not so pre-eminently. Heb. 12:22-29 does not end with the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel, but it goes on to the shaking of all things and the consuming fire. He is set on the destruction of that which is sown in the flesh.

He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

It is the fashion in some places to give out that Christianity is for the sinner, and thus God is forgotten; but God has His part in Christianity. The sinner is blessed most surely, but it is the goodness of God he is brought to share. It is the glad

tidings of the love of God's heart that goes forth. The prodigal hears them, and he is brought to feed with God upon His food. It is God's food that is shared -- God must not be forgotten. The whole of the fat, the excellent part of the offering, was for God. Let us then take heed lest we spoil that which God looks for as His part in Christianity. It was the Pharisees who believed who led the vanguard of defection in Acts 15; and in Gal. 2 it is an apostle who dissembled and led another to do the same. Peter had given up Judaism, and yet he sought to carry the Gentile converts back to it. Paul withstood him to the face. These early records of Christianity need not surprise us, for we see the same thing occurring now. It requires the continuous energy of the Spirit of God to go on.

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

It may be a difficult thing to put right, but it is not less difficult to keep right. The enemy is ever on the watch, and we are so unsteady. We get a glimpse of Christ for a moment, but strength lies in having Him ever as "the mark" before us. To this we are called. To have the eye ever and only on Christ. With the Apostle Paul it was so.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling on high (Phil. 3).

Peter was losing this singleness of heart and aim, and he was leading others with him; but the reproof entered his soul. Paul stands out as the only one who maintained the glory of Christ against those who would have brought in with Him something else.

In Gal. 4:9, we read,

How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage (Gal. 4: 9).

It was to Gentiles who had professed Christianity the apostle spoke thus, "Why turn ye *again?*" but it was Gentileism they left! Now they were adding Jewish principles to their profession of Christ, and the apostle classes it as a return to heathenism -- "again anew." "If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." The introduction of that which was of the camp into Christianity, or seeking to improve the first man, is that which forms the camp now which we have to beware of.

Col. 2:1 shows how earnestly the apostle desired the saints might be preserved from all that savored of the camp, and grow up fully into the full truth of Christianity,

I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the *full assurance of understanding*, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, *in which* are hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

They had doubtless the full assurance of faith, and of hope; but what they needed, that they might stand in the truth of Christianity, was the *full assurance*

of understanding, the full knowledge of the mystery of God -- i.e., the present connection of the saint with Christ. It is the knowledge of the mystery alone that will keep one out of evil now. In the Col. 2 we find that by which we may be carried off the true ground of Christianity, or, as it is expressed, "made a spoil of." When the sportsman has made the game his own, he takes it off the field and carries it home, and so the enemy of Christ now seeks to lead souls from simple occupation with Christ. Thus they become his prey, and are taken from the ground of Christianity, and that ends in apostasy and infidelity.

There are two highways which lead from the profession of Christianity to that of open infidelity. These are rationalism and ritualism -- or, in other words, the philosophy of the mind of man in the flesh, and the religiousness of his nature. These two will bring in the apostasy of the last days. There are many Christians, and true believers too, who have not the knowledge of the "mystery." They have been made a spoil of, and are not really on the ground of Christianity. Clever men there are amongst them, who can lecture well and preach beautifully but it is the mind and wisdom of the first man that is at work in all that is short of Christianity. It is not Christ simply, nor the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hid in the mystery of God. All real knowledge, all spiritual teaching, is linked up with the truth of the mystery. That which is popular to-day is not coupled with bearing His reproach who suffered outside the gate. It is unto Jesus, outside the camp, we are to go forth. The spirit of the camp cannot be added to Christ. The shadows which pointed to Him must not again be brought in. Now we have the substance -- "The body is of Christ." We no longer need the shadow: the fulfilment is ours in Him who is the Head in heaven of His body, of which we are on earth the members. To know the connection between the members of His body with Christ the Head in heaven, and to walk as such, was the truth which the Colossian saints were in danger of losing. We stand in danger now of letting it slip from us. The word of God must be allowed to judge us, and not the reason of man. "Let no man judge you," says the apostle. Do not be made a spoil of. Let not the enemy carry you off divine ground. Christ the Head in heaven, and man in the Spirit, is the truth you have to maintain. Seek grace to walk in the power of that. What characterized Judaism is that which we must avoid.

Beware lest your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

If dead with Christ, you are out of the old thing -- you are risen with Christ, and you must not revive that which has now no place in the Divine presence. Your standing is in Christ in heaven, and in the Spirit on earth. You have now to do with the things where Christ is, and to "walk in newness of life."

From 2 Thess. 2 we learn that there is to be an apostasy, and not a wide-spread reception of the gospel of Christ. There will be the abandonment of

even the profession of Christianity before the ushering in of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, or, in other words, before the establishment of the millennium. Such is not the general belief, but it is what Scripture plainly teaches.

That day shall not come, except there be a falling away first (2 Thess. 2:3).

What, then, are we to do? Verse 15 tells us --

Stand fast, and hold the traditions {instructions} which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.

Remember what the Apostle Paul has said. Hold to the truth of the mystery, and to “the full assurance of understanding therein.”

In Ezek. 43 we see the camp will again be reinstated on the earth; and you ask, what about the sin-offering then? It will be offered, but not *outside* the camp, as in Lev. 16. Christ will then be the center of all things.

In the dispensation of the fulness of times, He (God) will gather together in one all things in Christ {Eph. 1:10}.

The camp will be under the sway of the Lord Jesus, then the acknowledged Messiah of Israel, and the savor of His name will spread to earth's utmost bounds.

Divine order in the camp will be maintained by the presence of the glory of Christ; and the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, *commemorative* of Him who suffered the sacrifice for sin outside the gates of Jerusalem, will be offered in the house, outside the most holy place, in the appointed place (Ezek. 43:21).

This seems in keeping with the place Christ will then have as Head and Center of all things. Still even the millennium is not a final and perfect order of things. It belongs only to the second great division of 2 Pet. 3. The new heavens and new earth are beyond it; and so, it would seem, the sin-offering, while offered *in* the house, is still without the sanctuary. In Rev. 5:6, we get further on, for the Lamb as it were slain, is in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts and of the elders. The center and support of the whole system, of divine glory is Himself, my title to be there.

The pillar and support of the millennial camp will be the Divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; but we are in the days of Christianity, and it is unto Jesus, who suffered without the gate, that we go forth. In fellowship with His rejection, we bear His reproach. ♦

Articles to be continued, if the Lord will.

God's Sovereignty and Glory in the Salvation of Lost Man

Chapter 5

God's Sovereignty in the Book of Romans

(Continued)

The Place of Romans 9-11

In view of the “no difference” teaching in Rom. 3:22, 23 regarding Jews and Gentiles concerning guilt, and that all the world is under judgment to God (Rom. 3:19), what becomes of God's promises to the fathers and to Israel? This is answered in Rom. 9-11. God will make good those ancient promises for Israel when all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26). “For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance” (Rom. 11:29).

In the development of the teaching in Rom. 9-11, the sovereignty of God necessarily is emphasized, for He must sovereignly undertake to make good those ancient promises, in view of the universal failure of man. Thus, it is made clear in Rom. 9 that blessing is conferred by sovereign choice and election. That being true as regards the Jew, it is also brought out that blessing to Gentiles is on the same basis. All blessing is the result of God acting sovereignly from Himself. That this applies to both Jew and Gentile is clear in Rom. 10:12 where we read about another “no difference”:

For the scripture says, No one believing on him shall be ashamed. For there is no difference of Jew and Greek; for the same Lord of all [is] rich towards all that call upon him. For every one whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved (Rom. 10:11, 12).

It is not intended to go through Rom. 9-11 other than to take up some sovereign actions of God in view of the subject we are considering.

***“So Then [it is] not of Him That Wills,
Nor of Him That Runs”***

ROMANS 9:16

So states Rom. 9:16. *Willing* it is an internal thing in a person; *running* is activity. You will observe that the way this is stated is in accordance with the view of man presented in Romans, namely that he is viewed as alive in sins and is under bondage to the law of sin that is within him (Rom 6; 8:3). Neither of these two things -- willing nor running -- is the source, causative agency, or contributor concerning salvation. Really, John 1:13 makes it quite clear, spite of the will of the flesh in us wanting to have the matter be otherwise than it is. Let us have that Scripture before us again:

He came to his own, and his own received him not; but to as many as received him, to them gave he [the] right to be children of God, to those that believe on his name; who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, not of man's will, but of God (John 1:11-13).

So said James:

According to his own will begat he us by the word of truth . . . (James 1:18).

So said Paul:

. . . for it is God who works in you both the willing and the working according to [his] good pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy (Rom. 9:16).

Why is it that the human will is set against this? It is the pretension of the first man not to be entirely lost.²

In chapter one we noted that in the book of Genesis the line of blessing was not in the firstborn and that this was consonant with God's purpose regarding the first man and the second Man. It is a foreshadow. In Rom. 9:7 we see that not all the seed of Abraham are "children." "The children of the promise" (Rom. 9:8) are the seed of Abraham in the spiritual sense. Such are elect. In Rom. 9:6-13 we have two particular cases, of two sets of brothers, brought forward, showing God's freedom and sovereignty in His choice "that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls" (Rom. 9:11). Isaac was a child of the promise and so was Jacob. Rom. 9:16 is the conclusion drawn from the purpose and call of God. The case of Jacob and Esau is subsequent to, and parallel with, the case of Isaac and Ishmael.³

2. See the penetrating letter on this pretension in *Letters of J. N. Darby* 1:314-316.

3. There are some amazing comments by N. Geisler on this text (Rom. 9:16):

Again, the Greek word for "of" here is *ek*, which means "out of." It is a reference to the source of salvation, not the means by which we receive it -- this means it is a *free act* of

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THE CHILDREN OF PROMISE ARE RECKONED AS SEED

That is, [they that are] the children of the flesh, these [are] not the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned as seed. For this word [is] of promise, According to this time I will come, and there shall be a son to Sarah. (Rom. 9:8, 9).

Clearly, God did not "look down the avenue of time" and see that Isaac would be a child of God and therefore God could promise him as a child of promise before Isaac was conceived. And from this case, the apostle next goes to the case of Jacob and Esau.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ELECTION

And not only [that], but Rebecca having conceived by one, Isaac our father, [the children] indeed being not yet born, or having done anything good or worthless (that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls), it was said to her, The greater shall serve the less: according as it is written, I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau (Rom. 9:10-13).

"And not only" that case of Isaac, but there is the instructive case of Jacob and Esau. There is a story of a woman that came to Spurgeon and complained that she could not understand how God could hate Esau. Spurgeon replied that what *he* could not understand was how God could love Jacob! Likely, his point was, how could God love any of us.

Now reader, let us bring into this the notion of God 'looking down the avenue of time' and seeing what would happen, then electing Jacob.⁴ You cannot see

3. (...continued)

our will in receiving it (John 1:12; Eph. 2:8, etc.) (*op. cit.*, p. 59 [60]).

1. *Ek* is not found at all in the sentence. The word translated "of" is τῶ (three times).
2. John 1:13 uses *ek* three times: nor *ek* flesh's will, nor *ek* man's will, but *ek* God. So the new birth is not "out of" the flesh's will, not "out of" man's will, but "out of" God.
3. John 1:12 and Eph. 2:8 do not refer to "a *free act* of our will." It is an Arminian imposition.

4. Appendix 7 considers "corporate election" in some detail (the election of Israel is a *national* election). Here, we need to touch on it in connection with Jacob. The case regarding the election of Jacob must be quite troubling for some who believe in moral free will towards God, as indicated in the claim that:

God is not here speaking about the *individual* Jacob but about the *nation* of Jacob (Israel). In Genesis when the prediction was made (25:23 NKJV), Rebekah was told, "Two *nations* are in your womb, two *peoples* shall be separated from your body . . . And the older shall serve the younger." So the reference here is not to individual election but to the *corporate* election of a nation -- the chosen nation of Israel (N. Geisler, *op. cit.*, p. 82 [84]).

This seems to be standard Arminian-type fare (so in Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This?*, pp. 263, 264, citing others also). First of all, Gen. 25:23 is *not* proof that individual are not meant here. And, Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, and Rebecca are named individuals. Then Rom. 9:10, 11 speaks of the two

(continued...)

how such a notion evacuates the text of meaning? That is just an attempt to get rid of the truth of election; namely, that God can predetermine of His own will who will be saved. What is the point to referring to them “being not yet born, or having done anything good or worthless”? The point is that the issue does not hinge in any way on *time* -- “being not yet born” -- nor on their *conduct* -- “or having done anything good or worthless.” The issue, then, is *God’s election, God’s sovereign choice*:

that the purpose of God according to election might abide, not of works, but of him that calls.

The “*purpose of God*” is the explanation for what He does. It is not the purpose of God to act contingently. That is what the notion of free will morally towards God really means. The notion of moral free will towards God makes God’s actions in purpose and in salvation contingent on what man does. But this text is very clearly against the notion.

Esau was born first. In our text, as the firstborn he is called the greater. In the book of Genesis wherever we can find out who the firstborn was, we see that he is set aside. This is warp and woof of the book of Genesis. It is in keeping with the fact that the first man was to be set aside and displaced by another (cf. 1 Cor. 15:45-47). This is in the purpose of God -- and His election encompasses the display of this truth. It is important for the soul to apprehend this truth. Esau and Jacob illustrate God’s purpose to displace the first man and establish the second man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. (...continued)

brothers in the womb. Verse 12 was stated before the two children were born. In this “corporate election” scheme we are to believe that the next two names, Jacob and Esau (in v. 13) mean, not the two sons of Rebecca that God was just speaking about, but two corporate entities suddenly named. Then the passage returns to the individuals, Moses and Pharaoh; besides whom, Hosea and Isaiah are quoted. All names of persons in the passage are of individuals; but not in v. 13? The reasoning that Jacob and Esau means two nations exposes the desperation of the case for corporate election here.

Some use this as a way to get rid of the election of the individual by making v. 13 mean no more than a corporate status or privilege conferred on one compared to the other.

Perhaps an uneasiness concerning the thought that if this is not corporate then an unconditional election of Jacob is meant is seen in this remark:

So even though Israel as a nation was elect, nonetheless, each individual had to accept God’s grace by “faith” in order to be saved (11:20) (*ibid.*).

He holds that faith is not the gift of God but rather the expression of moral free will. Clearly, this is an effort to get rid of the force of Jacob’s unconditional election. He is, of course, aware that the time will come when all Israel will be saved according to Rom. 11:26 (*ibid.*), but does not deal with the passage. “All Israel shall be saved.” Notice how Rom. 11:26 uses Jacob in a collective sense: the deliverer “shall turn ungodliness away from Jacob.” Every one of them that form the nation will be saved. I suppose Arminian-type reasoning says we are to believe that it is so because every one of them will exercise moral free will to believe.

What a sorry spectacle Isaac is in Gen. 27, being belly-minded! The six-fold mention of the *savory dish*, such as he loved, is most ominous. In his occupation with his stomach, he failed to heed the word of Jehovah in Gen. 25:23. And his wife, and son, Jacob, conspired to deceive him so that the principal blessing would fall upon Jacob. Now, we might rightly perceive that Jacob wanted to be in the line of blessing and that was well, but the deception was not in keeping with the faith he had. He never saw his mother again. She died before he returned home some 20 years later. These are matters in God’s governmental/disciplinary ways with His own, as was all that he passed through under Laban. Esau, however, despised the birthright (Heb. 12:16, 17). None of this, however, caused God’s purpose to be what it was. *He* had a purpose according to election.

Because the statement, “I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau,” troubles some, let us hear from W. Kelly on this:

In this case how unbecoming the language of Israel: “Wherein hast thou loved us?” What was it for Israel to ask such a question of Jehovah? Yet He deigns to answer in grace: “I have loved you, saith Jehovah; yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?” Jehovah, as usual, rises up to the source of things. “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob.” Then He adds, “and I hated Esau.” I do not think it would be true to draw this inference at the beginning of their history. But it is just an instance of what the best of men do in their haste. God withholds the sentence of hatred till it is evidently justified by the conduct and ways of Esau, more particularly towards Jacob, but indeed towards Himself. In short, it would be quite true to say that God loved Jacob from the first, but that He never pronounces hatred until that be manifest which utterly repels and rejects Himself with contempt, deliberately going on in pursuit of its own way and will in despicability of God. Then only does He say, “I hated Esau.” Along with this He draws attention to the fact that He “laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.” Thus, apart from such profanity, if God “despise not any,” we may be perfectly sure He hates not any. Such an idea could not enter a mind which was nurtured in the word of God, apart from the reasonings of men. I say not this because of the smallest affinity with what is commonly called Arminianism; for I have just as little affinity with Calvinism. I believe the one to be as derogatory to God’s glory as the other, though in very different ways -- the one by exalting man most unduly, and the other by prescribing for God, and consequently not saying the thing that is right of Him.

. . . At the beginning of the history of Jacob and Esau we find the purpose of God before the children were born. Indeed to make election a question of the deserts in the two parties is simply to destroy its nature, if allowed in word. Election is necessarily from God entirely apart from those that are the objects of it, as it means the exercise of His sovereign choice. If there is the smallest ground in the party chosen because of which God chooses, it is not His choice, but rather a moral discernment, which, far from being sovereign, is only an appraisal whether the person deserves or not. One may hold then as strongly

as the stoutest Calvinist the free sovereign choice of God, but the reprobation of the wicked which the Calvinist draws from it, as an equally sovereign decree, is in my judgment a grave error. I do not therefore scruple to say a word upon it now, inasmuch as it is an important thing in both doctrine and practice. The idea that, if God chooses one, He must reprobate another whom He does not choose, is a fallacy and without, yea against, scripture. This is exactly where human influence comes in; that is, the petty self-confidence of man's mind. Now I do not see why we as believers should be petty; there is every reason why we should gather what is great for God. To be simple is all well; but this too is a very different thing from being petty, and no reason why we should limit ourselves to ourselves; for what does God reveal His mind for? Surely that we should know Him, and be imitators of Him.

To my own mind then it is full of the deepest interest, that while God chose before the children were born, and decided what was to be the lot of the one relatively to the other, He never made any man to be a sinner. No doubt the children of Adam are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity; mankind are born in that condition. Their whole being is lost in it. It is no question therefore of making man a sinner, because since the fall he departed from God and the race is evil without exception. Man belongs to a stock now wholly depraved -- evil the sad and universal heirloom. God's election is entirely independent of what He finds, and spite of all evil. He elects angels no doubt that never fell: even so they had nothing to do with determining the rest who were not so kept. In every case it is simply a question of God's choice. But the fallen condition of man gives to God's election, where sinners are the only possible objects, an exceeding beauty and very deep moment. He chooses entirely apart from anything that deserves it, in the face of all that is out of harmony with Himself. It is not so where He judges and rejects.

When He says "Esau have I hated," He waits to the last moment, till Esau has shown what he is. The first book of the Bible lets us see His choice of Jacob. Only the last book tells us of His hatred of Esau. I do not say that we do not find His moral condemnation of Esau's spirit long before this, but He is patient in the execution of judgment. Long-suffering belongs to God, and is inseparable from His moral nature, while He delays to execute judgment on evil. All-powerful and good, He is nevertheless for that very reason perfect in patience. Now the sentence comes forth from His lips, and may well be felt to be a serious matter.

Yet Esau's ill-conduct to Jacob was not the only or the worst element of evil which comes into judgment. He was profane Godward, despising everything done on God's part, save that which brought sensibly before him the greater dignity to which his brother was promoted. Then he who sold it for a morsel of meat in the hour of want feels and resents keenly his loss of place and honor, even though he seemed one of those characters devoted only to that which man can do in this present life. He had no confidence in God: beyond this life no thought, no desire. If he could live in ease and honor, not without energy and action, that was enough for Esau. Why should he seek more than

to enjoy present life, or, if needful, carry his point by main force? But that is practically a denial of God, particularly of His goodness and His sovereign choice. It is also a denial of one's own sin, of the real import of death, of resurrection, and of glory. There was undoubtedly a great deal unsatisfactory enough in Jacob, just as there is alas! in most of us. There is a great deal beyond question which proves how brittle and broken we are as men. Jacob shows us the difference by comparison with one who walked with God, and hence styled with singular beauty the friend of God. Jacob stands in painful contrast with Abraham in many respects. Though Abraham, we know, failed gravely now and then, still failure was not what characterized him in the same way as it checkered (we will not say characterized) Jacob. Intercourse with God stamped its attractive, softening, ennobling influence with a wonderful disinterestedness on Abraham's life and ways; whereas Jacob has the feebleness that belongs to one who knew not so to walk with God by faith. Craft, or a mind ever seeking to manage and so accomplish his ends, belongs to such as he. Self tarnished, but did not shut out God, with nothing but will to govern: this {the shutting out of God} is rather what we see in Esau. Jacob was really a different man. Even when going on with his devices to benefit himself, he looked to God for a blessing of which he realized the need. Thus it was certainly by no means the happiest form of the life of faith -- far from it; hence a great deal takes the shape of warning to us in Jacob as in most, but genuine faith was there spite of all. Thus, not having a good conscience, he fell into a sort of fraud on his brother Esau in the first instance, and not much better when we last hear of the brothers meeting each other. We must remember he was a man naturally timid: only dependence on God does not find but make us what we should be.

"And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." God was against him. "Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places." Thus we see the strength of will to the last: he would fight it out even with God. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, Jehovah will be magnified from the border of Israel." ⁵

On the other hand, there is no ground favorable to that absolute reprobation which Calvin deduces from this place . . . Man hastily infers reprobation of the one from the choice of the other. This is unfounded. ⁶

These are wholesome, instructive words, so opposite of "Salvation Is Not The Subject." ⁷

5. *Introductory Lectures to the Study of the Minor Prophets*, Malachi, pp. 505-512.

6. *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, London: Morrish, p. 174, n.d. See the passage.

7. Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This?*, p. 262; who says:

TO WHOM HE WILL HE SHOWS MERCY, AND WHOM HE WILL HE HARDENS

So then, to whom he will he shows mercy, and whom he will he hardens (Rom. 9:18).

Is God Unrighteous? In view of what the apostle stated, there arises in the human mind the thought that God is unrighteous (Rom. 9:14). Really, it is man who is unrighteous and he unrighteously thinks to sit in judgment on God. Fallen man does not penetrate to the depth of his own lost condition:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and incurable; who can know it? I Jehovah search the heart, I try the reins . . . (Jer. 17:9, 10).

That deceitfulness remains in the Christian and he needs to bow to the light of God's Word about the depth of the evil. In ch. 1 we saw that God did not create moral evil. Here, in Rom. 9:14, anticipating an objection, we read:

[Is there] unrighteousness with God?

Perhaps the reader will see that the idea that God created moral evil, or 'before prepared' a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction, is excluded by this verse. It excludes the notion that God created Pharaoh's stubbornness.

If it were true, as Calvin says, that those who perish were destined to destruction by the will of God, the case were hard indeed. But scripture never really speaks thus, and the language of the texts usually cited in support of such a decree, when closely as well as fairly examined, invariably avoids such a thought, however near it may seem to approximate.

In truth it is but the expression of the heart anxious to gather an excuse for its own wilful evil and a plea against judgment from the irresistible will of God. Yet better is known in the heart of hearts all the while. It is never said in scripture that sin was God's purpose; but man fallen under sin is the platform where He does display His ways, counsels, and even Himself. God did not make any man to be evil; but from all (being evil already) He does choose according to His sovereign will and show mercy to some, not all, though all be no more guilty than the some may have been. It would be

7. (...continued)

Before these men were born, God knew that Jacob would hear His voice and turn to Him but that Esau would despise his birthright and reject God's grace and that His descendants would be the enemies of Israel. On that basis he hated Esau/Edom. If this were not the case, we would have God's hating for no reason at all, which is contrary to all that the Bible tells us of the God who "is love" (p. 265).

As W. Kelly pointed out above:

if God "despise not any," we may be perfectly sure He hates not any.

He means that God did not hate by some decree from eternity, but expressed Himself in this way regarding Esau *after* Esau had manifested himself as a profane person (cp. Heb. 12:16, 17). But this fact does not set aside the words "that the purpose of God might stand." The quotation from Dave Hunt is the standard, Arminian-type way of sweeping away the Scriptural truth of election and making the alleged moral free will towards God the hinge on which all blessing turns.

perfectly just to destroy all. But if pleased to spare whom he will, who shall say to Him, nay? It would be to set up a claim of superiority over God, and is really an attempt to judge Him. Now whenever a sinner is converted, he feels and owns the just judgment of God, even though such a recognition sanctions the execution of the divine sentence against one's self, yet withal never quits in despair, but looks and cries, feebly at first perhaps but with increasing earnestness, for mercy.⁸

Of course the last received their wages thankfully {Matt. 20:1-16}. But when the first heard about it, they began to think themselves entitled to more -- they who had borne the burden and heat of the day. But the master reminds them that all was a settled thing before they entered on their work. In their selfishness, they forgot both the terms and the righteousness of him with whom they had to deal. If, out of the liberality of his heart, the householder was pleased to give others, who had worked the twelfth part of what they had done, as much as he gave themselves, what was that to them? God maintains His own rights.

It is of greatest importance for our souls that we hold to the rights of God in everything. Persons will argue as to whether it is righteous for God to elect this person or that. But on the ground of righteousness all are lost, and for ever. Now, if God is pleased to use His mercy according to His wisdom, and for His glory, toward these poor lost ones, who is to dispute with Him? "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" God is entitled to act according to what is in His heart: and "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Is He entitled to act from Himself? He cannot act from man on the grounds of righteousness. There is no foundation on which he can thus deal; it is entirely a question of His own good pleasure. And we must remember that there is not a man that is lost but rejects the mercy of God -- despises it, or uses it for his own selfish purposes in this world. The man that is saved is the only one that has a true sense of sin, that gives himself up as lost; but then he falls back upon His infinite mercy in Christ to save a lost sinner.⁹

Commenting on the sovereign choice of Isaac and Jacob, J. N. Darby remarked:

But now, to go further down in your history, and then you have Jacob and Esau; and if you go by descent, you must let in the Edomites by the same tide as yourselves. But in vv. 8, 9, it says, "the children of the promise are counted for the seed": so that it must rest on Isaac and Jacob, and Ishmael and Esau remain outside; therefore your mouth must now be closed as to descent, for your mouth is bound up by God's saying, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." He has chosen, according to His sovereign title, to bless you, and on that alone your blessing depends; as your own history shows, your own prophetic testimony proves, you cannot rest it on a mere title by descent. But

8. W. Kelly, *Notes on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, London: Morrish, p. 182, n.d.

9. *Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew*, London: Rouse, 1896, p. 105.

is there then unrighteousness with God? for such is the natural objection of the flesh. No: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." If we begin to ask, Is there unrighteousness with God, as really calling Him in question, we are seeking to judge God, instead of God's judging us. Whenever the sovereignty of God is called in question, it is the soul saying, in effect, I am to judge God, and not that God is to judge me. But further, see how their mouth is stopped; for when did God say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"? When every Israelite had lost all title to everything God had to give, then God retreated, if I may use the expression, into His own sovereignty, that He might not cut them off.¹⁰

We might pause to notice once again that there are those who say election is only corporate,¹¹ thus getting rid of God's sovereign election of individuals. Isaac and Jacob are examples of individual, sovereign choice, there being no corporate nation of Israel at that time.

To return; do *you* accept it that God has the right to have mercy on whom He will choose to have mercy? and to have compassion on whom he chooses to have compassion? This is a test for one's state of soul.

So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy (Rom. 9:16).¹²

We cannot obtain the blessing by *willing* to have it or by any *running* (activity, actions) in order to obtain it. It is sovereignly given.

Aurthur Pridham observed:

The suggestion, therefore, as to the possibility of there being unrighteousness with God, after calling forth from the apostle his usual exclamation of indignant repudiation, becomes an occasion for the more distinct and emphatic enunciation of the doctrine of mercy as a particular aspect of the electing will of God:

"For he saith unto *Moses*, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," &c. (v. 15).

It was to the lawgiver of Israel that Jehovah revealed the secret of His way, in sovereign elective grace, after the nation had for ever forfeited all claim of *legal* blessing by their breach of the covenant of works.¹³ After having been for a

10. *Collected Writings* 33:395. See the further comments on this on p. 398.

11. The notion of "corporate election" of the church is a device to get rid of individual election, the total lostness of man, and to maintain the idea of moral free will towards God. To use the words "corporate election" both of Israel and the church is preposterous. The nation of Israel has a national election to supremacy under Messiah's reign. There is no analogy with the church.

12. See *Collected Writings* 26:179.

13. Ex. 22, 23, *passim*, and Acts 7:42. The force of this allusion to so important a crisis in the national history is obvious. The Jewish mind, in order to be delivered from the inveterate notion of self-righteousness, needed to be taught or reminded, by such references, that the principle to

(continued...)

moment admitted to a higher moral elevation than other men, by virtue of their promised obedience to the Law, they are precipitated by their sin to the ordinary level of an ungodly world (Amos 9:7, 8). But the common guilt and consequent ruin of the creature having been once proved, the question of *justice* is necessarily excluded from any display of Divine favor towards such. That is, considered in themselves and with reference to their own works, the entrance of God into judgment with men must destroy all hope. For vengeance against sin is the natural march of Divine justice. But this would involve the destruction of all, for all have sinned. Power belongs to God, and the natural condition of man as a sinner provokes the exercise of that power in wrathful indignation. But mercy also belongeth unto Him. Now this must in its nature of necessity be controlled and directed by the will of Him who shows mercy. It is drawn by no attraction of desert. Moreover, human wretchedness, being in itself the natural effect of Divine judgment against sin, is no compelling cause of mercy. Its deep and blessed spring is to be sought for and found (if indeed that depth be searchable) in the mystery of the love of God -- in God Himself, whose name is Love.

Nor is this all. The objective display of mercy, when revealed in its full brightness in the person of Jesus, is not enough to secure the blessing of the chosen vessels of God's grace. Nature can never believe the truth of God, whether for good or for evil. "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:45), is the expostulation of Truth itself, when dishonored and withstood by those who, as touching the flesh, nevertheless stood near to God {i.e., the Jews}. The vessels, therefore, of Divine mercy must be fitted to receive mercy. Truth must act subjectively on the heart and conscience by the power of the Holy Ghost, or all promise and testimony alike will fail of their effect. And so, he adds, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

Now it was to Moses the man of God that the secret of electing mercy was declared. Its grand exemplification to Israel will be in the day when, having wearied itself in the greatness of its way (Isa. 57:10), the scattered and dispersed nation shall again be brought into its own land. For the mercy which their sin under the old covenant had caused to depart, will yet again revive when the time of promise shall have come. "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy" (Hos. 2:23), is the word spoken concerning her who had first been put away for her sins. Moreover, the Lord will yet return with mercies to *Jerusalem*. His house shall be built in it, and a line stretched forth upon Jerusalem (Zech. 1:16). For a small moment He has forsaken Zion, but with great mercies He will gather her (Isa. 54 *passim*). Thus we find, first, the solemn assertion of the sovereign will of Divine mercy as the alone condition of blessing; and secondly,

13. (...continued)

which it clung with such infatuate tenacity had been disallowed from the very first. Long-suffering, mercy, and faithfulness {on God's part} had been the security of a stiff-necked people, whom righteous judgment, untempered by mercy, must have blotted from the earth.

the distinct assurance that the good pleasure of that will is to show mercy unto Israel in the latter day

Verses 17, 18. It is in close connection with what goes immediately before, and in further illustration of the doctrine of Divine *mercy*,¹⁴ that the manifestation of righteous power in the way of judgment is next exemplified: -- "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh," &c., &c. The same Holy One, who reserves to Himself the sovereign prerogative of mercy, is equally God in the just infliction of His vengeance upon rebellious sinners. The question, "who is the Lord," which was asked by Pharaoh in his pride of heart, -- a question which, whether audibly expressed or not, lurks always in the depths of unregenerate nature, -- must one day receive its decisive answer. As it has happened to Pharaoh and his host, the fame of whose catastrophe has filled all lands, in lasting testimony both to the power and the faithfulness of God, so will it again be done when the "sudden destruction," which has so long impended over an unrepentant world, shall be at last permitted to descend (1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 2:8-12).¹⁵

Man Has a Hard Heart to Begin With. It is noted in Ezek. 36:26 that man has a stony heart. We must remember that Israel is representative of the first man, given great privileges, under testing, under probation, to see if he was recoverable from the fall. Regarding Israel, Arthur Pridham wrote:

The apostle's summary, in Rom. 9:18, conducts us to the point beyond which no created mind can ever advance. The will of God is affirmed to be the ultimate and sufficient reason of the opposite conditions of good and evil, as they are exemplified among men:

Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.

. . . we have only to recall to our minds the earlier teaching of the apostle as to the intrinsic qualities of corrupted nature, in order to see clearly that, independently of positive judicial blindness, -- itself the beginning of that everlasting punishment which is awarded to obdurate sinners, -- whenever God refrains from *softening* the heart, he *hardens* it:¹⁶ i.e. if left to its natural tendencies, the various dealings of God, whether in goodness or in judgment, serve only to evince more decidedly the native contrariety of the unregenerate will to that of God. For, as has been shown already, the natural mind can never be subject to the Law of God.

14. Compare Psa. 136:10-21, where Jehovah's mercy to His chosen is declared to be the motive and measure of His righteous acts of judgment, whether upon the Egyptian or the Amorite.

15. *Notes and Reflections on the Epistle to the Romans*, London: Yapp, pp. 192-194.

16. If He leaves it to itself, He suffers it to harden, and is so said by His own act to harden it. In Rom. 1 & 2, the same point is clearly illustrated. In Rom. 1, it is God who gave up the Gentiles to a reprobate mind; but it was through their own lusts that their dishonor came. And so in Rom. 2:5, the hardness and impenitency of men are charged entirely upon themselves.

Accordingly, this mode of expression is continually employed by the Spirit of God, when describing the way of evil men, whether Jew or Gentile.¹⁷ So long as Israel remains under the old covenant, the heart of the nation is declared to be a *stony* heart, to exchange which for a heart of flesh is the promised effort of regenerative grace (Ezek. 36:26). While the special visitation of judicial blindness is announced in such words as these --

He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart," &c. (John 12:40),

the cause of their infatuation is by the same Spirit referred solely to themselves:

They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, *they made their hearts* as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law and the words (Zech. 7:11, 12).

For it is a fearful truth, that the more plainly and directly the voice of God addresses itself to the natural heart, the more decided and manifest will be the evidences of intentional resistance to His will. And so it is that we find the same repentant people, who, when their eyes are opened to behold the Light of Israel, make such confessions as these: --

All we like sheep have gone astray -- *we have turned* every one to his own way, &c.;

expostulating with Jehovah when first awakened to a sense of their ruin and distance from Him in the following strain: --

O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" &c. (Isa. 53:5, 6, and 63:17; cp. also 64:6).

So true is it, that when that "strong delusion" comes, which is to seal up for judgment those who have so long trifled with the overtures of grace, the depraved will of man will be the ready medium through which the art of the deceiver will effect his aim. If men are led to destruction, it is by the cords of their own unhallowed lusts.

We have seen thus how the sovereign attributes of elective purpose, of absolute mercy, and of judicial power, not only appertain to God, but are severally associated with His name as the God of Israel, the pledged fulfiller of the mercy promised to the fathers.¹⁸

To be continued, if the Lord will.

Ed.

17. Though more frequently of the Jew, as might be expected; inasmuch as it was the position of the latter, as standing in a covenant relation to God, that gave such occasion for the manifestation of this hardness.

18. *Op. cit.*, pp. 194-196.

“That They All May Be One”

The Good Shepherd -- He who gave His life for the sheep -- foretold that there should be one flock, and one Shepherd. He died, not for Israel only,

but that also He should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad {John 11:52, 53}.

Before His death -- even upon the self-same night in which He was betrayed -- Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven, and prayed, not only for those whom the Father had already given Him (John 17:9, 10), but also for *all* who should believe on Him through their word (vv. 20, 23 --

that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.

At the moment when He thus pleaded with His Father, concerning us who believe, he knew perfectly well that, after He had died for our sins, had risen again for our justification, and had ascended to the right hand of God, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, would come. He had so taught His sorrowing disciples (John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7). He also knew (although He had not revealed this result as yet), that at the coming of the Holy Spirit, all that believe would be baptized into one body, and be thus brought into special relationship with Himself, as also with one another; every one members of that one body, He Himself the glorified Head, and they, in Him, members one of another (Rom. 12:5). To this unity, so wholly of God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, for the glory of the risen and ascended Christ, *man's* will or power can have nothing to say, any more than he can have to say to his own salvation.

Did any earthly parent ever express a wish that his sons and daughters might become members of one family, and be brought into relationship one with another? They are this already by birth. What a parent desires is, that his family may be manifestly one in everything answering to, and corresponding with, their relationship to himself, and with one another. And it rejoices his heart if he finds, in the course and actions of every member of his household, the practical fulfilment of so cherished a desire.

Before, then, the full result of the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth was made known, our Lord Jesus, in infinite wisdom and infinite love, prayed the Father that *all believers might be one*. Not simply that they might be *one* in purpose, *one* in desire, *one* in action, of *one* accord, of *one* mind, of *one* heart and of *one* soul, but above and beyond all these, that

they might be ONE, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee,

-- and this on earth, that the world may believe that the Father sent Jesus. ONE not so much for their peace and blessing, as for His glory. So blessedly and

practically ONE that their every thought, word and deed might not only beautifully answer to the exalted relationship into which they should be brought, but be a standing witness to His praise in a world that crucified Him.

Although the *family unity*¹ (i. e., the unity of the household of God), is not to be confounded with the “unity of the Spirit,” or the truth of “the one body,” the former must never be lost sight of in zeal for the latter. We are, as children of God, responsible to promote family unity, for if discord and strife divide the children of one family, it is in vain to hope that that family can be recognized as *one* in any other relationship.

Our Lord has commanded us to love one another, as He loved us. If we keep His commandments, we shall abide in His love, and our ways, words and actions will testify to our unfeigned desire to promote the family unity, as an essential element in the endeavors to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Let us never forget we are children of *God*, as well as members of the body of *Christ*.

Historically, we know that the church was no sooner formed, than the adversary commenced to attack it. Despite all his efforts, as detailed in Acts 4,

the multitude of them that believed were of *one* heart and of *one* soul . . . and great grace was upon them all.

Foiled, yet determined if possible to thwart the purposes of God, he attacked it with deeper subtlety from within (Acts 5 and 6). After this Stephen was martyred, and those that believed were scattered abroad by persecution, but Saul's conversion showed that the Lord was working with them, and we read,

Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

Thus far, all who believed were *one*, not intrinsically only, but practically.

It was after God had opened the *door of faith* to the Gentiles that the enemy imagined a mischievous device. He would raise a question, by pressing which, he hoped to break up the family unity, and to sow discord among brethren.

It was *by the enemy* (Gal. 2:4), and not *by the Spirit* of God that the question of circumcision was raised. Though division appeared imminent, the Lord Himself directed the way for its settlement (Gal. 3:1, 2; Acts 15:2), and the Spirit of God so guided and controlled “the Apostles and elders, *with the whole assembly*,” that the question was divinely settled to the great comfort and

1. {Actually, for clarity it is helpful to speak of family *oneness* in John and speak of *unity* in connection with certain truth unfolded by Paul.}

joy of all (vv. 22-31). The church then knew her responsibility to act as “the whole church” in the locality in which God had gathered it; and, despite the enemy’s malice, if the church had never left her “first love,” never abandoned her first principles, she would have continued as “the whole church,” even though, as in Jerusalem, there were many thousand believers meeting in private houses or in upper rooms. Only unbelief can say, How could it possibly be? Is God the Holy Ghost unequal to maintain the integrity of that for which Christ died? for He died, not only to save, but to *gather into one* those whom He saved. Has the Head ceased to care for His body? Has the Father provided ought for one member of the household of God, which He has not provided for all its members? “Drink ye ALL of it,” said the Lord Jesus Christ, as He gave the cup to those beloved ones who were gathered round Him, when He instituted the feast of remembrance (Matt. 26:28). “And they ALL drank of it” (Mark 14:23). So the Apostle --

For we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are ALL partakers of that one bread {1 Cor. 10:17}.

Is it asked who now are the “all”? None less, and none more, than those who by one Spirit are ALL baptized into one body, . . . and have been ALL made to drink into (or of) one Spirit {1 Cor. 12:13}.

The Word of God alone gives the charter of privileges to the saint of God, and *can alone rescind any of them*. Disobedience to the Word of God, persisted in, calls for separation. “I have given them Thy Word,” . . . “they have kept Thy Word,” the Lord could say of His own in John 17. No less is worthy of Him now, and no less will satisfy His heart now (Rev.3:8).

Men press for a slight departure from the Word, but the point once conceded, the path is downward. It was the devil who first raised the question, “Hath God said?” We are not ignorant of the enemy’s devices. If he can foster a sectarian spirit, and tempt saints to act as if the narrow path is narrower than it really is, or if he can lead them to count the narrow path wider than the Word of God declares it to be, is it not that souls may be entangled in a yoke of bondage, or seduced into walking disorderly, contrary to the written Word? Or further, if he can beguile souls into unduly exalting some favorite doctrine as a rallying point instead of CHRIST, and shutting out or shutting in all outside or within the rays of that particular doctrine, does he care what that doctrine may be? Nay, the higher the truth the better suited for his purpose; for the body gathered round it just be less than the “one body,” and that is division, not unity.

There were at least four parties at Corinth, but Paul made no attempt to decide between them. He sharply rebuked them all by the Holy Ghost, and met the whole question by asking, “Is Christ divided?” (1 Cor. 1:13; 12:12). To this

church, in which “heresies” were imminent, for schisms were rampant {1 Cor. 11:18, 19}, the apostle wrote,

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Alas! is not this Word and will of the Lord everywhere set aside most grievously? Not only in large towns, but even in small villages, believers, all “members of that one body,” are content to meet in separate communities, as if these had a cup of blessing, and those a cup of blessing. Beloved brethren, there is, simply “that one bread,” and “the cup of blessing,” provided for all the members of the body of Christ. Where is the authority for diverse loaves and diverse cups? ²

And, as there is simply “that one bread,” and “the cup of blessing” for all saints, so they have but one Head. The external sign is valueless without the vital reality. While the Corinthians were saying, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos,” &c., they were drawing their own circles round their own centers, and separating themselves not only from other Christians, but, what was far more Christ-dishonoring --

not holding the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God {Col. 2:19}.

How solemn was the fruit of such ways the 11th chapter {of 1 Cor.} vividly portrays. How much was there at Corinth which the Spirit could not sanction, and which the Corinthians were to put themselves to the test as to any complicity with. But, blessed be God, it was the Word of God then, as it is the same Word now, that settles all questions. It is our only safeguard, as the Spirit is our almighty power. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, would not yield an iota of the one, or limit the power of the other (ch. 2.). He withstood Peter to the face when the truth of the Gospel was imperilled by him (v. 14), but he gladly acknowledged how the Spirit had wrought by him unto the apostleship of the circumcision (v. 8). This was *grace and truth*, and this only comes, and can come, from Jesus Christ. Grace might have tried to spare Peter the public rebuke, but truth with grace met all; and Peter retained his honored place among the saints, and, in the fulness of a restored heart, could only write of Paul as “our beloved brother Paul.”

A. J., *The Bible Herald*, 1883, pp. 95-100.

2. {What we observe is that there are, or have been, divided groups that pretend that in spite of division, they all partake of the same cup and loaf. This is self-deception.}

NOTICE: the following article by A. C. Ord did not appear in *The Collected Writings of A. C. Ord* (available from Present Truth Publishers). Photocopy it and insert it into your copy.

Practical Separation and Testimony

Heb. 11:13-16; Mark 13:31-34; Eph. 1:19-23

There is one point in Heb. 11 in connection with what we have had before us, which is, that that which throws us out of this scene as to our hopes, expectations and joys, is the truth that God Himself is a stranger in His own world. God is not at home here, because His Son has been rejected; and the effect of this is, that we who are united to Christ are thrown out of it too; but into His blessed company. It is this which has separating power with the saints.

We are so apt to look upon ourselves as losers because of this. It tests the heart continually while down here, thus proving whether we are content to let all go for Him. We gain everything.

To Abram God appeared as "the God of glory." God takes His start there with him, and from thence unfolds to him His purposes and counsels in Christ. God gives rest to the heart here by choosing us to share in His rest there; and He calls us out from this scene, separates us from what is in it, that we may be able even now to take part in that rest.

Look at the Lord in Mark 3. They said, "He is beside himself." They could not understand His blessed path of self-renunciation, self-forgetting toil in their midst. Neither can a worldly Christian understand it. And to the extent to which the saints follow in His steps will the world be unable to understand them. It is "As long as thou doest well to *thyself* men will speak well of thee."

But what are these to the Lord who take His path with Him? He looks round with delight and satisfaction upon them, and says:

Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

Priceless is that will to Him. All such as do it most near; all relationships dear and tender concentrated in one. This is the result of faithfulness to God in days of evil. Christ loves our company; He delights to have us with Him. If the church has left its first love, has Christ ever left His? He loves to have us in association with Himself, linked with Himself; and how can that be? Only in the path in which God's will is everything; His disciples had left all to follow Him.

But then comes the question, are we content to take the lot of pilgrims?

These of whom we read in Hebrews that they declared plainly that they sought a country, "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." And what was the consequence? What did God do for them? When we link ourselves with God's interests, He can link Himself to ours. It is then He is "not ashamed to be called our God." It is wondrous that God should call Himself the God of men on earth.

It is seldom God takes up people in this way; it is only with the patriarchs and David. He links Himself to the interest of those who identify themselves with Him upon earth; to those who have no home, no country, no city here, and who are content to find themselves in company with Christ in His path of separation and rejection in this scene through which He passed. If through grace I can take this place, He says of me "My brother, and my sister, and mother."

But what does it involve? Self-surrender; there must be the giving up of self. The more self-surrendered we are here, the more we are able to enter into and learn the path of that blessed One on earth, the more we are able to walk with Him in it. How did He come into this world? The manger and the cradle tell. He says of Himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart." He came as the dependent One, the obedient One. God never had but one obedient Man upon earth; never but One who always did His will, who could say: "I do always those things that please him." All else were disobedient; men were in open defiance of God; and there is not a single one of us, though saved by His grace, that does not carry the principle, the root of this in his heart. So that though we know what this path of obedience is, yet how often we get out of it. There never was any trod the earth like Him. The meekest, the lowliest man ever seen here was the Son of God.

It was just this point that our brother touched upon which I wished to take up a little. Rest we must not seek here; our rest is to come, when all will be according to God's own heart.

As regards the testimony of God, there are only two places where the apostle says he is "not ashamed." He is "not ashamed of the testimony of the Lord" in Timothy; and he is "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" in Romans. We get these two great subjects: the testimony of the Lord, and the righteousness of God, in these two epistles. How wonderful! A display of righteousness for man, and that God's own. Sin righteously met for the believer, by God taking all that His Son has done and using it to justify sinners!

Well may the Lord present Himself to Nicodemus as the only One who could tell of heavenly things, because He "came down from heaven." Thus, divine love is heavenly. (See John 3:12, 13, and 16.) Conversion is connected

with this earth; but heaven itself came down to die for me, to sacrifice itself for me. Who can tell the wonders of this love! The divine wonders and depths that we shall enjoy, as we were hearing, in eternity, all flowing to us from that blessed One to whom "all power is given."

I once saw on a tombstone a little verse which struck me,

"Millions of years my wondering soul
Shall o'er my Saviour's beauties rove."

It was not about the sinner, or even about the salvation, it was the beauties of Christ Himself. It spoke wonderfully and beautifully of the occupation of the soul through all eternity; and that is the essence of Christianity. The more I see men giving up Christianity and slighting it, the more its beauties come out; and the more the blessed Person of Christ is despised, the more His beauty comes out, too.

Then there is the other side to this path of separation on earth. We look up into heaven, and what do we see there? The glorified Man; the One who fills heaven with His glory. What do we find is the great subject there in the book of Revelation? It is the Lamb in the midst of the throne; the Lamb who was slain; it is the worthiness of the Lamb and the efficacy of His blood. And how is He spoken of? When John sees Him he says:

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.

Just as the evangelist says of the transfiguration, His raiment was "white as snow." And Daniel gives us "the Ancient of days," whose garment was "white as snow." The very selfsame words are applied to the sinner washed in that precious blood; he is made "white as snow, as white as wool" (Isa. 1). Such is the place, the portion, that He has won for me, and I glory in the means that has done it.

But this is not all; there is more than salvation. God has His eternal counsels in Christ. What is the will of God? Is it to

gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him {Eph. 1:10};

from the highest archangel down to a blade of grass? This is God's counsel as to Him who came down from heaven and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, that He might give us a place on His throne, a place in His glory. Thus is God working everything after the counsel of His own will. Thus He has

saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and

immortality to light through the gospel.

He has gained too the victory over death and the grave, and has gone up there to sit at the right hand of God. Man looks at death as the end of everything, his own complete overthrow, whereas the very first thought as to the testimony is that of death abolished, by Christ having taken His place in it. We are connected with Christ as the fruit of His death, and every after-step is connected with death, He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens.

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear." The apostle did not give way under the consciousness of the difficulties that pressed upon him. He knows that he has the spirit of "power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Therefore he says, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." He had not a fear, however things might be failing outwardly. He was not going to give up; he would maintain it in every iota, and be himself in practical consistency with it, as our brother has been pressing.

I am sure we all feel the need of more earnestness on this point; I do. The apostle, as Moses, counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Is there a despising of this world in its objects, in its principles, in its progress? Do we not too often take up a little of it? And remember, the more we meet of its reproach, the better for us; it is really a thing to be loved, to be valued, if it is the reproach of Christ.

If we are not on the ground that Moses was, counting it greater riches than all here, we shall surely be formed by the world around us. I am persuaded of this, and the more so as I look back and think of early days amongst us, when some can remember that the reproach of Christ was a thing gloried in; and now, when I look around, I see the great assimilation to the world that is coming in. What a contrast.

Surely it is for us to be refusing citizenship in this world; refusing a country, a home here. It is then God can say: I am not ashamed to be linked with those people; not ashamed to be called their God. And in the day that is coming we shall share in His throne as His companions, His bride, partakers of His glory for ever.

A. C. O. in *Food for the Flock* 8:330-337 (1882).

God's Sovereignty in World Affairs And Governments of Men

In view of current events much agitation and discussion is had among believing Christians as to what is our responsibility in the midst of this world as sojourners, like Abraham of old in a former dispensation. Are we to do as he did, arm his trained servants, 318 of his household, and to pursue the foe and deliver his worldly living nephew Lot? Or do as the nation of Israel later were commanded by Jehovah to destroy the seven Canaanite nations living in the land so wickedly? These are questions honestly asked and require Scriptural answers, not opinions. These are serious considerations and their answer will depend on how we understand our Christian position in this world as believers. Many would argue for participation in political involvement, if not in military activity also, so it will bear careful investigation of the Word and that we seek to make clear the issue on the basis of rightly dividing the Word of God as to the particular dispensation of the grace of God as set forth in Paul's line of doctrine through the Spirit.

Firstly then let us see how the title of our article has been carried out in the sacred record and -- for this we will go to the book of Daniel where the "times of the Gentiles" began (Lk. 21:24). This time period began with the final captivity of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem and temple by the Babylonian king Nebuchnezzar because of Israel's departure in infidelity to Jehovah long forewarned by Moses to happen. These times of the Gentile sovereignty run on to the present day and will until Israel's rejected King-Messiah takes His own throne in Jerusalem. (See Psa. 110 with 1 Chron. 29:23 and Zech. 6:12, 13). Turning to Dan. 2 and Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an image of five materials, i.e., gold, silver, copper, iron and lastly iron mixed with clay in the toes, we have the prophetic history of these times of the Gentiles. In Daniel's prayer of thanksgiving to the God of heaven for revealing the dream of the king he states that God ". . . changeeth the times and the seasons; He removeth kings, and setteth up kings . . ." (v. 21). Later in speaking to the king when he was about to interpret the revealed dream, he states as to the king, "thou art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom . . . and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold" (vv. 37, 38). In these two references God is attributed as the source of placement and power to the earthly potentate addressed. Later this same sovereign writes in ch. 4, after being humbled because of his pride and self sufficiency, "that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will and setteth up over it the basest (i.e., lowest) of men" (v. 17). Again this is reiterated three times by this humbled monarch gone temporarily insane. See vv. 25, 26, 32 and 35 all of similar import. Since his grandson Belshazzar had learned nothing from his father's experiences, he too is told the same thing in ch 5:21 but with a different, final result for he was slain that

very night in unrepentance (v. 30).

Consider now an earlier illustration of our premise, namely king Saul of Israel. The people desire a king like the nations rejecting Jehovah's direct reign over them. (See 1 Sam. 8:5b with 12:12b). Compare with these 1 Sam. 12:6 and 11, "the Lord advanced Moses and Aaron," "the Lord sent Jerubbaal . . ." Now 1 Sam. 12:13 states ". . . The Lord set a king over you." In view of his selfwill in 13:13 by offering sacrifice he is told his kingdom will not continue and ". . . the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people . . ." (v.14). All this shows by Whom rulers are instituted and disposed. See later as to this same rebellious king Saul, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king. (vv. 22, 23). Going to the prophet Hos. 13:9-11, speaking of this kingship and their asking for one, "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in My wrath" (v.11).

Turning now to the NT, we are made clearly aware of His sovereignty in rulership choice. Rom. 13:1 states, ". . . there is no authority except from God; and those that exist are set up by God" (JND trans.). This was written when Nero, one of the worst of Roman rulers, sat in the throne of absolute authority. 1 Pet. 2:13, 14 again state "submit . . . to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him . . ." Compare our Lord's word to Pilate as to Divine source of power in John 19:11. Peter's admonition was written shortly before he was to suffer martyrdom at the hand of the very one to whom he called for submission as in our Lord's case also.

Further, we are called upon to pray for those in authority not that they be removed but that they may be saved and that we lead quiet and godly lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom we are to shine with good works and glorifying God our Father. See Phil. 2:14-16 and Matt.5:16. along with 1, Tim. 2:1-4. Authority has been delegated to earthly rulers, masters i.e., employers, parents in the home, husbands in the marital relationship (this is a tough one for feminists and women's libbers) and to elders, i.e., overseers in the assembly of God, as the following list will show from Scripture:

- I. Earthly rulers: Romans 13:1-5; 1 Pet. 2:13,14; Titus 3:1.etc.;
- II. Masters or Employers: Eph.6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25; Titus 2:9,10; 1 Pet. 2:18. etc.;
- III. Marital headship: Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:1. (See 1 Cor.11:3 for order in subjection.);
- IV. Parental oversight: Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Tim. 3:4;
- V. Elder oversight: Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Cor. 16:15, 16;
- VI. Assembly authority: Matt. 18:17, 18; 1 Cor. 5:4, 5, 12, 13.

Finally and most important,

VII. to Deity; James 4:7.

A careful study of the above from God's word of absolute authority will cause us to keep short account with ourselves as rebels by nature from Adam, so that these injunctions for our good are carried out in the Spirit's power by obedience in love to the One Who was voluntarily subject in Manhood to God His Father (Heb. 5:7-9), as our example of humility and subjection, that God be honored in all things and there be no occasion for the Enemy to speak evilly. Indeed, we are sanctified unto the obedience of Christ (1 Pet. 1:2); i.e., our obedience is as His was. Amen.

Having considered the Christian obligation toward those placed by God above us for our good, we will now consider the only exception where obedience to a higher claim, i.e., God's call to us does not answer to the normal command to obey authority. For two examples of this exception, turn to Acts 4:18-20 and 5:27-29. In each of these cases with the apostles, concerning the authority who commanded them not to speak and teach in His Name, they replied that the higher Power had commanded them to do so (see Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:6, 47; Acts 17:30). This contra-obedience is applicable in all relationships of life and no plea of normal submission must be resorted to as an excuse to do otherwise than obeying Him, the supreme Authority. See its effects in reference to Matt. 10:34-37.

Having set all this Divine instruction as to God's sovereignty and our submission to it let us ask the question of how this fits in with a democratic government where individual rights are constitutionally guaranteed and the right to choose our rulers or set them aside by vote. Is the Christian called to exercise this power as a believing Christian or not? To understand this question we must know our position in this world as Christ's followers, to act Scripturally. Here, may entertain diverse judgment.

Our position in Christ as "in the heavenly places" is set forth Ephesians where our corporate relationship is seen of Christ and His assembly as house-building (2:21), temple, and later as a Spouse relationship (5:23-3). Eph. 1:3 speaks of our position as a heavenly one in contrast to an earthly one, and also our warfare being in the heavenlies; being spiritual, not fleshly (Eph. 6:12 with 2 Cor. 10:3, 4). Linking this with Phil. 3:20 where our citizenship is likewise spoken of as in heaven, we are told in Gal. 1:4 that He has delivered us from this present evil age. So though we become members of a nation on earth by birth from earthly parents, it is superceded by our belonging to another, even to Christ as born from above, i.e., of a heavenly origin. So, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new" (2 Cor 5:17). See also Gal. 6:15 with 1 Cor. 15:47, 48. All this speaks of a new and higher relationship linked with a new Headship in Christ. Now what is the position of this new head of a new

Creation with respect to this present world? He has been rejected and cast out by both Jew and Gentile and Satan has become both prince and god of this world-system down here (2 Cor. 4:1, 4; John 12:32 with Eph. 2:2). We are here, then, to testify in identity with a Person Who is cast out as the rightful Heir and Who sits on His Father's right hand until His enemies be made His footstool (Psa. 110 and 2:1-12). He has not commissioned us to change the *status quo* as He said to Pilate in John 18:38 -- and the servant (us) is not above His Lord. How can a believer be a part and parcel to a political party or platform composed of unregenerate men capable as they may be, or even moral, or God fearing to a limited extent? We are spoken of in 1 Peter as "pilgrims and foreigner" or "aliens" in this world where we sojourn. Abraham is called "the Hebrew," which translated means, "sojourner" or "pilgrim," since he was in the land of Canaan, that by Divine appointment was his, and his descendants of promise, i.e., Isaac and Jacob with his twelve sons. In 2 Tim.2:4 Paul uses an illustration of an enlisted soldier who is under the authority of his superior. The word "warreth" is better rendered "goes as a soldier" so he does not entangle himself with the outside world, "that he may please him who has enlisted him." The allegory pictures our relationship to this present evil world as strangers along with our rejected Lord. Gal 1:4 speaks of us as "being delivered from this present evil age."

The practical application of this is our Lord's prayer in John 17:14, 16 where He says twice, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." Yes we are in it temporarily 'til called out of it by His return for us or when falling asleep through Jesus. In the meantime we carry our God-given responsibilities as husbands, wives, parents, children, servants, and subjects in this world and are not to ignore them. All these relationships are recognized as earthly institutions for our good.

As a sad example of a believer getting entangled in this world's affairs, we see Lot dwelling in Sodom and sitting in the city gate -- the place of judgment by city fathers (Gen:19:1). He had become so conformed to the present condition in Sodom that he lost his influence with his own kin. With Col. 3:1-3 and Rom 12:1, 2 before us, we are called to a practical response to our position in Christ in the heavenlies. True, Scripture doesn't spell out not voting *per se* but leaves the soul in exercise about its legitimacy by our identification outside this world system with a Christ rejected even in the house of His professed adherents, so-called Christians -- but of a largely empty profession.

With coming judgment upon this fast developing open apostasy (falling away from the Faith) how we need more than ever to know our place and act upon it in obedience, cost what it may as a cross to bear (Luke 9:23; 12:27; Matt. 10:38). We are to go forth unto Him without the Camp bearing His reproach (Heb.13:13,14).

One more thought, secondarily, as to the forms of government assumed by men for their governorship. Dan. 2 gives the dream of Nebuchadnezzar concerning the image of four metals starting with the head of gold and descending down to the toes of part iron and part clay, the latter not even being metal but often used to make the mold for metal castings. What do we learn from this picture image? In Daniel's interpretation he states that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold, which was absolutism, i.e., imperial rule and what is called modernly called dictatorship (Dan. 2:38). Then we read next of the Persian kingdom represented by silver, precious but inferior in value to gold. This is called later in Dan. 6:8, "the LAW of the Medes and Persians which altereth not." Dan. 2:39 speaks of this form of government as "inferior" to the imperial form. It represents the joint rule wherein we have an "oligarchy," i.e., the rule of a few by law rather than one potentate.

Next we have the copper (brass) of Greek rule wherein we see a republican, i.e., representative government for the people but not the people directly ruling. Again, it is an inferior metal type (Dan. 2:39).

Coming down to the two legs, the metal is not precious at all but "strong" as iron is (Dan. 2:40), representing Rome that went from republican to imperial in form, historically. Rome was famous for its invincible and crushing power subjugating all resistance.

Iron has no real intrinsic value except for its strength character.

Finally we have a mixed condition of this iron form with clay. What does this kind of mixture suggest? Turning to Isa. 57:20 we read of the wicked likened to the restless sea whose waters cast up dirt and mire, figures representing peoples *per se*. See also Rev. 17:15, where the same figure of waters is given as representing the nations and peoples thereof. Bringing this figure into the mixture of iron with clay in the toes, the latter would represent democracy or "People rule." We have examples of this in the French Revolution, 1789, Russian Bolshevik of 1917, where Royalty was brutally done away with to give place to mob rule, and finally developing in turn to a dictatorship -- to which democracy tends finally; i.e., Napoleon, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, etc.

We may conclude from this that democracy is the lowest form of human government and tends to anarchy (no rule) and then to dictatorship necessarily. The famous Scottish author, Thos. Carlyle (of the 19 century) said: "Anarchy among rulers leads to tyranny, tyranny among the people leads to anarchy."

In the Theocratic (God-ruling) kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ we have a perfect monarchy-oligarchy-aristocracy kingdom, the God-Man Christ and His chosen associates called "princes" (Isa. 32:1, the Redeemed by His blood Rev. 1:5b and 5:9, 10; 20:4; etc.). The present is, for believing Christians, suffering time; later it will be reigning time. See Paul's rebuke to the carnal Corinthian believers on this very subject (1 Cor. 4:8-16). Even though the modern

democratic process gives all citizens the right to vote, it does not carry with it the responsible necessity to do so in the light of our spiritual position in this present evil world as pilgrims (passengers through) and foreigners (aliens). See 1 Pet. 2:11. The Lord enable us through grace to identify with Him in loving obedience to His revealed will in this dispensation of the grace of God. Amen !

T. J. Knapp, July 2003.

Some Thoughts on the Shipwreck of Acts 27

There are three persons named and one unnamed on board the ship which would suggest some typical pictures of the present, professing testimony of Christian times.

1. Paul the apostle -- the Word of God (he speaks four times). See 1 Cor. 14:37;
2. Aristarchus ("best ruler" Gk.) -- the Holy Spirit (He says nothing audibly);
3. Luke ("The beloved physician," Col. 4:14) -- the healing, recovering ministry of God's Word. (He is not mentioned by name but is the writer of the account (Acts 1:1 with Luke 1:3).
4. Julius-- the governing powers of this world representing God and to be obeyed under condition as unto God Supreme (Acts 4:18-20 & 5:27-29).

A. That Paul is the real voice of God in the purposed journey is evident as he speaks throughout in warning (v. 21), rebuke (v. 22-25), encouragement and edification (v. 26). See also 1 Cor. 14:3; 2 Tim. 4:2. Note verses 31-34 of our chapter (the Word), then his example (v. 35; 2 Tim 3:10 and Phil 3:17.)

B. Aristarchus is only mentioned once by name and he speaks of the place and unseen authority/sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in the Assembly of God -- but not a Person to address, being a Servant-Sovereign. Follow this line in these Scriptures: John 16:13-15 (JND trans.); also 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:19; Heb. 2:4; 1 Cor. 14:3-11, 13. So we do not pray directly to the Holy Spirit though recognizing His being a Person in the Triune Godhead: See Acts 5:3, 4 as confirmation of this as He is a Divine Person lied to by two disciples.

Our act of praying is IN the Spirit not TO Him. See Eph. 6:18; Jude 20 and Rom. 8:26, 27.

C. Luke who is the inspired writer of the evangel record under his name and the book of Acts is on board with Paul as he speaks in the record as "We" and "us" (vv. 1-7, note) and so throughout the narrative. Interestingly, and showing the Divine inspiration of the book, though Luke was a physician, not a cartographer,

his discription of the landmarks are perfectly accurate as has been demonstrated. So a doctor must diagnose the condition perfectly for proper healing and this the Holy Spirit through the Word does in Divine ministry through vessels of mercy and truth. See Rom. 9:23; 10:14, 15; 2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:9, 10.

“Lo, from vessels earthen only
Shining forth in ceaseless grace,
Reaching weary hearts and lonely,
Beams the light from Jesu’s face!”

D. Julius, as pointed out, represents human government as ordained of God (Rom. 13). Of these rulers, or those sent by them, we are told in Prov. 21:1 that they are under God’s direct control. He can turn their decisions to work His sovereign will for our good. See as an apropos example right here in our chapter (v. 3), “And Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends and refresh himself” (JND trans.). And turning to the OT we have God’s working on the heart of Darius I to seek deliverance for Daniel from the lion’s den though he was thwarted by the law of the Medes and Persians that was inflexible and unchangeable, and such a law as he was tricked into authorizing by his pride -- no doubt repented of (Dan. 6:14-24). We have other instances later with Cyrus, foreordained to proclaim the restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem, who went further in his decree by giving orders to those whose hearts might stir them up to help materially (Isa. 45:1-4 and Ezra 1:1-4, 7, 8). So also later in the beautification of the rebuilt Temple, Artaxerxes granted Ezra’s request (Ezra 7:6, 11- 27). The same experience Nehemiah had some time later with the same king, (Neh.2:1-4, 8b). All this is teaching us to rely on God’s controlling of affairs and not to be anxiously trying to work out things by our own powers (votes, petitions, demonstrations, etc.), but rather to pray for such whom God has set over us (1 Tim.2:1, 2). It gives great calmness under most stressful conditions. See also in our chapter, Acts 17:42, 43, how God is for us in men’s decisions. Our faith is strengthened when we see God working in matters beyond our control as both Ezra and Nehemiah exclaimed in praise and thanksgiving (Ezra 7:27, 28; Neh. 1:11 and 2:8b, 18).

Note also how the Jewish captives in Babylon were to pray for their captors and for the city where they were captive (Psa. 122:6 and Jer. 29:7).

The Lord help us to be more sensitive and in tune with His revealed will in the Word of God; Amen.

Thomas J. Knapp

Doctrinal Definitions

1. PURCHASE means that Christ’s blood or death has bought the world, and all that are in it, to Himself and to God. See Matt. 13:44; 1 Cor. 6, 7 ; Heb. 2:9 ; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9, 14:3. But there is this difference, that the believer owns the

purchase, the unbeliever disowns it, and denies Him who purchased all by His blood.

2. REDEMPTION is by power founded on the shed blood of the lamb, as we see in Ex. 12-14. By the resurrection of Christ the Christian now knows this for his sin, that is, for his soul, and will know it for his body when Christ comes again, who will make it good for Israel in the day of manifestation.

3. RECONCILIATION is the bringing back to God what had been severed by sin, and this is applied to both persons and things, as we see typically in Lev. 16, doctrinally in Col. 1.

4. ATONEMENT consists of the two parts, united for us in the bullock, analyzed for Israel in the two goats of Lev. 16, which set forth Jehovah’s part in propitiation, the people’s in substitution.

5. JUSTIFICATION means that the believer in Jesus, though in himself ungodly, and confessedly so, is accounted righteous with God by virtue of the work of Christ, the full measure of which is Christ risen from the dead (1 Cor. 1, and 2 Cor. 5).

6. FORGIVENESS is the remission of the sins of those who believe in Jesus through faith in His blood; not their pretermission merely, as of old, but their remission (Rom. 3).

7. SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit is the setting apart to God of all that are born of God, to obey as Christ obeyed, and the sprinkling of His blood (1 Pet. 1); and this personal or absolute sanctification is followed up by practical sanctification in the measure of their faith, and therefore relative; it should also be progressive. There is also a position of sanctification by blood in Heb. 10, which might not be vital, and hence be lost.

8. ADOPTION, in the Christian sense, is the sonship which the believer receives as his new relation to God through faith in Christ Jesus.

9. PERFECTION means that full growth, which is the characteristic of the Christian who goes on from the elements of truth in Christ after the flesh to Him, dead and risen, and ascended to heaven, and our place in Him.

10. GLORIFICATION means the application to our bodies of that power of Christ risen, which will conform us completely to His image in glory (Rom. 8; Phil. 3).

11. REGENERATION goes beyond “new birth” in John 3, which is a change purely subjective, and was always true of saints since the fall, where *παλιγγενεσία* is objective and imperfect; that change of place only which enables one to say, “I am in Christ a new creation, old things have passed away; behold all things are become new.”

W. K., *The Bible Herald*, 1877, pp. 234, 235.