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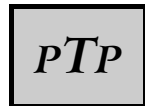
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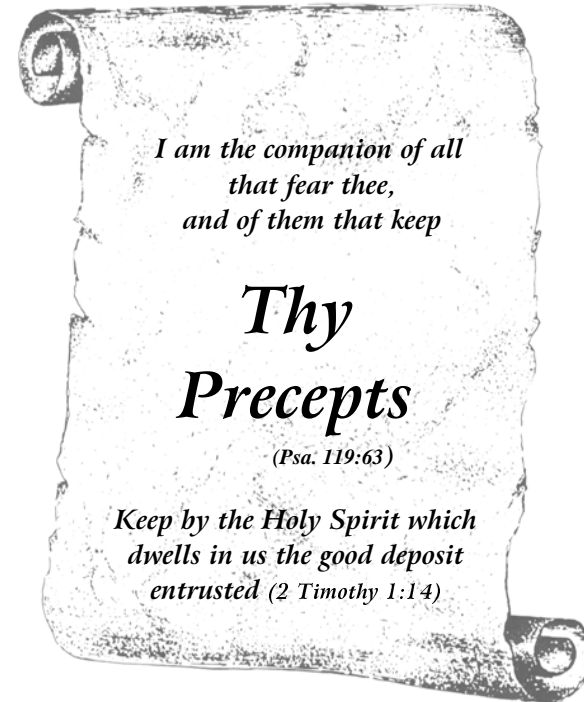
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*The Christian's Heavenly Place and  
Calling Eviscerated by Messianic Judaism*

## Chapter 6

### Christian Jews Now

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" has *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 for in Judaism. The worship was now 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). 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 a false notion. Moreover, it is a patent pretense, for Christianity has no earthly tabernacle service and no earthly temple and its earthly service, nor do Messianic Jews have these 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 -- 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."

### *The Status of the Christian Jew*

*Help and Food 15:169-186 (1897)*

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be ONE FLOCK (Gk.) and one Shepherd (John 10:16).

And that He might reconcile both unto God in ONE BODY by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:16).

The question has been raised, no doubt with the best intentions and by godly sincere persons, whether the Jew by virtue of his birth, may not continue after his conversion to Christianity to consider himself still a Jew and to observe the ordinances, such as circumcision and the passover.

It is the object of this present paper to examine the question simply in the light of the word of God. Of its importance many we believe can scarcely be aware, for it involves the very truth of the Church of God in its corporate testimony upon earth, and, if carried to its legitimate results, in its unique and heavenly glory as well.

Let us begin by asking what is Judaism and what is Christianity, and what is the connection between the two.

Judaism is the name given to that system originally established by God in relation with His covenant people Israel, but which, as its name implies, had come to mark the disruption of the twelve tribes, and the consequent annulment of that covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). Naturally this annulment was, to outward appearance at least, gradual. Practically this covenant was never fully established with the nation, for they apostatized and set up the golden calf before Moses had brought the tables of the covenant into the camp (Ex. 32). God's relation with the people was at that time marked by the removal of the tabernacle or tent to a place outside the camp afar off (Ex. 33:7). It will be interesting later on to connect this scripture with one in the New Testament {Heb. 13:13}.

After this apostasy there was a re-establishment of intercourse but upon a somewhat modified basis. God was proclaimed as merciful and gracious, yet as One who would by no means clear the guilty (Ex. 34:6, 7). The first declaration permits Him to go on with the stiff-necked people; the second shows the legal nature of the relationship. The effect is seen in the fact that Moses was compelled to veil his face (Ex. 34:32-35), showing that there was no full, complete restoration to God's favor. How could there be if law entered in as a factor? (See 2 Cor. 3).

The removal of the ark from Shiloh (1 Sam. 4-7), first to the Philistines' land, and, on its restoration to Israel, not returned to the tabernacle, is but

another illustration of the same truth. The relationship of God with His people was in mercy, not on the basis of mere law; and all that witnessed of standing in the flesh, such as the pre-eminence of the tribe of Ephraim, had to be set aside.

David again is an illustration of this setting aside the flesh, and a fresh interposition in mercy. Saul was king according to the flesh, but was rejected for the simple shepherd called from his flocks. Psalm 89 presents all this in a most beautiful and interesting way, which is of especial value in the study of prophetic truth regarding Israel's future.

But David was merely a type -- though also the ancestor of our Lord according to the flesh -- and when throne is established under Solomon God again reasserts the principle of the uncertainty of everything under law. See the solemn statement of this after the building and dedication of the temple (1 Kings 9:1-9).

It is significant that when Stephen reaches this point in his wondrous discourse (Acts 7) he goes no further in the recapitulation of the people's history. The highest glory which they as a nation attained did but emphasize their own alienation from God. Paul similarly (Acts 13) leaps from David to Christ. Nothing marked the interval save instance after instance of their enmity and of God's long-suffering mercy. The darkness ever deepened. The tribes -- long severed from Judah -- were carried captive by the king of Assyria, and to this day are hidden from view (1 Kings 17:6-23). Deeper gloom follows as Judah also is carried to Babylon, the temple burned and the "Times of the Gentiles" introduced. The "Ichabod" pronounced long ago, when the ark was taken captive, is now finally the doom of the nation, and Ezekiel beholds the departure of that reluctant {to leave} glory which took its flight, never to return until the nation as a nation is born again and restored, after the great tribulation, in peace and blessing in their land, never more to go out so long as sun and moon endure. Let the reader compare the following passages for one of the most solemnly magnificent and yet most mournful occurrences described the word of God: Ezek. 1:1-28; 3:22-27; 7:4-18; 9:3; 10:4-22; 11:22, 23; 43:1-6.

The return from Babylon was not a setting up again of the nation as such, but a provisional restoration under Gentile protection and authority, with no glory, no Urim and Thummim (Ezra 2:63). But had there been a heart for God, the promise of the prophet, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former" (Hag. 2:9), would have been fulfilled. Alas when the Lord came to the temple, it was but to find it a house of merchandise, a den of thieves

(John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12, 13<sup>1</sup>). At the close of His ministry He can but weep over Jerusalem and pronounce the doom upon an apostate nation:

Behold *your* house (not God's house) is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in name of the Lord (Matt. 23:34-39).

The cross is the people's answer to God's presentation of His Son, and their words, "His blood be upon us and our children," do but state the solemn and awful judgment upon a guilty people. Surely it is the mark of Cain who slew his brother, which while it preserved his life, forever branded him (Gen. 4:15) as the shedder of blood. Blessed be God, when the nation turns to Him with the prayer, "Deliver me from blood guiltiness" (Psa. 51:14-19), that precious blood which now witnesses against them, will then speak "better things than that of Abel," and the walls of Jerusalem will be built. But meanwhile Jerusalem is "trodden under foot of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24).

The first part of the book of Acts -- the first seven chapters -- presents to us the wonder of God's lingering mercy loath to depart from a people still blind and hardened. We know the descent of the Spirit marked a new epoch in God's ways -- a new dispensation. The Church, into whose character and destiny we will presently look, had its beginning at that time by that Baptism of the Spirit {1 Cor. 12:13} which is its distinguishing feature and glory. But though the new era had thus dawned, one last call is made. The gospel begins at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), and in connection with the preaching of repentance and forgiveness through the name of Jesus, His return is promised (Acts 3:18-26).

Alas, such patience but manifests the incorrigible hardness and blindness of the people; and when Stephen addresses them in a discourse which sounds like a judicial summing up (Acts 7) their answer -- final as in any sense a nation -- is to stone him, the *national* method of judicial execution (Josh. 7:25). Stephen, like his Lord, prays for his persecutors, and passes into the presence of a Christ rejected on earth but glorified in heaven. Most beautiful is it to see, rising as it were red handed from the murder of the first Christian martyr, the chosen vessel {Saul} who, arrested by the revelation of that rejected Jesus of Nazareth in the glory of God, becomes the apostle and minister of the Church, Christ's body. But we pause, ere entering upon the subject of the Church, to ascertain

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1. It is interesting to note, as an illustration of the perfection of Scripture and its absolute inspiration, that there are two cleansings of the temple: in John it takes place at the beginning of our Lord's ministry, and in Matthew at its close. This is in entire accord with the theme of each book. In Matthew our Lord is presented as King, as it were tentatively, and it is after His rejection is fully manifested that He purges the temple; in John He is seen as rejected from the beginning {John 1:11} and thus early pronounces judgment upon that which was called God's house.

the connection of the ordinances with Israel as a nation.

If our readers have followed us thus far, they will have seen the absolute rejection of Judaism as having any status whatever before God. And we have no doubt that some may say this was already sufficiently clear without taking the time to prove what all admit. Our purpose, however, has been to show that there is nothing arbitrary in this rejection, and that with it goes the whole fabric of Judaism as a system, with its ordinances as well. Let us look at this last more closely.

Moses gave unto you circumcision; not because it is of Moses but of the fathers, and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man (John 7:22).

We have here two of the principal ordinances of Judaism -- circumcision and the Sabbath -- connected with the law of Moses and yet of far earlier institution. We find the Mosaic ordinances of circumcision in Lev. (12:3, with Luke 2:21, 22): the Sabbath of course we find in the fourth commandment, where its previous observance is at least suggested (Ex. 20:8-11).

As to circumcision, it was given to Abraham as a distinctive mark of the covenant God made with him and his seed to bless them and to give them the land of Canaan for a perpetual possession (Gen. 17 with Acts 7:5-8). It was *the* ordinance of Judaism, so completely indeed as to be used as the designation of the Jewish people. (See Rom. 3:1, 30; 4:9; 15:8; Gal. 2:9, 12; Eph. 2:11; Col. 4:11; Titus 1:10.) Any one who failed to receive it, lost caste in the nation, was to be cut off (Gen. 17:14, see also Josh. 5:2-9). It was the initiatory rite in the reception of the stranger (Ex. 12:48). Other nations were stigmatized as "uncircumcised" (1 Sam. 17:26, 36; Jer. 9:26). We see thus that circumcision was woven into the very structure of Judaism as a whole. They stood or fell together.

As to the Sabbath, it opens up a most needful and important line of truth into which we can enter but briefly. It was commemoration of the completion of the work of the first or old creation: it is contained in the law "written and engraven in stones," which was "done away" (2 Cor. 3:7-11). Its observance was enjoined because of Israel's redemption out of Egypt (Deut. 5:15); it was particularly made known to that nation (Neh. 9:14). The sabbaths were a special sign given as a covenant to them (Ezek. 20:12, 20, etc). Any fancied violation by our Lord, as to the observation of the Sabbath, always aroused the special enmity of the Jews (John 5:16-18, and frequently). It is linked with other ordinances as to meat and drink, holy days and new moons (Col. 2:16, 17). It has its place with these and when, as we have already observed, the penitent nation is truly restored, the sabbath will, with the other feasts, have its appointed place (Ezek. 45:17, etc).

The same can be said regarding all the feasts or set times. They were called,

when given, "the feasts of Jehovah" (Lev. 23:2, 4, etc.); in days of decline, "*your* new moons and *your* appointed feasts" or, as frequently in John, "feasts of the Jews." Any national recovery was marked by their resumption, as the passover in Hezekiah's and Josiah's day (2 Chron. 30 and 35); or the feast of tabernacles, after the return from Babylon (Neh. 8:14-18). These will all be resumed with the restoration of the nation (Zech. 14:16, 18, 19; Isa. 66:23; Ezek. 45:21).<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile they have been set aside with the nation to which they belong, while they serve as most beautiful shadows of things to come.<sup>3</sup>

We pass now to consider the second question of our paper, What is Christianity?

Christianity is marked by two great and related facts: -- Christ glorified in heaven and the Holy Ghost upon earth. We have already seen these as marking the setting aside of Judaism; they likewise introduce Christianity. About these two great facts cluster those precious characteristics which are the unique treasure and joy of the Church: a present and eternal forgiveness of sins, justification, access, deliverance from sin, from the law; the sealing, unction and guidance of the Spirit, with His illumination and power for a walk in the world, to witness and to suffer for Christ; Sonship and Heirship, the hope of the glory of God and Himself our joy. Such are some of the special individual blessings characteristic of Christianity, set forth chiefly in Romans and Galatians. Coming to Ephesians we find a heavenly position in Christ and the believer quickened and raised up with Him and seated in Him in the heavenly places -- in heaven already, as it were. In Galatians the believer is seen as crucified to the world; in Ephesians as in a new world {i.e., new creation}; in Colossians as quickened with resurrection life, and seeking the things which are above (Col.3:1). In Ephesians the great mystery of the Church as the body of a glorified Christ is presented (Eph. 1:22, 23) -- a mystery till Paul's day unknown (Eph. 3:1-11 {Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1}). In 1st. Corinthians we have that body as upon earth, formed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, with its gifts and responsibilities set before us. Hebrews is filled with the contrasts between Judaism and Christianity, presenting, among other precious themes, the finished

2. {*The Seven Set Feasts of Jehovah*, available from Present Truth Publishers, gives the meaning, history of observance, and fulfilment of these feasts.}

3. We have but touched upon the whole question of the law and the Christian's relation to it, as a subject too large for the limits of the present paper. Its importance however in this connection is immense. Where it is not understood little successful resistance can be made against the assaults of such evil systems as Seventh day Adventism. "Are you under the law?" say they, "then keep the fourth commandment." Those who desire to look carefully at the subject will find it set forth in "The Law, the Sabbath and the Christian Ministry," "What is the sabbath and what is the first day of the week," "The Seventh day Adventists and the Sabbath" . . .

sacrifice of Christ, His priesthood, access into the holiest and a pilgrim walk here. We must select from such themes only such matter as bears directly upon our subject {though they *all* bear on it}, and this can be brought out in our third and final inquiry as to the relation between Judaism and Christianity.

Our answer is brief: They are mutually exclusive. This, Scripture most abundantly proves. We will present a few reasons for this, gathered from the general character of Christianity and the Church, before taking up the specific arguments so frequently set before us in Paul's Epistles.

Judaism had to do with the old creation; Christianity with the new (2 Cor. 5:16, 17). Judaism was promised earthly and temporal blessings on condition of obedience to the law; Christianity has received spiritual blessings in heavenly places {Eph. 1:3}, through faith in Christ alone. Judaism had to do with shadows; Christianity with the substance. The hope of Israel is to inherit their land; the hope of the Church is to be caught up to meet the Lord, and to share His heavenly glory in the Father's house {John 14:1-3}.

All are familiar with the presentation of the "no difference" doctrine in the epistle to the Romans. Jew and Gentile are alike proved to be under sin -- the one under law, the other without law. Both alike are partakers of the free grace of God through the sacrifice of Christ, for faith. The advantages of the Jew (Rom. 3) are shown to be great, chiefly because of their having the revelation of God in His word: but this only enhanced their guilt. Abraham and David, the two chief figures in the nation, are shown to have received blessing not by law but by faith, Abraham particularly having received the promises before circumcision (Rom. 4). The third section of the epistle (Rom. 9-11) is taken up with showing how the doctrines of grace, while superseding the blessings of national Israel, are not inconsistent with the promises of ultimate earthly blessing when the nation shall have repented. Rom. 11 gives us the sovereign election of God as the assurance of blessing, and not the blood {blood-line} of Abraham. Rom. 10 contrasts the faith, which accepts, with the unbelief which has rejected the Lord; while Rom. 11 declares that even now a remnant is preserved -- according to the election of grace, and therefore *not* of the first covenant -- while in a day yet to come "all Israel," Israel as a nation, "shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26).

The passage as to the olive tree is of special interest (Rom. 11:17-25). The olive tree suggests those privileges and outward blessings connected with the manifestation of God.<sup>4</sup> Its root we may say was Abraham who received the

4. {The idea in Messianic Judaism is that the olive tree is Israel. It is not Israel. If the Lord wills, we shall consider the olive tree in a future article.}

promises, and its branches his natural descendants. Israel had not continued in God's goodness and therefore were cut off from the privileges and blessings of the olive tree; the Gentiles who professed faith in Christ had entered into those privileges and were responsible as the channels of blessing to others. But it is all profession: were this not real they would be broken off. As a matter of fact the Gentiles have not continued in God's goodness and will, when the Church is caught up to meet the Lord, be broken off, as containing only the lukewarm self-righteousness of Laodicea and the blasphemous iniquity of Babylon. (See Rev. 3:16; Rev. 17.) After this the "natural branches" will be grafted in again, at the time of national restoration already frequently spoken of.

In other words this olive tree does not touch the question of nationality, but of privilege. Hence circumcision and the ordinances are not in question at all. Were they, then the Gentiles now partaking of the "root and fatness of the olive tree" would have to be circumcised.

Corinthians is largely occupied with the Christian Church and as such must be noticed later. We have already alluded to the striking passage in 2 Cor. 3 where the law is absolutely set aside for the "ministration of the Spirit," and to the fifth chapter where new creation is so strikingly spoken of. We must look for a moment at this.

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

Of Israel the apostle has said (Rom.9:5):

Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever.

To know Christ after the flesh was to know Him as of the nation of Israel, as their rightful king. In Christianity, the apostle knows Him only as the risen Head of the new creation.

Galatians is so full of the subject we are considering that well nigh the entire epistle might be commented upon. Gal. 1 shows how Paul *received* the gospel, absolutely independently of Judaism, even of Jerusalem: Gal. 2 shows how he *maintained* it clear of all such influences: Gal. 3 shows, like Rom. 4, how grace antedated all law and ordinances: Gal. 4 shows us the liberty of the Spirit and sonship as contrasted with the bondage of Judaism with its "days and months, times and years" -- "weak and beggarly elements," as the apostle calls them: Gal. 5 emphasizes the walk in this liberty of the Spirit, giving amongst much else this most pungent word,

If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a *debtor to do the whole law* (Gal. 5:2, 3).

After a few practical exhortations in the sixth chapter, he closes the epistle with

those “large letters” (*Gk.*) written with his own hand,

As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised: only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh (Gal 6:12, 13; see also vv. 14 to end).

If it be objected that the apostle in all this is referring to the attempt to Judaize the Gentile Christians, the answer must be that he is on the contrary establishing the great salient features of Christianity for all. One passage of a character similar to those to which we have alluded refers exclusively to those who are “Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles” (Gal. 2:15-21).

But if we turn to the epistle to the Hebrews we find, as its name imports, a message to those of Israel’s race who had professed Christianity, and the burden of it all is *Christ*, setting aside all else that the Jew might glory in -- angels, law, Moses, and Aaron with his priesthood, the law, the sacrifices, the first covenant, the “worldly sanctuary,” {Heb. 9:1, 2} yea, this world. As gone on high He has opened a path for those who have believed in Him to follow, and the heavenly city and the “kingdom that cannot be moved,” are just in view.

Most solemnly again and again throughout the epistle are the professors warned against going back from Christ. Who could think that there was the least thought in the apostle’s mind of the Hebrews going on with circumcision, the Passover and the like, as he wrote,

We have an altar, whereof they have *no right* to eat which serve the tabernacle. Wherefore Jesus also that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Heb. 13:10-16).

We can but pause to notice how the death of Christ, in Colossians, has taken out of the way the handwriting of ordinances: The only circumcision recognized is the circumcision (death) of Christ, made without hands (Col. 2:11-23). Most distinctly does the apostle declare (Col. 3:10, 11), as to the new man, that there is “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision.”

This brings us to the similar statement in Eph. (2:11-16) where the division between Jew and Gentile is seen broken down, and a complete reconciliation in one body (the Church) effected by the cross; a *new man* created, ordinances all set aside.

This truth of the one Body we find presented with much fulness both in the epistle to the Ephesians and that to the Corinthians. It is the basis of all true apprehension as to what the Church of Christ {of God} is. In Ephesians it is presented as in union with Christ its head in heaven (Eph. 1:22, 23); a body

formed of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 3:6); with gifts for all needed service in its upbuilding -- bestowed by the ascended Head (Eph. 4:8-13). This Church is destined to be the heavenly bride of Christ, and even now should have the affections and obedience which such an union suggest (Eph. 5: 22-33).

1 Cor. 12-14 gives us the Church as formed by the Spirit upon earth (1 Cor. 12:13) with gifts bestowed, energized and directed by the Holy Spirit. Love is the main spring of all activity (1 Cor. 13), while prophecy -- speaking to edification, and exhortation and comfort -- is to be earnestly desired. Directions as to meetings follow (1 Cor. 14). Previous to this we have (1 Cor. 5, 6) the exercise of ordinary and extraordinary discipline, and in 1 Cor. 10 and 11 the privileges and responsibilities in connection with the Lord’s supper. In short, in 1st. Corinthians we have the Church and its responsibilities upon earth, as in Ephesians we see it (largely) enjoying its privileges linked with Christ in heaven. We ask, Where is there room for any of the features of Judaism in either epistle? They are both explicitly and impliedly excluded. In both epistles the unity of the body of Christ is emphasized. How could that be where the distinction between Jew and Gentile was preserved! We have Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as the two ordinances (if we may use such a word) of the Church. How could we conceive of part of that church also observing the Passover and circumcision, with *all* other Jewish ordinances?

But it will be replied this is just what we find in the book of Acts. We must then, ere closing, look at that book.

We have already alluded to the beauty of God’s lingering over the nation, as seen in the first seven chapters, as though He would say “How can I give thee up?” This gives the key to the whole book. We see the good Shepherd leading the sheep out of the fold, so gently and tenderly that even the weakest need not falter.

After Stephen’s death the gospel is carried to Samaria -- a step off the plane of Judaism (Acts 8). Saul’s conversion is then narrated (Acts 9), while Acts 10 marks a most important step in the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile. Jewish persecution closes this part of the book (Acts 11, 12 ). Acts 13 and 14 show the gospel going freely among the Gentiles of Asia Minor, with the Gentile city of Antioch as a sort of center. When however the question of Judaizing is broached from Jerusalem, it is brought back there and settled by the apostles. Peter and James are prominent and while neither presents the truth as to the Church, both practically declare the end of exclusive Judaism; Peter even acknowledging that it was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear (Acts 15:10).

Thus far we see gradual emancipation from the domination of Judaism. Yet, respect for weak consciences is most carefully enjoined. Timothy, as no

necessity had been made of it, and unquestionably for the time being, was circumcised, in order that the gospel might go on unhindered. It reaches to Europe and great and wide-spread blessing is the result (Acts 16-19).

We have no heart to appear as critics of that devoted servant of Christ, the apostle Paul, but simply applying the tests which he himself has furnished us in the epistles, his course as he turned himself toward Jerusalem seems to have been backward. We remember that he declared that once he wished himself accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake (Rom. 9:3, *Gk.*). His love for them was a passion. Gladly would he sacrifice anything to win them to the knowledge of Christ -- to become as a Jew to Jews. In the face of known persecution, nay of what seems like actual prohibition (Acts 21:4), he pressed on, burning with love to Christ and His earthly people. Well did that faithful Lord appreciate the devotion, but alas, poor indeed was the reception given by the Jews. Instead of winning them, he stirred all their prejudices to the depths, and was thrown into prison.

Surely God overruled all this, and from the lonely prison came those wondrous epistles which set the distinctive truths of Christianity before us -- notably Ephesians and Colossians -- epistles which cast no uncertain light upon the mistakes of a love rarely equaled.

In the face of such an ending can we say the Spirit of God encourages compromise? Gently as God had led on His beloved earthly people, the break had to come at last, and we find Paul himself severing the last strand,

Be it known unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it (Acts 28:28).

Shortly after this Jerusalem was destroyed and the last step in the break with Israel was taken.

Judaism is at the present time absolutely cast off. The Jew must take his place with the Gentile as a lost guilty sinner. He finds Christ and in Him stands before God no longer in a righteousness which is of the law, but which is by faith in Christ. The apostle (Phil. 3) describes the true circumcision, as contrasted with that made with hands. He arrays everything that he might have gloried in and sets it all aside.

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews . . . but what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

It is useless to urge that this was only for salvation. This is analogous to the reasoning that the believer is not under the law for salvation, but *is* under it as

a rule of life, and both are similarly injurious.<sup>5</sup> We can understand that the timid faith of the Jewish convert might cling to the ordinances of his fathers, and it is barely possible that he might escape persecution by so doing. He would, we firmly believe, be opening the way for less worthy ones to enter the same path. But, after all, these are not the things we are to consider. We may pray for our weak brother, but we should seek to deliver him from a yoke which can but mean a failure to understand God's ways, and his own privileges. To make provision for him to go on in Judaism is but to provide for the dividing of the Church of Christ into Jewish and Gentile.<sup>6</sup>

But it may be asked what is the converted Israelite to do? The Church is divided, where can he go? Our reply must be, just where every Christian whose eyes are opened to the evil about him must go -- to the Lord Himself. He never changes, and He is just as ready to meet those put out of the synagogue to-day, as when He found the man whose eyes He had opened, and revealed Himself as the Son of God.

Oh, beloved, to be at the feet of the Son of God -- worshipers! what place have ordinances here? ❖

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5. {Messianic Judaism does say that their keeping of the law and Jewish practices is not for salvation. And, yes, the way of supporting the system is analogous to how holders of "covenant theology" reason on the use of the law by Gentile Christians. The mind-set is similar, however the systems differ.}

6. It may be argued that 1 Cor. 7:18, 19 warrants a continuance of Jewish ordinances for the new convert. Let it be noted that the apostle set aside both circumcision and uncircumcision. Grace takes one up where it finds him -- and he cannot undo the past. If married he remains so; if a slave he remains so, though he was to seek freedom if possible. But he was to go on with God (1 Cor. 7:24). Now if his original position were contrary to the mind of God, he must abandon it. Quite a similar argument is used regarding eating meats offered to idols. In one sense it was nothing, in another it was eating of the table of devils (1 Cor. 10:16-22). The most that could be gathered from the passage we are considering is that a man remains a Jew just as a man remains married -- neither having the slightest relation to God. But to go on with Jewish observances as unto God, would be going back to the flesh after having begun in the Spirit.

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

### Chapter 6

## *God's Sovereignty in the Book of Ephesians*

(Continued)

### *The Riches of His Grace in Redemption*

(7) in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of his grace; (8) which he has caused to abound towards us in all wisdom and intelligence, (9) having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself (10) for [the] administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; in him (Eph. 1:7-10).

#### VERSE 7: REDEMPTION AND THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE

In Ephesians, the subject is not the justification of the believer and the righteousness of God as in Romans. The passage is not about the sinner's need. It is about God's purpose and counsels and grace and glory, about Himself and Christ's glory and His glory in Christ. May the fact that the great supper (Luke 14) is the celebration of God's grace lay hold of our souls. It is about God! Here also the point is the riches of His grace. It is of His grace and glory that redeemed sinners be part of the display of His grace and His glory. It is part of His glory and grace that redeemed sinners be co-heirs with Christ in the display of His glory when He takes the inheritance. Jacob is part of His inheritance, but we, rather, share with Him as heirs of the inheritance noted in v. 11. The great supper was furnished with redeemed ones, and their right occupation is with the grace of Him Who furnished the great supper, not with themselves or where they came from. Does this occupy our hearts while waiting to be with Christ?

The place of redemption in the purpose of God is that the riches of God's

grace<sup>1</sup> be displayed; and, that Christ might have co-heirs concerning the inheritance which is His. Meanwhile as we await that time, we have the Holy Spirit Who is the earnest (the down-payment and pledge) of the inheritance (Eph. 1:14). Thus we have the assured expectancy while awaiting Christ's taking the inheritance.

**In Whom.** "In whom" refers back to "the Beloved." It is in such a One as that -- the Beloved -- the One in Whom the Father delights. This speaks of the love expressed. "In whom" tells us that we have redemption in Him. God connects the redemption with our place in Him. *Redemption* is more than *purchase*, or being bought. Purchase, by Christ's death, brings everything under His ownership as man, even the wicked (cp. 2 Pet. 2:1). Thus all belong to Him as property and all men are really His slaves.<sup>2</sup> Redemption goes further and makes us Christ's freedman (cp. 1 Cor. 7), though in the other point of view (purchase) we are His slaves. In Scripture usage of words, Christ's *blood* is not connected

1. There is much about "riches" in Ephesians. See Eph. 1:18; 2:7; 3:8, 16. In Eph. 1 we see surpassing power and in ch. 2:7 surpassing grace, while in ch. 3 there is the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. See also 1 Cor. 12:31; 2 Cor. 3:10; 4:17; Phil. 4:7; 1 Tim. 1:14. Such are the things into which God has brought us.

2. The following remarks by W. Kelly direct attention to a very important common fault in both Arminianism and Calvinism, and that is the distinction between purchase (or, *bought*) and redemption.

Let me then point out the difference between what scripture calls being "bought" or purchased, as distinct from redeemed. It is a familiar fact that the words of the Spirit are not really the same, though frequently confounded in our justly prized English Bible. The translators seem never to have suspected that there was any substantial distinction; and the mass of expositors and preachers have followed in their wake.

Take for instance in Rev. 5:9, "redeemed us to God." Here it is ἀγοράζω the word not for redemption, but for purchase; and compare Rev. 14:3, 4. It is, "Thou hast bought us to God." In our chapter {1 Cor. 7} it is translated aright, as in 1 Cor. 6:20. The word "bought" does not mean redeem; but so thoroughly had these two thoughts been identified in the minds of Christians generally that even the difference was quite ignored by the two parties who stand most opposed to one another as they have been for 1400 years. I refer to the old Pelagian struggle in the fifth century (between those who contended for grace in God to meet the sinner's ruin, and those who held up man's ability to please and serve God if he liked), or, when you come down to later times, to what is commonly called the Arminian and Calvinistic controversy. The remarkable fact is that both agree in taking these two words as equivalent; so that there has been no thought of discriminating, but the habitual confusion of the two ideas "purchase" and "redemption." The effect of this has been most disastrous; because it hinders, not only the settlement of the question, but all clear and sound discernment of the truths revealed. It is the confounding of the two that makes the chief difficulty. It does not seem to have occurred to any engaged in the ancient or the modern strife to distinguish between the truths conveyed by these words (*The Bible Treasury* 16:277)..

Well, it certainly "occurred" to J. N. Darby, who brought out the distinction.



with purchase; it is connected with *redemption*. Where a word speaks of something concerning the work of Christ on the cross in connection with purchase (or, bought), the word death is used. He has purchased all things by His death; His saved ones are redeemed by blood. Such is the exactness of the Scripture usage of these words.<sup>3</sup> Thus, as here, we have “redemption through his blood.” Moreover, *all* our offences are forgiven. What is the measure with which God has so acted toward us?

**The Blood.** That blood has all the value of Christ’s death and the sufferings under God’s judgment during the three hours of darkness. These things have the value and glory of His Person, thus they are infinite in value and glory. Such is His precious blood through which we have redemption.

**The Riches of His grace.** We want to see in Eph. 1:7 the distinction between the *glory of His grace* (v. 6) and the *riches* of His grace. Of course, both the glory and the riches are exhaustless, yet there is a difference to be observed. Because the need of the sinner is now touched on for the first time in Eph. 1, there is the riches of God’s grace to meet the need. “The glory of His grace” is the display of His purpose while “the riches of His grace” has to do with the sinners need of redemption. Thus, “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offences,” is according to those exhaustless riches.

And only in v. 7 does He come to what met our responsibility and ruin. After he has put us completely in the place as it is in God’s mind, then he says, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” It does not say “the glory of His grace” here, but “according to the riches of His grace”; it is given to us according to the wealth of God. When we come for this redemption we must come according to our wants; but our wants are not the measure of what we have got in the cross. There we have God spending His own Son for us according to the riches of His grace. When I do come to Him, I find I have forgiveness according to what God is, and not merely according to what I wanted. He meets our poverty, but He meets it according to His own riches. It is striking how every word has its weight in this passage. I am “accepted in the Beloved,” not merely that the sins are blotted out.<sup>4</sup>

#### VERSE 8: ABOUND TOWARDS US IN ALL WISDOM AND INTELLIGENCE

It is the riches of His grace which He has caused to abound towards us in all wisdom and intelligence. What exhaustless supply is in that word “abound.” It is like the work of Christ -- which is infinite in value and glory because the value and glory of His person is imparted to the work. That is limitless and unfathomable. And thus the riches of God’s grace is furnished by, and

3. These matters are considered in detail in the book *The Work of Christ on the Cross and Some of Its Results*, available from the publisher.

4. J. N. Darby in *The Christian Friend*, 1882, pp. 215, 216.

commensurate with, the person and work of Christ. Concerning wisdom and intelligence, another wrote:

σοφία is the mind conceiving all things rightly; φρονήσις is the activity of the mind seizing the objects presented to it.<sup>5</sup>

#### VERSE 9: HIS GOOD PLEASURE AND PURPOSE IN HIMSELF

Not only is the redemption, the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of His grace, but the riches of that grace has brought it about that He has made known to us the mystery of His will. God acts according to His good pleasure (and always as *light* and *love*). It is His purpose to glorify Himself, in Christ, in two spheres, the heavenly and the earthly (Eph. 1:10). See Isa. 14:26. The church is specially connected to the heavenly, and Israel to the earthly. God does as He wills, according to His good pleasure. There are numerous things which it is His pleasure to do -- and to give account to no man. See Luke 12:32; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:11; Psa. 149:4; Isa. 46:10; Isa. 53:10; etc.

Christ must be glorified in order that God be glorified.

#### VERSE 10: THE HEAVENLY AND THE EARTHLY HEADED UP IN THE CHRIST.

The administration of the fulness of times speaks of what we call the “millennium,” the 1000 year reign of Christ. At that time heaven and earth will be headed up in the Christ. The OT foresaw that the earth would be under the dominion of the Son of man (see Psa. 8), but the heading up of the things in the heavens was not foreseen. This is why it is called “the mystery of His will.” The NT mysteries were not revealed in the OT and were not foreseen by the prophets. What constitutes the mystery is not the earthly millennial reign (which *was* foreseen by the OT prophets) but the universal heading up of all in the Christ. The church as one body was not revealed in the OT, nor foreseen by the prophets. This God has made known to us -- the mystery of His will.

### *Marked out Beforehand According to the Purpose*

(11) in him, in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being marked out beforehand according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, (12) that we should be to [the] praise of his glory who have pre-trusted in the Christ . . . (Eph. 1:11-12, JND).

(11) in him in whom we have also obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to [the] <sup>6</sup> purpose of him that worketh all things according to the

5. *The Bible Treasury* 10:15.

6. Notice that W. Kelly has the word “the” bracketed. I do not know why JND did not bracket the word, yet the following quotation from him indicates that it should have been bracketed:

(continued...)

counsel of his will, (12) in order that we should be unto [the] praise of his glory, that have fore-trusted in Christ (Eph. 1:11, 12, W. Kelly).

#### IN HIM

We have noted how often we have such words as *in Christ, in whom, in the Beloved*, etc. The purpose of God centers in Christ but has its origin in Himself. It is in Christ that God glorifies Himself. Who else could secure and display the glory?

#### IN WHOM WE HAVE ALSO OBTAINED AN INHERITANCE

Yes, it is “in him” that what we have in vv. 9, 10 is made good -- “in whom” there is more yet, for we have also obtained an inheritance in Him. The thought is that we have been made to have our inheritance in Him. The inheritance involves our being placed before our God and Father as we have been considering, so as to be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Moreover, it involves sharing all that has been acquired by Christ, in whom we have this inheritance.

The inheritance is not spoken of until after redemption (v. 7) is spoken of. It is through that work that there are others who share in the inheritance. We share the inheritance; we are not the inheritance. Israel will be part of the inheritance, but the church is not part of the inheritance. We are joint-heirs with Christ. The Bride, the Lamb’s wife, will share all with Him.

#### BEING MARKED OUT BEFOREHAND ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKS ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL (V. 11)

There are three words used here regarding God’s intention.

1. The first of the three is “being marked out <sup>7</sup> beforehand”; or,

#### 6. (...continued)

Verse 11. Again we have the unusual form *κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ*. But *κατὰ πρόθεσιν* denotes the nature of the predestination, and connects itself with predestinated. We are predestinated according to purpose (not the particular purpose) of Him who, etc. And then we have again the article associated with this work in God where it has its source, and it is presented as a positive object of the mind. We are merely characterized, and our predestination by purpose. Our predestination was not *δι’ ἔργα*, but *κατὰ πρόθεσιν*, and that of Him who, etc. (*Collected Writings* 13:49).

7. In the second ed., revised, of JND’s translation of the NT, London: Morrish, (n.d.) a note remarks upon why he used “marked out”:

‘Predestinated’ refers only to the intention as to the person; but here that to which they are foreordained is still more in view: hence I have said ‘marked out.’

The third ed., revised, is dated 1884, and it omits this note. However, that edition contains the following helpful footnote to “beforehand” in v. 5:

(continued...)

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“predestinated.” This word, *προοριαθέντες*, brings before us the determinative will of God. See Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11. It was not contingently determined; i.e., it was not dependent on foreseeing some action of the alleged moral free will of sinners and that will then determining what God would do. It is solely according to the good pleasure of His will.

2 and 3. The second and third words are “purpose” and “counsel.” These two words differ in this respect, that God has an *intention of His will*, i.e., His *purpose* (*πρόθεσιν*) that He intends to bring to pass, and in doing so He acts according to the *wisdom of His mind*, i.e., His *counsel* (*βουλήν*).

Returning now to predestination, and its being “according to the purpose,” we see that the predestination is in accordance with the non-contingent, determinative will of God. Moreover, God predestines both persons and events. When predestination of persons is spoken of, what they are predestined *to* is coupled with His speaking about it. Concerning what the predestined person is predestined *to* is quite clear here:

predestinated . . . in order that we should be to [the] praise of his glory.

Note well the fact that it is stated that it is persons who are predestinated. Persons are predestinated; *and*, they are predestinated in order to be something -- something in which God is glorified. This predestination is not corporate, it is individual, just as in Rom. 9. Moreover, as we saw in considering Rom. 8:29, foreknowledge of persons cannot refer to God’s general omniscience and prescience, but it is particular and discriminatory.

Note also that we are “called according to purpose” (Rom. 8:28). In Eph. 1:11 we see that according to his purpose the One Who works all things does so according to “the counsel of his *own* will.” That excludes other wills (cp. Rom. 9:16; James 1:18; John 1:12, 13) as well as speaking of the wisdom of His mind concerning what He does.

#### THAT WE SHOULD BE TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

In Eph. 1:12 we read of those who have “pre-trusted in the Christ.” This refers to the Jewish election of grace (Rom. 11:5). These have trusted in Christ before (hence, pre-trusted) the Jewish nation does so; i.e., before the new Israel under the new covenant receives the national adoption (Rom. 9:4) when the Deliverer

#### 7. (...continued)

*Προορίσας* involves purpose. It is not *βούλομαι*, ‘counsel,’ though it is *κατά*, ‘according to the counsel *βούλήν* of his own will.’ The passive of *ὀρίζω* is ‘marked out,’ ‘determined,’ as in Rom. 1:4; here *προ* --, ‘beforehand’ is prefixed. It refers generally to persons, but is applied to things as in 1 Cor. 2:7. But when applied to persons, always, I think, adding that to which they are destined.

shall have turned away ungodliness from Jacob and all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 9:26; Isa. 60:21; cp. Ezek 20). Though those who pre-trusted will not participate in the earthly glory that shall be Israel's, there is the sharing of the glory of Christ in the administration of the fulness of times. This is implicit in having obtained an inheritance in Christ, Who is the heir of all and we joint-heirs with Him as heirs of God. Thus they will "be to the praise of his glory" for God is glorified in the Heir and the joint-heirs.

And then in v. 13,

in whom ye {note the change from "we" in v. 12} also [have trusted], having heard the word of the truth, the glad tidings of your salvation, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is [the] earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession to [the] praise of his glory (Eph. 1:13, 14).

The Gentiles are brought into this wonderful place also. The Spirit is called the "Holy Spirit of promise" so that we connect the matter of sealing with what the Spirit did at Pentecost, He having been promised to the Lord's own who waited at Jerusalem for His coming. Each sealed one is connected with what happened at Pentecost, namely the formation of the body of Christ. He has been given to us as the earnest, the pledge, of what lies ahead regarding the redemption of the acquired possession. Christ owns everything, for His death has purchased everything. The title is His. He will soon take it in power, and we with Him, to the praise of the glory of God. So, we will be manifested jointly with Christ as possessing the inheritance, and this will be to the praise of God's glory. (Cp. Col. 3:4). Is it not so that then will be manifested that the Father loves us as He loves the Son?

We are, right now, to the praise of the glory of His grace, as at this present time redeemed; in the future, at the redemption of the acquired possession, we shall be to the praise of His glory (as well as His grace).

In Eph. 3:14 we read of the riches of His glory, as we do in Rom. 10:23 concerning the before-prepared vessels of mercy. The Father already works in us (by the Spirit indwelling) according to the riches of His glory as we await the manifestation of Christ and the sons of God.

\* \* \* \* \*

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has determined, chosen, predestinated, and purposed without consulting the alleged moral free will of man towards God. Fallen man has no such faculty to be consulted, upon which God must act contingently. The invitation to the great supper only brought out that "all began, without exception, to excuse themselves" (Luke 14:18). And so we learn in Scripture that God acts freely from Himself and furnishes His great supper with those brought and compelled to come in. Eph. 1 shows the same thing, as we also saw in John's gospel, as well as in Acts and Romans. We shall

now look at Eph. 2:1-10 where again we see that all is of God -- even faith.

## *From Death in Offences and Sins to Seating in the Heavens in New Creation*

### *Eph. 2:1-10*

The various books of the NT have their distinctive character and presentation of truth,<sup>8</sup> yet form a whole. Whatever the instrument the Spirit used, He ultimately is the Author of it all. We should note again some differences between Ephesians and Romans in view of the fact that Eph. 2:1 looks at the sinner as **dead** in offences and sins.<sup>9</sup> That is not the presentation given in Romans. We have

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8. In Ephesians Christ's coming is not even spoken of because they were seated in heavenly places; and therefore all that was spoken to them was about the inheritance; the thing set before us is the inheritance in heaven, the possession, not the glory or translation. In Colossians it is "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." Why? Because they were not holding the Head, but holding angel-worship and all sorts of things. They had slipped down from the full possession of their place, and he is getting them back. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." In Ephesians they were going on properly, and he could unfold to them all. In Peter it is "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled . . . reserved in heaven for you" -- "ready to be revealed." In Peter they are seen as begotten again, walking towards heaven, and therefore the word is "as pilgrims and strangers in the earth," in virtue of the resurrection. If the flesh be not judged, one will not stand. The coming of the Lord is the proper hope of the soul to be converted to; as in Thessalonians, "to wait for his Son from heaven."

It is of the utmost importance that we should thoroughly get hold of what the church is and its identification with the Lord Jesus. Its importance may be gathered from the very many and various ways the enemy seeks to attack that truth, and it is always liable to be let slip, for it is easily lost. To have the one truth, that I am in and associated with Christ, uppermost in my thoughts, is a most difficult thing, and the easiest lost of any, because it is a thought, of course, of the Spirit, and nature will always sink the soul down into something in which it is to satisfy God. I am to understand that the power working in my soul is "according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." And it will not do if the soul has not taken up its position with Christ. One need not speak of hypocrisy, but sincerity will not do. I ought to crucify the world . . .

*Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 21:238, 239.*

9. W. Kelly wrote:

Calvinism clogs and obscures the gospel by teaching that Christ suffered to reconcile His Father to us, and by its decree of reprobation. For God so loved the world that He gave His own Son, not only that the believer might have eternal life, but that his sins should be effaced by His sacrifice. And Rom. 9:22, 23 is conclusive, that while *He* before prepared vessels of mercy for glory, He endured with much long suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. They were fitted by their own sins and unbelief, not by God, who is not the author of evil and is righteous in judgment.

(continued...)

already noted the matter of the emphasis on the purpose of God in Ephesians. And that is how Ephesians opens. Not so the epistle to the Romans. We find in Rom. 1 the wilful departure from the knowledge of God. Rom. 2 takes up the case of the Gentile condition first (vv. 1-16) and next the Jew (vv. 17-29). Then the totally lost condition of man is stated. Then we have what meets this totally lost condition, even the righteousness of God in justifying the sinner.

In Romans the sinner is looked at as alive in sins (not dead as in Ephesians). This is found in the first major division of the book, which ends at Rom. 5:11. Then Rom. 5:12 – Rom. 8 takes up the matter of *sin in the flesh*, the root principle at work inside the sinner. Sins are the fruit of that root. Sins are like the fruit on an apple tree, while sin is like the root of the apple tree. Sins are forgiven, but a nature (i.e., sin in the flesh) is not forgiven. How, then, did God deal with sin in the flesh? Rom. 8:3 answers.

“Our old man”<sup>10</sup> (Rom. 6:6) is not “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3); it is not what we call the old nature. “Our old man” refers to Adam-fallen, standing in responsibility before God to see if He was recoverable. Each person has his standing before God as in Adam. “Our old man” is a generic term referring to that standing. Rom. 6 goes on to point out that we have died with Christ. Viewed thus, that old standing is gone. We have a new standing before God. Moreover, so viewed by God as dead, we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin (i.e., sin in the flesh) and alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11). So the sinner previously alive in sins is, concerning his standing before God, dead unto that which produced those sins, and is now alive unto God *in Christ Jesus*.

In Rom. 7:7-25 we have a parentheses occupied with God’s deliverance from captivity to the law of sin in the flesh (Rom. 7:23, 24) of one who has the “inward man” (Rom. 7:22). It is part of the *ways of God* with souls.<sup>11</sup> In Ephesians we have not this dealing with man’s condition and such *ways of God* with souls. Man is viewed as dead in offences and sins and in need of the “surpassing power” that wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead and seating Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:19). Eph. 2:1-10 is an expansion of Eph.

9. (...continued)

The Arminian scheme necessarily fails by making man guilty and sinful, to go as partner with God in his own salvation. But if it be true as scripture plainly declares, that man *is* dead in trespasses and sins, not the Gentile only but the favored Jew too, that question is decided. Arminianism is farther from the truth than Calvinism.

*The Gospel of God.*

10. Such language as “my old man,” and “my new man” are erroneous. These two expressions are generic, referring respectively to Adam (fallen) and to Christ, having to do with the subject of one’s standing before God.

11. Rom. 7, and many other subjects are considered in detail in *From New Birth to New Creation*, available from the publisher.

1:19 as applied to the sinner to take him from the state of spiritual death to being seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, and being part of the new creation. There are no *ways of God* with sinners in Ephesians because it is a matter of divine purpose, choosing, predestination and God’s glory.

It is important for saints of God to understand the distinction between the *purpose of God* and the *ways of God*. These two lines of truth are well illustrated by God’s dealings with Israel in bringing them out of Egypt and into Canaan. Canaan was His purpose, and it is spoken of several times (Ex. 6:6-8; it is celebrated as if accomplished in Ex. 15:13; see also v. 17).<sup>12</sup> What about the wilderness, then? The wilderness is part of *His ways*, not His purpose. His purpose was to bring them out of Egypt and into Canaan. In Ephesians we are not viewed as in the wilderness (as we are in Hebrews and Peter, for example); we are viewed as presently seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Ephesians answers to the book of Joshua. Hence, in Eph. 6:10-20 we see that there is spiritual power of wickedness in the heavenlies, as there was the power of the enemy in Canaan.

Ephesians, then, gives us the purpose of God. His purpose for us involves taking us from spiritual death (Eph. 2:1) and seating us in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6), “created in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:10), we thus being in the new creation.

Eph. 2:1-10, an expansion of Eph. 1:19, displays “surpassing greatness of his power,” even that “which he wrought in the Christ [in] raising him,” etc. The power surpasses creatorial power that brought the universe into existence. The reason is that while the creation evidences God’s “eternal power and divinity” (Rom. 1:20), the “surpassing greatness of his power” is evidenced by bringing about the new creation, begun the instant Christ rose from the dead and resulting in His being seated above. Let us get hold of the fact that this is “surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe” (Eph. 1:19), and that this is displayed in Eph. 2:1-10. ***It is all of God!*** There is no room at all for human will or action in this.

**FREE-WILLERS SIDESTEP THE CORRELATIVE EXPRESSIONS: DEAD -- QUICKENED**

In Eph. 2:1-5 we have two correlative expressions,<sup>13</sup> i.e., two expressions that correspond to each other because they have a mutual relationship:

And *you* being ***dead*** in your offences and sins . . . has ***quicken***ed us with the Christ.

12. Psa. 78 reviews His ways with them in the wilderness as does Psa. 106; Psa. 105:39-41 only briefly mentions His ways with them, and only in the character of His provision for them in accomplishing His purpose.

13. When considering John 5:24, 25, we also saw the correlative expressions, dead and quickening.

The correlative expressions have been placed in bold-faced italics. Persons who are half-dead, or who are unconscious, do not require quickening, which means to make alive. It is dead persons who need to be made alive. The dead in v. 1 are spiritually dead towards God. Thus, they cannot exercise faith toward God. It is quite instructive that this status of deadness and the need of being made alive is in the same passage that tells us that faith is the gift of God (v. 8). We should understand that faith being the gift of God is correlative with the fact that the spiritually dead need to be made alive by the surpassing power by which God wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead. In connection with the quickening power upon the spiritually dead, God implants faith into the person. The implantation of faith has a mutual relationship with the quickening. Arminians and semi-Arminians, who all claim that lost man has free will morally towards God and has a human capability of exercising faith toward God, not only deny that faith is the gift of God, but in effect they deny that man is dead as described here -- the moral free-will idea implicitly *requires* this. Below, we will show this to be the case. ***The spiritual deadness is the context in which to view faith***, which is the gift of God. Even the good works are those “which God has before prepared that we should walk in them” (Eph. 1:10). All is of God.

Accordingly, we are co-quickened with Christ (v. 5), co-raised up with Christ (v. 6), and co-seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (v. 7). All flows from sovereign grace. All is divine action. The *purpose* of God, not the *ways* of God with His people, is seen here. Thus, salvation, grace, and faith all are from God. By the surpassing greatness of His power He has lifted us out of spiritual death and seated us in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. To bring man’s alleged moral free will towards God into this matter injects a fog, a spoiling of it. It lowers the intent of the statement in Eph. 2:7, “the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.” It is really to inject into this matter an obligation on God’s part to honor man’s alleged free-will choice. I am sorry that there are so many who cannot see that spoilation.

We ought to look at some circumventions of Eph. 2:1 caused by maintaining that man is not really spiritually dead. Most people realize that if man is really spiritually dead, then he has no moral free will towards God. Here are several ways of circumventing the implications of the sinner’s being dead in offences and sins. First, a Mennonite Arminian objects to the fact that there are those who hold eternal security and that believe that a dead man cannot repent (the position in the book that you are reading), but who nonetheless preach to sinners to “believe.” He says:

We would like to enquire as to how a dead man can believe? <sup>14</sup>

Clearly, he does not really believe the statement in God’s Word that man is dead

14. J. L. Stauffer, *The Eternal Security Teaching*, Harrisonburg: Christian Light Publ., Inc.

(spiritually, of course). The sinner cannot believe, but the sinner is responsible to believe what God has said. In preaching to sinners, it may please God by the instrumentality of the Word preached to quicken the sinner. Is that really so difficult to understand? The writer of the quotation does not believe what God has said in Eph. 2:1 -- since it conflicts with his notion of man’s free moral agency. He realizes that if Eph. 2:1 means what it states, then there is no free will morally towards God, and that faith is indeed the gift of God, implanted into the soul. Therefore, there is a need to circumvent the force of the word “dead” (and, really, the correlative word “quicken”).

Henry C. Thiessen, a noted evangelical who is not a full Arminian, has another way of supporting free moral agency while admitting that Eph. 2:1 does teach that man is spiritually dead towards God. Observe how he tries to get around the force of being dead in offences and sins. He wrote:

Although we are nowhere told what it is in the foreknowledge of God that determines his choice, the repeated teaching of Scripture that man is responsible for accepting or rejecting salvation necessitates our postulating it: man’s reaction to the revelation God has made of Himself is the basis of His election. May we repeat: Since mankind is hopelessly dead in trespasses and sins and can do nothing to obtain salvation, God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him. This is the salvation bringing grace of God that has appeared to all men. In His foreknowledge He perceives what each one will do with this restored ability, and elects men to salvation in harmony with His knowledge of their choice of Him. There is no merit in this transaction, as Buswell has clearly shown in his allegory of the captain who is beaten into unconsciousness by the crew on deck of his vessel, if that captain is revived by restoratives and then accepts the proffered leadership of a captain from another vessel who has come to his rescue. J. O. Buswell, *Sin and Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Brothers, 1937), pp. 112-114. <sup>15</sup>

Is it so, that ‘faith comes by hearing, and hearing by postulating’? Saying that a dead man can do nothing, he then invents a notion that “God graciously restores to all men sufficient ability to make a choice in the matter of submission to Him.” So, according to Dr. Thiessen, God restores the spiritually dead to a condition that actually contradicts what He has said in Eph. 2:1. And, it follows that man is not really as described in Eph. 2:1. Dr. Thiessen’s man is really only part-dead. He was dead but God put a bit of life in him -- so he is, perhaps, almost dead, but not quite. These notions are theological contradictions of God’s Word fathered by insisting on free will morally towards God. Dr. Buswell’s captain is merely unconscious, not dead. Lazarus’ case is an example of our Lord’s being both the resurrection and the life. Relating his case to these explanations of “dead” would

15. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 344, 345, 1949.

make Lazarus not really dead, actually only unconscious, and the Lord did not cause him to become alive. Really, at bottom, neither of these two evangelical, semi-Arminians believes that man is actually dead in trespasses and offences, any more than do full Arminians, as is shown by their circumventions of the force of Eph. 2:1. We reject this reasoning just as we do the Calvinistic reasoning supporting the doctrine of a decree of reprobation. Note, then, that the condition described in Eph. 2:1 requires *quicken*ing (Eph. 2:5), which means to make alive. Quickening does not mean that Dr. Buswell's unconscious captain needs a whiff of ammonia to wake him up.

Let us take other contradictions, by Dr. Norman Geisler, who considers himself to be a "moderate Calvinist" whereas he is, at best, a moderate Arminian. He considers the view herein taken of Eph. 2:1-5, "This extreme Calvinistic interpretation." His first argument is that:

it does not mean a total destruction of all ability to hear and respond to God, but a complete separation of the whole person from God.<sup>16</sup>

This fails to do justice to the *remedy*, which is *quicken*ing, i.e., making alive. This view of the matter would mean that quickening is a restoration to fellowship rather than making alive. He also cites Isa. 59:2, which states the fact of the separation. But in Eph. 2:1 we learn that man is dead in offences and sins -- *besides* being separated from God. For separation from God, reconciliation is needed (Rom. 5:10, 11; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:22). For death, quickening is needed (Eph. 2:5).

Dr. Geisler's second objection is that the spiritually dead can perceive the truth of God as evidenced in Rom. 1:20 because:

. . . God's truth is "clearly seen" by them so that they are "without excuse" (p. 58 [59]).

16. *Op. Cit.*, p. 57 [58]. D. A. Waite defines the sinner's deadness as, "We are dead in the sense that we cannot do anything to save ourselves" (*Ephesians*, Collingswood: The Bible for Today Press, p. 39, 2002). Instead of leaving to Calvinists their phrase "total depravity," he must distort its traditional meaning: "I believe in the total depravity of man, but I do not believe in the total inability of man" (*ibid.*). This is really obfuscation, thought to be clever, perhaps, but not sober dealing with the matter. The truth is that we are spiritually dead toward God, totally lost, having total inability to believe on the Son of God, for the will is under bondage to "the law of sin" in our members. Faith *is* a work, as we read in John 6:29, the Lord replying to those who wanted to know what they should do to work the works of God:

Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom *he* has sent.

Of course, without having the new nature, they could not do this work. Still, man is in a responsible position before God. Inability to pay a debt does not cancel the debt. So, God implants faith and the new nature simultaneously. Dr. Waite does not believe that the sinner is totally lost -- totally spiritually dead towards God. Dead Lazarus serves as an example for the Resurrection and the Life to speak the Word into the soul and bring the person into His presence. Such is the quickening power of the Son regarding the spiritually dead towards God.

Previously, it was pointed out that Romans views man as alive *in sins*, and fleeing from God. Rom. 1:19, 20 shows man's inexcusable guilt, for even what might be known of God, outside of the Word of God, man has departed from. This does not show that man is not completely spiritually dead towards God, which is what the author is trying to show, but the reverse! He also cites Gen. 3:10 and says:

Their reaction shows that they understood the meaning of the words.

So a sinner's understanding the meaning of some of God's words proves that he has moral free will towards God? proves that he is not spiritually dead towards God? How simple, after all, to show that *dead* does not mean *dead*, and that quicken means, well, whatever I want it to mean! I once quoted John 14:6 to an unbeliever, and reacting very angrily, he threatened to beat me up if I ever said that to him again. He said that that was my interpretation of the passage. But all I did was *quote* the verse to him. He had discerned that what was said meant that Christ was the only way to God, and he believed there were many ways. Man in the flesh *understands the fact* -- but he cannot respond in faith; he "cannot know" (1 Cor. 2:14). It is merely a fallacious free-willism notion that if the man could understand the fact therefore he must have moral free will towards God to obey the gospel. Free-willism is built on just this kind of "therefore." Thus, according to Dr. Geisler, I should have discerned from that conversation that the man was not spiritually dead-dead. Perhaps he was alive-dead. We must leave such to their free-willism reasoning.

In the third place, we have the sickness model of sin brought forward, with reference to Matt. 9:12, and the conclusion that:

In short, depravity involves the corruption of life but not its destruction (p. 58 [59]).

What *life*? He did not say. But his view is that *dead* in trespasses and offences means *corruption of life*, not that the person is dead. Is then the quickening (v. 5), meaning to make alive, another way of saying *removal of corruption of life*?

The next (fourth) objection, amazingly, is:

Fourth, if spiritually "dead" amounts to a kind of spiritual annihilation, rather than separation, then the "second death" (Rev. 20:10) would be eternal annihilation, too -- a doctrine rejected by extreme Calvinists (p. 58 [59]).

We have already noted that separation from God is true, but not a substitute for being spiritually dead towards God -- which indicates that there is no spiritual motion towards God -- indeed, there cannot be any. We reject his either/or as a ploy, not a fact. There is *now* no spiritual motion towards God by the sinner who is dead in offences and sins, nor will there *then* be any such motion towards God when the sinner is in hell for eternity -- for the very same reason *then* as now, namely, that man remains in the fixed state of spiritual death towards God for all eternity. Is God going to prohibit the sinner in hell from exercising his Arminian, moral free will, to accept Christ? Of course not. Moreover, using the word

annihilation<sup>17</sup> is merely playing with words. Spiritually “dead” amounts to being spiritually “dead” towards God. If persons cannot (or will not) understand that, it is pitiable. It is the insistence on the untrue notion of moral free will towards God that drives them to these things. In connection with the fourth objection, an illustration was given:

Like a drowning person, a fallen person can reach out and accept the lifeline even though he cannot make it to safety on his own (p. 58 [59]).

A drowning person is not a dead person. A dead person needs quickening, not a *lifeline* or a *life* preserver thrown towards him. Now, I do not accept the Calvinistic idea that Christ did not die for every person; but if He died for all, then all men were dead:

For the love of Christ constrains us, having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died (2 Cor. 5:14).

J. N. Darby has a helpful footnote on “have died”:

Or, ‘had died.’ It is the aorist, and refers to the state Christ’s *death proved them to be in*, in a state of nature. To make it the consequence of Christ’s death is, I judge, an utter blunder.

Yes, the teaching of Scripture is that man is in a state of spiritual death before God. The notion of free moral will towards God is a refusal to believe this fact.

Then we come to the final (fifth) objection:

Finally, in the parallel passage (Col. 2:12-13) Paul speaks of those “dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature” being able to believe. For he said, you have been “raised with him through *your faith* in the power of God” (p. 58 [59]).

Let us have v. 13 before us:

And you, being dead in offences and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together with him . . .

It is instructive to see what words he left out of the discussion, namely, “he has quickened together with him.” Here again we have those two correlative words: *dead* and *quicken*. The same reply may be given here as in the answer to his first objection. He has not shown that dead does not mean dead, and he has not accounted for the word *quicken*, i.e., to make alive. Moreover, he adds a piece of circular reasoning. His argument is that the presence of faith within a person proves that faith was there because of the exercise of man’s moral free will towards God. Mere presence of faith does not prove how it came to be there. Is

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17. On p. 227 he wrote that “‘dead’ means separation from God, not annihilation.” In hell the sinner will be eternally separated from God. He will not have moral free will towards God so as to be able to accept the gospel -- just as he does not have it now. Bringing in the word annihilation is merely obfuscation.

that really so difficult to understand? The truth is that the spiritually dead towards God have never exercised such faith, and for all eternity in hell they never shall. It is man’s fixed condition as totally lost, and unless God graciously intervenes *now*, the sinner will be in that eternally-fixed, horrible condition, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, cast away into the outer darkness, which answers to the spiritual state of darkness.

In Jude 12 we read of those who had gotten into the profession of Christianity who are called “twice dead.” They were dead in sins and they were also dead in their profession of Christianity. The only remedy for both is the implantation of a new life by the gracious act of God.

The fact is that those who hold to moral free will towards God do not really believe that man is spiritually dead towards God. Oh yes, they say he is dead, because Scripture so states, but they explain dead in such a way that the person is really alive. How can a dead man believe? it is asked. A dead man cannot believe any more than dead Lazarus could hear and obey the Lord’s command, “Lazarus, come forth,” but the quickening power of the Son of God is equal to the matter both in the physical and the spiritual sphere (John 5:21-30). The Son of God gives the hearing to the dead.

Finally, as we saw in the effort to overthrow the force of the word “compel” when we considered the parable of the great supper, so here we see the inability of these advocates of moral free will towards God to deal with the two correlative words, *dead* and *quicken*. They actually give illustrations of what dead means by cases of persons not dead. In the face of this sidestepping the force of the two correlative words, *dead* and *quicken*, by those quoted above -- including Dr. Geisler himself, who has the effrontery to say:

Likewise PF {*The Potter’s Freedom*, by James R. White} sidesteps the force of all the many passages that depict fallenness in terms of sickness, blindness, and pollution (as opposed to its mistaken understanding of “dead” as the destruction of ability to respond positively to God).<sup>18</sup>

Those who share the truth set out in this series of articles have no difficulty at all seeing fallenness in those terms as well as effects of sin. The problem lies with those who circumvent the truth of being spiritually dead and in need of quickening -- and it is quite clear that the truth of being dead and in need of quickening is the death knell of the notion of moral free will towards God -- and that is the reason for the desperate distortions that we have reviewed above.

Often, what is not apprehended is the distinct way in which Romans presents man’s condition and the way in which Ephesians presents man’s position. Both are true at the same time. It has already been pointed out that lost man is looked at as

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18. *Op. cit.*, p. 261, sec. ed., 2001.

alive in sins in Romans, and running from God. What he is “in the flesh” needs to be put to death with Christ that He might be alive unto God in Christ Jesus. In Ephesians he is dead and in need of quickening. It is quite obvious that if this is the case, there is no room for the notion of moral free will towards God, and that faith is the gift of God. Before passing on, let us observe how Dave Hunt seeks to circumvent the plain implications of man being dead. Keep in mind that his system does not make the distinction between the matter as presented in Romans and in Ephesians. Thus, it is said that the dead one does believe some things and that is offered in proof that dead does not mean incapacity to believe. The person is dead, but *not that dead*. The person is lost, but *not that lost*. The natural man does not receive many things (see 1 Cor. 2:14) but he receives the gospel, etc., etc. Rejecting the Scripture teaching that man is spiritually dead and cannot respond, Dave Hunt wrote:

Where does the Bible teach this? Aren't the Ten Commandments given to spiritually dead mankind and don't the spiritually dead understand the moral issues and often keep some of the commandments? Paul says that even the spiritually dead ungodly “shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another . . . (Romans 2:14-15). Doesn't God appeal to every man's conscience continually?”<sup>19</sup>

A characteristic phenomenon of this book is the many rhetorical questions, but we cannot direct faith by rhetorical questions. He, of course, has not claimed that the natural man kept all the law, that failure being fatal, of course, to the free-willers' notion that ‘God's commands are man's enablings.’ What this is about was concisely noted by J. N. Darby when he wrote:

. . . the doctrine of free will ministers to the pretension of the natural man not to be entirely lost, for that is just what it amounts to.<sup>20</sup>

Now, note how the objection reveals not seeing the difference between the way man's state is presented in Romans and in Ephesians. Another area of truth involved is that the law addressed man in the fallen Adamic responsibility as alive “in the flesh.” The way the condition of man is described in John<sup>21</sup> and Ephesians is the consequence of the end of the trial of the first man standing in responsibility to see if he was recoverable. It is in view of the end of that trial that man is pronounced dead in offenses and sins.

The trial of man under the law exposed man's state. The notion that if God

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19. *What Love Is This?*, p. 319.

20. *Letters* 3:314.

21. The character of John's Gospel is that the rejection of Christ is assumed in John 1:10, 11, and the truth presented is in view of the establishment of the new order brought in consequent upon the death and resurrection of Christ.

commands, the receiver of the command has power to comply is absurd. As in the case of the law, so when God commands all everywhere to repent, that does not imply that man has the power of moral free will towards God to comply. But this is a major part of the system -- that is, if God says ‘do it,’ man can do it, because God would not command man to do what he cannot do. We must conclude, if free-willers are correct, that all men have the moral free will to keep the law. Strange it is, then, that the best that can be offered is

. . . and don't the spiritually dead understand the moral issues and often keep some of the commandments?

That is another rhetorical question which merely obfuscates the issue -- but acknowledges that no natural man did fully keep the law.

Before leaving this, note more error packed into that brief quotation -- namely, concerning Rom. 2:14-15 -- illustrating the power of the moral free will notion to distort Scripture. The error is that they have a conscience addressed by God and therefore are not spiritually dead -- at least not *that* dead! So, what does the rhetorical question, “Doesn't God appeal to every man's conscience continually?” prove? You are correct if you said that it does not prove that because God addresses man's conscience (the Romans view) that man is not dead in offenses and sins and in need of quickening (Eph. 2:1-5 view of man's state).

And what does Rom. 2 show to be the result of God's addressing the conscience? that man responded? Rom. 2:1-16 deals with the Gentile and Rom. 2:17-29 with the Jew. The conclusion is given in Rom. 3:9-20. It is recommended that W. Kelly's *Notes on the Epistle to the Romans* be read for help on Rom. 2 and 3.

Dave Hunt's reasoning process in divine matters has even taken him to the point of denying that OT saints were born again:

Surely the new birth was unknown before the day of Pentecost, yet many prior to that time knew God and looked forward to the Messiah.<sup>22</sup>

Apparently he wants to have persons be able to know God and look forward to the coming of Messiah without being born of God. You see, then, how spiritually dead persons can know God without even being born of God? What we really see is a denial that man is spiritually dead and that he is totally lost.

The denial that OT saints were born again is stunning. Nicodemus, before the cross, should have known man needed such a change (John 3). OT saints are called “saints” (holy ones) in the OT and “elect.” The NT refers to them as “children of God” (John 11: 52; Rom. 9:7, 8). All this, we are to believe, without being born again.

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22. *What Love Is This?*, p. 321.



He quotes Eph. 5:14, coupled with numerous rhetorical questions and asks:

Are they *physically* dead or *spiritually* dead? Obviously not the former; but if the latter, this presents problems for the Calvinist. How can the spiritually dead even be addressed, much less respond and arise from the dead?

Are Christians dead and yet exhorted to raise themselves from the dead -- or are they just acting like those who are dead? . . . Or is this metaphorical language, and “dead” doesn’t really mean *dead*, but asleep? After all, Paul says, Awake thou that sleepest . . . <sup>23</sup>

He then complains that various Calvinist writings he consulted have not addressed this and thinks this odd. Though not Calvinists, we will address this simple text, though he, with all the rhetorical obfuscating, has not really explained it, but leaves it as if what he said was a crushing blow to Calvinism. The text says:

Wherefore he says, Wake up, [thou] that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee (Eph. 5:14).

Desiring to obtain something useful for our souls in cutting through this obfuscating, let us hear some words from J. N. Darby:

Thus assurance of salvation is connected with Christ, and, in one sense, it is the very essence of it; because we are brought into the presence of God, and the effect of this in our new nature, the divine nature that is in us being in God’s presence, is to make us judge about good and evil. His presence makes us judge it, just because we are there and have a title to enjoy everything that is there. If a man is walking with God, he has the light of God upon his path: no part is dark. And this is what Luke himself tells us. “The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light,” etc. “Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Paul speaks there of a real Christian who has got asleep, who needs this perfection of Christ as the light of his path. Are you then thus gone to sleep? You are not dead really as to your condition before God, but you are walking like a dead man. You must awake and rise from among these dead people, and you will have the perfect light of Christ.

But supposing I have been asleep, and I wake up and find myself to have been walking among the dead, what is the effect of this light? It is to bring in the light of God upon the conscience, perhaps to the extent of clouding all joy, or even for the moment causing me to doubt of salvation. But the exercises of the soul that is holding fast the certainty of salvation, founded upon the word of God (which is the real starting-point of the Christian, and in virtue of which it is that he gets any exercises of soul), flow from this -- that he looks at the inward state of his soul, and sees that it ought to be up to that full character of the presence of God in which we are placed. It is there that our daily exercises go on. God has brought us to Himself -- brought us all to Himself, because this

23. *What Love Is This?*, p. 321.

is the very position of the Christian. <sup>24</sup>

#### DOING WHAT THE THOUGHTS AND THE FLESH WILLED TO DO

. . . sons of disobedience: among whom *we* also once all had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh, doing what the thoughts willed to do, and were children, by nature, of wrath, even as the rest (Eph. 2:3).

“Sons” speaks of status while “children” speaks of nature. Not necessarily childish in his sins, he is a child of wrath as to his nature controlled by “sin in the flesh.” Lost man has a matured status concerning disobedience. All of us had our manner of life in such a character of disobedience to God. This involved both the “lusts of our flesh” as well as intellectual pursuits, “what the thoughts willed to do.” Our condition as lost was that we were children of wrath. In the eyes of God a person who later becomes a Christian was not different from any other sinner. All this answers to the darkness we were considering in John 1, where we saw that the darkness was the spiritual state of the lost. In connection with the sons of disobedience, Eph. 5:6-17 says:

(6) Let no one deceive you with vain words, for on account of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (7) Be not ye therefore fellow-partakers with them; (8) for ye were once darkness, but now light in [the] Lord; walk as children of light . . . (17) For this reason be not foolish, but understanding what [is] the will of the Lord.

“Doing what . . . the thoughts willed to do” (Eph. 2:3) is *not* to choose to believe the gospel. Instead, the thoughts manifested the old nature (“sin in the flesh,” Rom. 8:3) acquired in the fall. In fallen man, “sin in the flesh” controls the will, <sup>25</sup> and he has sinful desires and thoughts. Fallen man is in bondage to “sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:1-3).

Let us now turn to the matter of faith being the gift of God for those who are spiritually dead towards him and in need of sovereign quickening and sovereign implantation of faith.

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

24. *Collected Writings* 16:381.

25. Human nature, controlled by “sin in the flesh,” is often referred to as “the flesh” in the NT.

*Dr. Arnold G. Fructenbaum's  
Advocacy of  
"The Hebrew Christian Distinctives"  
Examined*

(Continued)

**IS PAUL CORRECTLY REPRESENTED BY DR. FRUCTENBAUM?**

**Timothy's Case.** W. Kelly explained the reason for the circumcision of Timothy:

“And I, brethren, if I preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?” They had made the Apostle Paul to be a sort of evidence in their favor. They may have taken advantage of his circumcising Timothy, in order to make a show of inconsistency between his acts and his preaching. But St. Paul was not acting contrary to these principles when he circumcised Timothy. It was the elasticity of a man who could stop the mouths of objectors; and Paul, to silence Jewish slander, ended that question most unjewishly -- by having Timothy circumcised. But he would not suffer it in the case of Titus, (who was a Greek,) whom he took up to Jerusalem with himself. This might appear capricious, but grace knows the time to be firm as well as to bend. There seems here to be an allusion to this, in his argument with the defenders of the law. It requires the wisdom of the Spirit of God giving one to know where one may use our liberty, or where it is a duty to stand as firm as a rock; and Paul did both. If Timothy had been circumcised, it was grace stopping mere fleshly questions, and not law, for his father was a Greek. But as to preaching it, such a thing was far from his mind. Had he ever pressed circumcision, he would have had their favor and countenance in every place that he visited. On the contrary, he was persecuted because he would not allow the flesh nor the title of circumcision.<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on Acts 16:1, W. Kelly wrote:

He was therefore not converted at this time, but, doubtless, during the former visit of the apostle, who speaks of him as his “true child in faith.” Timothy he had begotten in Christ Jesus through the gospel. The circumstances were peculiar. He was the son of a believing Jewess, Eunice, but of a Greek father, with an exceptionally good testimony from the brethren in those parts. This led to a remarkable step on the part of the apostle: he circumcised him “on account of the Jews” there, “for they all knew that his father was a Greek” or Gentile.

Now this was in no way the requirement of the law, which, on the contrary, in strictness placed Timothy by his birth in a painful and outside

1. *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*, London: Morrish, p. 135.

position. It was really an act of grace on the part of the same apostle who would have utterly repelled the circumcision of Titus; for Titus was a Gentile. Still less is it inconsistent with the recent council at Jerusalem; for the question there was whether the Jewish yoke was to be placed on the Gentiles that believed. It was decided, we have seen, that no such compulsion was authorized or desirable. Here, it was the child of a Jewess against whom Jews would have had a feeling because of his father. In all probability the father was now dead, of whom we never hear as alive, and who in that case, might have perpetuated the uncircumcised condition of his son. If the father no longer lived, Paul could act the more freely, and the same champion for liberty who refused compulsion in the case of Titus, himself took and circumcised Timothy.<sup>2</sup>

Why did Paul circumcise Timothy? “on account of the Jews that were there,” not because Timothy was under the Abrahamic covenant. Indeed, as WK pointed out, the law would expel him from among the Jews on account of His father being a Greek. The Abrahamic Covenant would not be for Timothy either. Timothy's case does not support the notion that Christian Jews are now under the Abrahamic covenant.

**Paul's Judaizing Error.** Remembering one's own failures, it is painful to speak of this failure on the part of the model Christian, Paul. Nonetheless, the following words from W. Kelly need to be brought to bear on this matter:

The glory of Christ on high is the answer to His humiliation below, whatever else may follow. Nor is there any witness to it so bright. Hence the apostle speaks of ‘my gospel’, and ‘our gospel’ where he names his companions along with himself. The gospel of the glory of Christ was given him to preach it in all its height of blessedness; and hence the danger of letting it slip, if even one that once knew it begins to preach grace at a lower level only, true as it may be. Nothing so completely lifts above the tradition and the thoughts of men.

Hence the danger even to the apostle himself when in Jerusalem. Another atmosphere was breathed there. It is not that they did not confess Jesus to be the Christ, and look for His kingdom and glory; but out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. “And they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jews of those that believe, and they are all zealous for the law. And they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs” (vv. 20, 21). This witness was true as far as they themselves were concerned; but what they were informed about Paul was an exaggeration. Whatever his sense of Christian liberty, none was more tolerant of Jewish conscience, on the other hand, none more resolute to teach the Gentile believers that they had nothing to do with law, but with Christ dead and risen. What could Gentile believers have to do with circumcision or the other institutions and customs of Israel? For heaven,

2. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, London, Hammond, p. 224 (1952 ed.).

as in heaven, all this was unknown.

As the full grace of God preached by the apostle startled not a few of the saints in Jerusalem, a gloss was sought to prove that he was a good Jew notwithstanding. "What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come. Do thou this that we say to thee: We have four men with a vow on them; these take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges over them, that they may shave their heads, and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee but that thou thyself also walkest orderly keeping the law: (vers. 22-24).

This was not strange advice for the Christians in Jerusalem to give, but it seems a descending path for the apostle Paul to follow. No one knew better than he to walk as dead with Christ and risen with Him, no one better than he to please the Lord without fear of the opinions of men, or even of his brethren. With him it was a very small thing to be examined of others or of himself. Had he looked to the Lord for His guidance now, perhaps he would have advised James and the rest to judge nothing before the time till the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall each have the praise from God (1 Cor. 4: 5). Indeed it is doubtful whether anything done as a witness to ourselves (and this seems the gist of James' counsels to Paul) is ever blessed of God or satisfies man. We shall see what the issue was in this instance.

In their past dealings with the Gentiles who believed (Acts 15: 22-29), the apostles and elders had acted with divine wisdom. So it is here added, "But, as touching the Gentiles that believed we wrote [or, enjoined] giving judgment, that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols and blood and things strangled and fornication" (v. 25). These injunctions were clearly understood before the law was even given to Israel. It was not natural religion which ignored sin and the fall. For God man needs revelation; but in such things Christianity only confirms the broad principles God had laid down before Israel existed.

"Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of the purification until the offering was offered for every one of them" (v. 26).

The apostle yielded to his Jewish brethren. It was in no way a step which flowed from his own judgment before God; and we shall see that it was wholly in vain as far as the Jews were concerned. No doubt there was misunderstanding on their part; but we can scarcely say, whatever one's reverence for the apostles, that the light of the Lord shone upon the course that was then recommended or pursued. Their conduct might not be without failure in this or that particular; whilst their teaching, beyond all doubt in what was written in the Spirit for the permanent direction of the church, was perfectly guarded from the least error. "We are of God" (said one of them): "he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4: 6). This is stringent, but it is the truth; and, if so, it is really grace to let all saints know that there is such a standard -- not

Christ's person only, but the apostolic word. If we truly confess Him, we shall surely hear them: if we refuse them, we do not really own Him Who sent and inspired them. If we reject Him and them, we are irretrievably lost, and guiltier than Jews or heathen, who had not such privileges. For the true light now shines. God is fully revealed in Christ, and the written word makes both known.

It was a singular sight: Paul purifying himself to show that he walked orderly and kept the law. He was evidently walking according to the thoughts of others, which no more glorifies God than it satisfies man . . . (vv. 27-36).

No more devoted servant of the Lord than Paul ever lived. This however did not hinder the effects of a mistaken position. He had departed from those to whom the Lord sent him, out of his excessive love for the ancient people of God. At the instance of others he had sought to conciliate them to the uttermost, but the effect in no way answered to the desire either of James or of Paul. Can we say that, in going up to Jerusalem there was such a following of Christ as he loved to commend to the saints? "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

Later in his book (p. 89) Dr. Fructenbaum quotes Acts 21:17-26 and italicizes the words "*thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law.*" After quoting the passage he says:

The believer is free from the Law, but he is also free to keep parts of it.

He is using Paul's failure to support his system but the quoted part, from James, in italics, says "walkest orderly, keeping the law," not "walkest orderly, keeping *parts of the law.*" Besides, elsewhere (p. 82) he says there are 613 laws and they are a unit. He should supply a list of which *parts* of the 613 that Jewish believers are free to keep. But what appears contradictory to keeping *parts* of it is this:

Thus if the Hebrew Christian feels the need to refrain from eating pork, he is free to do so. The same is true for all the other commandments (p. 89).

So if the Jewish Christian feels the need to keep all 613 commandments, he is free to do so. Why, on that basis he may feel free to have little to do with Gentiles! What Judaism this is!<sup>4</sup> This astonishing result we leave to the reader to try to digest. I note here that in Rom. 14, the Jewish believer who feels the need to refrain from pork on the basis of the law is called a weak brother! Dr. Fructenbaum tries to reverse this and we hope to consider Rom. 14 a little in Ch. 2

#### PAUL'S TEACHING CONCERNING CIRCUMCISION

3. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 326-329.

4. I am not saying that a Jew should not eat Matzoh, if he likes it, or gefilte fish, etc. or that he should not eat in Jewish restaurants, or that he should not speak Hebrew or Yiddish. That is all beside the point. If a persons conscience is under law, he is insofar not in practical Christian liberty.

Now let us compare some things Paul wrote, by inspiration of the Spirit, that stand in contrast to the Judaizing thing he fell into.

### Why Was Paul Persecuted If He Preached Circumcision?

But I brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why am I yet persecuted (Gal. 5:11).

Paul did not make a distinction between Jewish and Gentile believers regarding circumcision. He did not preach circumcision -- period. This is an unqualified statement.

### Circumcision is Nothing and Uncircumcision is Nothing.

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; but keeping God's commandments (1 Cor. 7:19).

How could Paul make such an unqualified statement if circumcision was something for Jewish Christians? It will not do to say that he meant this only as far as circumcision under the law is concerned, not with respect to the Abrahamic covenant. No such distinction, or exception, is made anywhere in the NT.

### Circumcision Outside of Christ?

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, not uncircumcision; but new creation (Gal. 6:15).

Perhaps Dr. Fructenbaum acknowledges that "in Christ" circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing. If so, since he attaches a "religious" value to circumcision as claiming to be under the Abrahamic covenant, he must find value for circumcision *outside of Christ*. He teaches that there is a God-approved circumcision for Jewish Christians -- and this circumcision must be outside of Christ. Let us state it in its true import. In effect, this is a denial of completeness in Christ.

### The Circumcision of Jewish Christians Denies Their Completeness in Christ.

(8) See that there be no one who shall lead *you* away as a prey through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the teaching of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. (9) For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; (10) and ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and authority, (11) in whom also ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ . . . (Col. 2:8-12).

This applies to all Christians. All have received this circumcision and all are complete in Christ. You cannot add anything to a Christian, though putting Jewish Christians under the Abrahamic covenant is an attempt to add something to them that has merit before God. To do so not only comes under the condemnation of being "concision" (Phil. 3:2), it finds its company in Col. 2:8.

### The True Jew is Circumcised Inwardly.

For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he [is] a Jew [who is so] inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:28, 29).

Here again there is no hint that a Jewish Christian needs outward circumcision to be pleasing to God. Dr. Fructenbaum's notion about Christian Jews being under the Abrahamic covenant is a fabrication, foreign to Scripture. There is no hint of it. A Jewish Christian has the inward circumcision, and that is sufficient. Likewise, the Gentile believer has the inward circumcision.

### We Are the Circumcision.

See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision. For *we* are the circumcision, who worship by [the] Spirit of God, and boast in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in flesh (Phil. 3:2, 3).

The *we* must be understood of all believers, and certainly of Paul and the Philippians, whether a Jewish or Gentile Christian. We are all classed together as "the circumcision." Here, Paul calls the Jews the "concision." This word means a cutting, a mutilation. Circumcision in the flesh, for religious reasons, is at the present time only a mutilation, like the prophets of Baal who cut themselves in their religious fervor. The Apostle goes much further than saying that circumcision in the flesh has no value before God. Circumcision has no place now since the covenant of the law was set aside. Nor is the Abrahamic covenant in effect. Indeed, that covenant was displaced by the law, not the law added to it. Now, all is in suspension while God forms the heavenly company. When that is concluded He will take up with Israel again. But it awaits the coming of Christ in glory to inaugurate the new covenant -- in which the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant will be put in force for the new Israel. The Abrahamic covenant is no more in force now than is the Davidic covenant. That also was an unconditional covenant as is the Abrahamic covenant.

Moreover, in circumcision in the flesh there is a "trust in flesh" as doing something of merit before God. All our merit is Christ Himself. His place is our place (Eph. 1:6). Nothing can be added. We are complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

### The Israel of God Is not Exempt from the Rule of the New Creation.

For [in Christ Jesus] neither is circumcision anything, not uncircumcision; but new creation. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. (Gal. 6:15, 16).

The Israel of God<sup>5</sup> is composed of believing Jews, here spoken of along with Gentile believers. However, both come under the "rule" of the new creation,

5. For more on this see, *Elements of Dispensational Truth*, vol. 1, Jackson: Present Truth Publishers (1998).

where there is neither circumcision or uncircumcision. That means that there is no distinction in the flesh as circumcision and uncircumcision as having value before God. We are *all to walk by this rule*. Our walk is formed by the new creation. There is a practical walk in this world that is thus formed. The Israel of God is to walk by this rule. Not so, says Dr. Fructenbaum, in effect. The Israel of God is to be circumcised the eighth day under the Abrahamic covenant -- that is a rule that the Israel of God is under. Thus we have noted that it is a circumcision outside of Christ and a denial of completeness in Christ. It is an adding to a heavenly people, who are circumcised with a circumcision not made with hand, that which is only an external circumcision. And, it is divisive in thrust, making a distinction in the flesh not recognized by God. It has nothing to do with such a distinction as "bond of free." Whether or not a Jewish Christian or a Gentile Christian is "bond or free" in his circumstances of life, he has nothing to do with circumcision in the flesh.

#### **CIRCUMCISION IN THE FLESH IS NOT FOR THOSE WITH A HEAVENLY CALLING**

It is the book of Hebrews which speaks of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). Among other reasons, Hebrews was written to direct Jewish Christians away from what was Judaistic. Israel had an earthly calling. And though Abraham did indeed look beyond this, by faith, and looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, yet his calling was earthly, to be separate *in the earth*. Circumcision was the token both of the righteousness of his faith in Jehovah and of the covenant God graciously made regarding him and his seed.

The law did not address believers, as such. It made no distinction between who really belonged to God and who did not. Under the Mosaic covenant, it signified the people's agreement to keep the law (vain expectation). It gave a character to the people such that they were "the circumcision" while all others were "the uncircumcised." It was a mark of separation in the world. While circumcision has a typical import and meaning for the Christian, as having been circumcised in Christ's death, concerning its use as circumcision in the flesh, it is a mark of separation in the world. It was so with Abraham as well as with Israel under the Mosaic covenant. It will be so for the new Israel under the new covenant. In no case was it in order, or will it be in order, for those with a heavenly calling. It was for those who had, and will have, an earthly calling. Thus in Hebrews, the Jewish Christians were directed to the heavenly calling and the sanctuary above, where Christ, our high priest, is minister of the holy places (Heb. 8) and where we have boldness to enter by His blood (Heb. 10:19-22). It was particularly appropriate to have such truths brought before those who were hankering after the OT order. There were holy places on earth, in the tabernacle and in the temple. This is not true now. There will be holy places in the millennial temple (Ezek. 40 - 48) with a priesthood of the offspring of faithful Phinehas (the sons of Zadok) between the new Israel under the new covenant and

Jehovah.

Yes, the veil has been rent once-for-all, and now we have boldness to go directly in (in spirit) into the holy places above. Not so with the new Israel under the new covenant. There is an intermediate priesthood and the temple will have two-leaved doors (no veil, of course). Yes, that is greater access, much greater, than Israel had under the Mosaic covenant, but it is still on earth, consistent with the earthly calling. There are no two-leaved doors for the Christian. The Jewish Christian now has no intermediate priesthood (*he* is a priest!) anymore than he has two-leaved doors when going into the holy places above (Heb. 10:19-22). In doing so, he has no intermediate priesthood. This unspeakable privilege is unique to Christians. Requiring circumcision for Jewish Christians, whatever the scheme to justify it, is, at its very best, the importing into Christianity the earthly position of a Jewish, millennial saint, who has an earthly calling, priesthood, and sanctuary. It is imposition upon one who ought to be in the good of the heavenly calling to which none of this attaches. It is Judaizing; or if you prefer, it is Israelite-izing. The spiritual circumcision we have in Christ, as identified with Him in death and resurrection, etc. separates us spiritually from the world, even as He is not of the world (John 17). We are one with Him, whether Jewish or Gentile believers. We are of a new creation though our walk in responsibility is in this present creation. Scripture does not teach that millennial saints will be positionally in the new creation. It is true that they will all be righteous, all saved, all circumcised in heart. And outward circumcision will have its place, distinguishing them from Gentile millennial saints. It has no place now, and as practiced as if under a covenant, shows lack of laying hold of the heavenly calling and the Christian's position before God. It is Judaistic and divisive in the assembly of God.

Ed.

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

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