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Exposition of Romans 9-11

Part 1: Romans 9: The Election of God According to the Purpose of Grace the Basis of Israel's Future Blessing

(God's Sovereignty: Rom. 9:15)

Introduction

We will treat Romans 9 this way:

1. 9:1-5: The blessing remains to be accomplished for Paul's kinsmen according to flesh, who are Israelites.
2. 9:6-13: The blessing will be in conformity with the purpose of God according to the election of grace. It was displayed in the past by rejecting the children of the flesh, and sovereignly choosing the children of the promise.
3. 9:14-18: The blessing is not of him that wills, nor runs, but of God who shows mercy.
4. 9:19-29: Meanwhile, Christians are vessels before prepared for glory, serving as an example of God's sovereign ways in blessing.
5. 9:30-33: Blessing is on the basis of the righteousness that is on the principle of faith.

The theme of Romans 9 is the election of God concerning Israel and that the exercise of His prerogatives as regards Israel's blessing is also a just basis for His blessing Gentiles meanwhile. He is sovereign and may do as pleases Him. The chapter shows that the Jewish claim to the promises in virtue of natural descent from Abraham is without a show of reason. In Abraham's offspring God's election discriminated between the children of promise and the children born according to flesh. The blessings of the Jews rests on the sovereignty of God. He

shows mercy to whom He will, as He did when Israel might have fallen under judgment, when Moses interceded for them. Meanwhile, then, the nation of Israel is rejected and there are Gentiles who have attained righteousness, though Israel erroneously thought to obtain a righteousness by law-keeping. Righteousness is obtained on the principle of faith, not law-works.

Romans 9:1-5

(1) I say [the] truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit, (2) that I have great grief and uninterrupted pain in my heart, (3) for I have wished, I myself, to be a curse from the Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to flesh; (4) who are Israelites; whose [is] the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the law-giving, and the service, and the promises; (5) whose [are] the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul loved his kinsmen according to flesh and reasserts their national privileges. These blessing remains to be accomplished for Paul's kinsmen according to flesh, who are Israelites. Moreover, while Christ has, according to flesh, sprung *of* Israel, He is not confined *to* Israel, as are the seven blessings stated to belong to his kinsmen according to flesh.

We may note that Paul's being appointed by God to be the Apostle of the nations did not set aside his love and concern for his kinsmen according to the flesh.

Romans 9:1-3: Paul's Pained Heart for His kinsmen According to Flesh

The Apostle was the man in Christ of 2 Cor. 12 (as all believers are, of course), and he speaks here words as "in Christ," thus *truth* (cp. John 14:6). "No lie is of the truth" (1 John 2:21). His conscience bore witness to the truth of what he was about to say, bearing witness in the power of the *Holy Spirit*.

The great Apostle of the Gentiles, chosen for this apostleship by God, expresses with much feeling the continuous anguish of soul he has for his brethren, that is, his kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites by natural descent. He saw them as the Lord had pronounced -- their house left to them desolate (Matt. 23:18). They had seen to it that Messiah was nailed to the tree, made a curse. He saw them lying under a judicial blindness. Denying that Jesus was the Christ, they hounded him in his pathway, seeking to prevent the gospel going out to the Gentiles.

Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, was nevertheless an Israelite; and although, in Christ, he knew no man after the flesh, and gloried in that cross which had abolished utterly the personal claims and pretensions of Jew and Gentile alike, yet, because Christ died *for that nation* (John 11:51), there was a clear warrant of Divine truth which justified the ardent yearnings of his desire towards the natural children of the covenant.

God had of old made promise to the *fathers*, speaking good things concerning the nation of His election. Had, then, the calling of the Church in anywise set Israel aside? Had the promises become void because of their unbelief; or had the mind of God altered with respect to the original object of His Choice? The apostle knew that this was impossible. The name of Jehovah as the God of *Israel*, was the eternal pledge of the eventual accomplishment of national blessing. While, therefore, the heart of this devoted servant of Christ might be wrung by the continual proof of the fatal stiff-heartedness of the Jews in his day, he finds in the revelation of the ways of God, which it was given Him first to perceive and then to minister to the Church, a solace and compensation of his grief. Rising by the power of faith above the actual sphere of things, and quieting the turbulence of natural sorrow by a recollection of the steadfast continuance of the nation's hope in God Himself, he presently enters into the general question of the faithfulness of Jehovah as the sovereign dispenser of blessing according to His own promise. Drinking, as he runs, from the deep springs of Divine joy in the gradual unfolding of the perfect way of God, he finds his heart strengthened to utter, at the close of this inquiry (Rom. 11:26-36), the memory of the Lord's great goodness (Psa. 145:7), and to sing of the righteous mercy of His faithfulness while discovering the unsearchable greatness of His way.¹

That he had wished to be accursed from Christ does not refer to when he was unsaved. It was more of an outburst of vehement love for them than a settled state of soul. Verse 3 should be compared with Moses' words in Ex. 32:32. In both these cases it was not a regular, settled, impassioned feeling in the soul; in Paul's case there *was settled* in his soul "great grief and uninterrupted pain in my heart." This was true though he was hated and persecuted by the Jews. How illustrative of what he wrote in 1 Cor. 13 that love seeks not its own. No doubt the fall of Israel (though not irrevocable, as we shall see) pained him deeply, they not having *submitted* (lovely word for a Christian) to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3), which pained him deeply. He thus lets them, and us, know of this love before he exposes their awful blindness which has come upon them, in part; and also affirms Israel's inalienable national place in God's purpose.

1. Arthur Pridham, *Notes and Reflections on the Epistle to the Romans*, London: Yapp, pp179-180, sec. ed.

Romans 9:4, 5: What Belongs to Israel, of Whom the Christ Came

At the beginning of the Apostle's treatment of the matters in Rom. 9-11, he first of all asserts the irrevocable privileges of his brethren, his kinsmen according to flesh, who are Israelites. Israel, "prince with God," is the divinely conferred name upon Jacob, "supplanter." We can sense the grace in this, can we not?

The Apostolic seal is placed upon what the OT had made clear: that these privileges enumerated here belong to the nation of Israel. We are not of those who by spiritual alchemy attempt to transmute these privileges into being inherited by the Church of God now, pleading that "the New Testament gives a larger meaning and scope to Old Testament prophecies which seem to be restricted to Israel." They do not "*seem to be*" restricted to Israel; they *are*, and the Apostle puts his seal on this great fact. How could it be any clearer than what he stated: "**my brethren, my kinsmen, according to flesh; who are Israelites; whose [is] . . .**"? The six things enumerated belong to ethnic Jews, Paul's kinsmen, according to flesh. We must observe that to eventually come into the good of these privileges, Jewish ethnicity, while essential, is not enough, because they must also be children of promise. This brings in the sovereign operations of God in salvation. Thus, it will be saved Jews and only saved Jews, who are heirs of these things. It is needful to press that Jewish ethnicity is a necessity. Any claim that Gentile, spiritual brethren of Paul are meant is absurd.

What has been promised to Israel, and the call of Israel, is affirmed as fixed. Thus Rom. 11:25-29 says:

. . . blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the nations be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. According as it is written, The deliverer shall come out of Zion; he shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And this is the covenant from me to them, when I shall have taken away their sins. As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved on account of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God [are] not subject to repentance.

"Not subject to repentance" means irrevocable. The covenant in Rom. 11:27 refers to the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8). Jehovah will bring them into the bond of that covenant (Ezek. 20:37). It is one of the "covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12) that will be sovereignly instated under Messiah's reign. The covenants belong to Paul's kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites (Rom. 9:4, 5). "Israel," used some 70 times in the NT, always means exactly what the word says: Israel -- not the Church.

***The Seven Things Belonging to
Paul's Kinsmen According to Flesh,
Who Are Israelites***

There are writers who say that the words “who are Israelites” is the first of the privileges Paul speaks of. That is a mistake, for there are six things summing up the sovereignly-bestowed blessings for Israel, and the seventh thing is Christ, Who is *of* Israel -- thus not a distinctive and peculiar blessing for Israel alone. In Christ, God acts sovereignly beyond Israel and her distinctive blessings. And this is shown to be so in this chapter; yet, Israel's distinctive blessings are certain to be established in God's good time. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29). Thus the apostle does not set aside Israel's privileges, but shows that God can sovereignly bless as He will, consistently with the setting aside of disobedient Israel now, and with the establishment of Israel in their privileges in due time, when the deliverer turns away ungodliness from Jacob.

THE ADOPTION

This does not refer to the adoption, or placement as sons, as now, which is of individuals. And this adoption (sonship) of Christians, their position of sonship, is sealed by the Spirit of adoption, i.e., of sonship (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14-16). Our place before the Father is the same measure as Christ's, because we are one with Him, taken into favor in the Beloved (Eph. 2:6). Thus we are placed into such intimacy with the Father that, having “the Spirit of his Son” in our hearts, we cry “Abba Father.” Thus did the Lord Jesus, as recorded in Mark 14:36. This is an unspeakable blessing we have in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. Such intimacy is not the portion of Israel.

Israel's adoption is a *national* adoption, involving supremacy among the nations. Ex. 4:22, 23 and Deut. 7:6, and 32:6, 18, point to this as Jer. 3:19, Amos 3:2 and Hos. 11:1 confirm it. See also Jer. 31:9 and Amos 3:2, etc. When Israel is designated Jehovah's firstborn, that is a title of dignity and rank. Of, course, it is a title used regarding the *earthly* order (there are heavenly firstborn ones, which is another matter). Israel's national adoption is earthly. The Deliverer will come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). Then will He reign before His ancients in glory (Isa. 24:23).

So, Israel's adoption is national, not individual; while ours is individual, not corporate.

THE GLORY

This refers to the Shekinah, the cloud of glory that first appeared to stand between Israel and the pursuing Egyptians (Ex. 14). Jehovah looked out of the cloud upon the Egyptians, a very ominous thing indeed for the enemy.

It settled on the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), penetrating the coverings, even to between the cherubim on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:2) set upon the Ark of the Covenant. It abode also on Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:1, 2); but later, upon Judah's continued, rebellious way, Ezekiel saw the cloud remove (Ezek. 10:18; 11:23); but it will again return (Ezek. 43).

It is indicated in Scripture that the millennial temple (Ezek. 40-48) is *morally* the same house that Solomon built, and morally the same house rebuilt in Haggai's day; i.e., in God's view there is a continuity such that Haggai spoke of these structures as if it is one house:

The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace (Hag. 2:9).

“The latter glory” refers to the millennial glory, glory being greater than that of Solomon's day, for what he built was a foreshadow of the millennial temple to come, when He Who is the antitype of David and Solomon combined, reigns before His ancients in glory:

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be brought together, [as] an assemblage of prisoners for the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall be visited. And the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts shall reign on mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients in glory (Isa. 24:21-23).

This is the time of the fulfilment of Isa. 60:7:

. . . I will beautify the house of my magnificence.

Haggai had also prophesied: “and in this place will I give peace.” That place is Jerusalem, the place that God had chosen, to dwell there.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, standing as a banner of the peoples; the nations shall seek it; and his resting place shall be glory (Isa. 11:10).

It may be that Isa. 4:5, 6 refers to the Shekinah -- present once again in the city of Jehovah's choice, consequent upon the awful application of the “the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning” (Isa. 4:4), for the regathering of Israel will involve the cutting off of many of the Jewish people.

THE COVENANTS

The covenants belong to Israel, Paul's kinsmen according to flesh, not to the Gentiles, and not to the Church. As always, many opinions have been expressed concerning what covenants are included in this. While the Mosaic covenant was for the nation, it is not, as a covenant, to be made good to Israel in the future day of her glory. A covenant of promise was given to Abraham. The Mosaic

covenant, given 430 years later (Gal. 3:17), was part of the test of the fallen first man (in the persons of Israel) to show that man was not recoverable from the fall. Could man gain what was sovereignly given by *promise* to Abraham by *working* for it (i.e., by *meriting* it)? Thus, the Mosaic covenant was provisional, something brought in meanwhile in order to bring the state of the people into relief -- as was Shiloh (where the tabernacle was at first) was provisional, to bring out the state of the people, before Jerusalem, the city of Jehovah's choice was marked out by fire falling upon the burnt-offering in the threshing floor of Ornan (1 Chron. 21:26 to 22:1).

The phrase in Eph. 2:12, "covenants of promise," would be the covenants spoken of here. There are four covenants of promise for Israel -- gracious covenants, unconditional. The Mosaic covenant differed in that it was conditional, while the covenant with Abraham, faithful Phinehas (Num. 25:12, 13.) David, and the new covenant (Jer. 31:31), all await fulfilment by God's sovereign action in Christ, for His glory, in the earthly sphere.

It has been said that the Mosaic Covenant is theirs. That covenant has nothing to do with this matter. The Mosaic covenant is finished; done away. The covenants here are the covenants never realized by Israel. They are to be fulfilled under Messiah; the new Israel being under the New Covenant. There is nothing of the Mosaic Covenant to fulfil -- why drag it into the discussion?

There is the non-existent Covenant of Grace that the Covenantists claim was made with fallen Adam. It was not made with Abraham. Adam was not one of Paul's kinsmen according to flesh as was Abraham. Nor is the covenant with Noah included. It was not made with "the fathers," nor was he one of Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh. That covenant belongs to all on the earth.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

That is not the equivalent of the Mosaic Covenant, which has been permanently terminated. However, the law is not dead:

Now we know that the law [is] good if anyone use it lawfully . . . (1 Tim. 1:9).

Rather than the law being dead, there is a lawful use of the law.² The Christian is, of course, dead to the law (Rom. 7:4) as well as to sin (Rom. 6:8), as he is also dead to the world (Gal. 6:14). See Gal. 2:20. He is not under the law as the rule of life but under the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:15, 16); and we see that

2. The law was not nailed to the cross and then someday it will come down from the cross in order to be on the hearts of the Israelites under the New Covenant. Col. 2:14 does not mean that the law was nailed to the cross, but rather the obligation to it. Not the law, but the hand-writing. In a footnote to JND's translation of this he has:

Hand-writing, obligation to which a man is subject by his signature.

both Gentile believers and Jewish believers (i.e., the Israel of God) are to walk by the same rule. The new creation was begun by Christ in resurrection, thus on the other side of death. The Christian has died with Christ and has been raised up together with Christ (Eph. 2:5, 6). This is consonant with having died with him.

Concerning the New Covenant with Judah and Israel (reunited -- Ezek. 37), we read:

Giving my laws into their mind, I will write them upon their hearts (Heb. 8:10).

In the millennium, Israel will observe the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

With the hermeneutic of spiritual alchemy, covenantists have transmuted the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) into the first day of the week, the Lord's day. After all, if, as Covenantists say, the Christian is under the law as the rule of life, he must be under ten commandments, not nine of them. One of the ten concerns keeping the Sabbath. For Covenantism, the Sabbath must be changed from the seventh day of the week to the first. It is necessary to the system.

And, if you (erroneously) say that the law is written in the heart of a Christian, Sabbath-keeping is written in the Christian's heart. And, since it is clear to Christians (other than to "Messianic Jews") that the Lord's day, the first day of the week, is the Christian day (see Acts 20:7, etc.), and if the law is written on the heart of a Christian, and he must keep the Sabbath, then the Sabbath must be the first day of the week.³ All untrue: the law is *not* the Christian's rule of life; nor does it make the Christian "lawless" to say so. But we cannot develop this here, other than to say that Christ is written on the heart of the Christian. Our law is "the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) and the rule of the new creation (Gal. 6:15, 16).

We will not address the fabrication by Covenantists that Adam had the law of ten commandments. The law came by Moses (John 1:17). And Paul says that the law is his kinsmen's according to flesh (Rom. 9:4). Gentiles never had, or were under, the law. See also Rom. 2:12; Psa. 147:19, 20.

Concerning the nation of Israel, when in possession of these seven things, we read:

For out of Zion shall go forth the law and Jehovah's word from Jerusalem. (Micah 4:2).

The divine supremacy shall set that nation in supremacy in the earth, under messiah's reign.

3. The seventh day Sabbath has been transmuted by spiritual alchemy into the first day of the week.

THE SERVICE

This refers to the ritual that God gave to Israel (see Heb. 9:1), especially concerning approach to Jehovah. It was given through Moses, and David added to it, as did Solomon subsequently, regarding the temple. The millennial temple will have a service (Ezek. 40-48) of course, since “the service” belongs to Israel. The nations will be required to bring honor to where Israel has the service (Zech. 14:16-21).

The service had its place where the earthly worship was carried on, where the temple was. God looked forward to pointing out the place He would choose where the center for Israel’s service would be (Deut. 16). Shiloh was provisional, something to bring out the state of the people before He indicated His choice of Jerusalem as the place. He also gave a king according to the people’s wishes (Saul) before He appointed David as ruler of His people, and it was through David that the place of the service was pointed out by fire falling from heaven to consume the burnt-offering (1 Chron. 21:18 to 22:1). The choice of God is celebrated in Psa. 78:67-72. It is a Gentile conceit that God shall not yet choose Jerusalem. The prophesied regathering of Israel was not the return from the Babylonian captivity. First of all, Babylon is not the place from which God will regather them for “the service” which is theirs:

And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the Lord shall set his hand a second time to acquire the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall lift up a banner to the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 1:11-12).

This does not refer to the past regathering from Babylon; it speaks of a gathering “the second time.” Moreover, after the regathering the first time, from Babylon, the prophet Zechariah prophesied:

Cry further, saying, thus saith Jehovah of hosts: My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity, and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem (Zech. 2:17).

Having returned to the city of God’s choice the first time, the returned remnant is told that Jehovah “shall yet choose Jerusalem.” Certainly so; for there was to be a “second time” of regathering a remnant. The first was but a faint foreshadow of what yet awaits Israel when the Man Whose name is the Branch (Sprout) builds the temple of Jehovah and will be priest upon His throne (Zech. 6:12, 13). It is then that He shall be King, and exercise the Melchizedec, the millennial, priesthood. (He is presently exercising a heavenly priesthood in the sanctuary above (Heb. 8:2)). Then shall the sons of Zadok minister in the priests’ office (Ezek. 45:15) in fulfilment of the covenant to Phinehas (Num. 26:12, 13), for the

Zadokites are the progeny of Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest. The line of Eli, progeny of Ithamar (Eeiazar’s brother), the son of Aaron, had somehow obtained a chief place instead of Phinehas’ line. Abiathar, who was thrust from the priesthood by Solomon, was the progeny of Eli, to whom Jehovah swore that He would cut off His house. ⁴ And Solomon, type of the great King of the house of David that will yet come, established Zadok in the chief place. This is all typical of what is yet coming, which will transpire in due time to establish Israel in “the service.” It has been said that the wheels of God’s government grind slowly, but they grind surely! Think of Jehovah above the cherubim with the terrible wheels beside those cherubim, the executioners of God’s government, seen in Ezek. 1.

The Melchizedec priesthood is founded on the once-for-all finished work of Christ. It is His Melchizedec priesthood that imparts its character to the sacrifices in the millennium. The sacrifices being offered as based on the once-for-all finished work shows that the sacrifices will be in character memorial of the finished work done by Christ.

However, this is earthly, and Christian worship is in the sanctuary above where Christ, after a *heavenly order of priesthood*, is Minister there (Heb. 8:2) and leads the singing (Heb. 2); for that is where we have boldness to enter (Heb. 10:19-22).

THE PROMISES

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy . . . (Rom. 15:8, 9).

Such is the voice of the Spirit through the apostle. Also, it is clear that Zacharias was expecting the restoration of Israel nationally, and spoke this by the Holy Spirit.

And Zacharias his father was filled with [the] Holy Spirit, and prophesied saying, Blessed be [the] Lord God of Israel . . . to fulfil mercy with our fathers and remember his holy covenant, [the] oath which he swore to Abraham our father . . . (Luke 1:67, 72, 73).

The promises in Christ Jesus, for us, are not what are referred to in Rom. 9:4. Israel knew nothing about the mystery of Christ and the Church, for silence had been kept about that (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:5, 9). This is above and beyond the new covenant too, of course. There are many promises for Israel throughout the prophetic writings of Israel’s prophets that are not expressly

4. The priests at Nob, who were killed by Saul through Doeg the Edomite, were also of the house of Eli. The wickedness of man is used to serve the governmental ways of God. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrains (Psa. 76:10).

named in a particular covenant. Jehovah will make all good in Christ, for His glory in the earthly sphere.

There is an instructive distinction made in Scripture regarding what is for Israel and what is for the church -- in view of Israel being earthly and the church being heavenly. What is for the church is stated to be from before the foundation of the world, or before the ages of time:

according as he has chosen us in him before [the] world's foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love (Eph. 1:4).

. . . in [the] hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the ages of time, but has manifested in its own due season his word . . . (Titus 1:2, 3; see also 2 Tim. 1:1, 9).

Such is not the language used concerning Israel or even the Gentiles to be blessed in the millennial kingdom. Regarding the earthly kingdom for the Gentiles who received the King's brethren (the godly remnant), we read:

Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from [the] foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

In Luke 11:50 we read:

that the blood of all the prophets which has been poured out from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation.

"Before the world's foundation" has reference to the heavenly aspect of God's purpose to glorify Himself, in Christ, in the two spheres; while "from the foundation of the world" has reference to something in the earthly sphere in which God will glorify Himself in Christ (cp. Eph. 1:10). Thus, the kingdom of the heavens here on earth in mystery contains things "hidden from [the] world's foundation" (Matt. 13:35). After the removal of the church, there will be those whose name had "been written from [the] founding of [the] world in the book of life of the slain Lamb" (Rev. 13:8 and see 17:8). Thus, for example, the godly Jewish remnant that will enter the millennium will form the new Israel under the New Covenant will be such.

Dan. 12:1 does not state when the names of Daniel's people who are to be blessed were "written in the book."

Every saint who ever lived has his name "written in the book of life" (Rev. 20:15), but some have a special place, as Rev. 21:27 shows, referring to those whose portion is with the holy city, Jerusalem, which Rev. 20:9, 10 shows is the Bride, the Lamb's wife (the city is symbolic, not a literal city). Rev. 22:19 should read "tree of life," not "book of life." Rev. 3:5 states to the overcomer that his name will not be blotted out of the book of life. It is inferred from this that names of others will be blotted out, but bear with me in not drawing such an inference. It is only saints whose names are written in the book of life. The Apostle wrote

concerning those:

whose names are written in the book of life (Phil. 4:3).

What comfort in that if names can be removed from the book of life? Rev. 13:8 and 17:8 also negates the idea that names are expunged from the book of life. The names of the apostates never were written in the book of life.

THE FATHERS

For I say that Jesus Christ became a minister of [the] circumcision for [the] truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers; and that the nations should glorify God for mercy . . . (Rom. 15:8, 9).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob belong to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh. The Christian is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48); and viewed as blessed of God in His heavenly privileges and place (Eph. 1:7; 2:6), has no earthly genealogy as Israel does.

The fathers are noted again in Rom. 11:28:

As regards the glad tidings, [they are] enemies on your account; but as regards election, beloved as regards the fathers.

Election in this case refers to the national election of Israel, as a nation (corporate election), connected with the fathers of Israel chosen by Jehovah; i.e., Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, spoken of in Rom. 9:7-13 as called of God, as elect. Indeed, great principles of God are brought out in these men:

Abraham: election, calling, separation

Isaac: sonship

Jacob: discipline

Concerning these three, Jehovah said to Moses:

Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you (Ex. 3:15).

In Genesis we have one other great person who completes the picture as presented in Genesis, for we see in

Joseph: sufferings and the glory that follows.

In fact, these men point to things that are true of us regarding our Christian path as we await the coming of our Lord.

Observe also that not one of these was a firstborn, a characteristic feature throughout Genesis. See 1 Cor. 15:46.

THESE SEVEN THINGS ARE FOR THE PRESENT EARTH AND WILL END

None of these things will continue in the eternal state, though the church, as such,

will (Eph. 3:21). Jer. 31:35-37 shows that as long as the ordinance of sun and moon, etc., continue, so long will Israel be a nation. They will not be a distinct nation among men in the eternal state. Israel's promises that are to be in force "forever" means while the present heavens and earth continue. A careful searching into the whole matter leads to this conclusion, though some texts might be taken otherwise, if the entire corpus of relevant material is not brought to bear. W. Kelly rightly takes Isa. 66:22 to speak of the millennium from the Jewish point of view, not in the same way as 2 Pet. 3.

Christ, of course, continues eternally in manhood, indissolubly taken into His Person. We have already noted that it is not said, as in the other seven things, that He belongs to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh. He is "of" them.

Of Whom . . . is Christ

. . . and of whom, as according to flesh, [is] the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen (Rom. 9:5).

I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, [the] first and [the] last, the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13).

Concerning the translation of this verse, W. Kelly has some lengthy, learned comments concerning it, supporting the words "who is over all God blessed forever."⁵

Christ as born into the world is of the stock of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such is the humanity that the Son took into His Person in incarnation (Luke 1:35), fully God and fully man, one Person, the God-man. Thus is affirmed His descent according to flesh as well as His Godhead glory. Without that full manhood, His Godhead avails us nothing.

How wondrous the glories that meet
In Jesus and in His face shine,
His love is eternal and sweet,
'Tis human 'tis also divine!

His glory -- not only God's Son --
In manhood He had His full part --
And the union of both joined in one
Form the fountain of love in His heart.⁶

5. Found in *The Bible Treasury* 8:203-205; his *Notes on the Epistle to the Romans, in loco*; and in *Two Nineteenth Century Versions of the New Testament*, pp. 541-543, which includes also a note on this matter from W. Kelly in *The Christain Annotator* 3:176-177, and a note from *The Bible Treasury* 14:352, available from Present Truth Publishers.

6. *Little Flock Hymn Book*, 1881 ed.

Such is the Father's Beloved Son, and He is our Beloved too, in whom we have been taken into favor (Eph. 1:6), we thus having *His place* before the Father! Christ is not restricted to Paul's kinsmen according to flesh as are the seven things we have reviewed. The wording "of whom" shows this is so. And so, room is left to bring Gentiles to Himself, not Jews only.

The Son took a place of dependence and obedience in manhood, yet was (and is) over all, God blessed forever. And as here below, and now also, "in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). He is the mighty God (Isa. 9:6), and as to flesh an Israelite. Though a Babe in the manger, yet were all things subsisting, or cohering, by Him (Col. 1:17), all sustained by the immediate action of His will. Why, the very spit with which they spit in His face, was immediately upheld by Him in its travel from their wicked mouths to His face. Yes, the laws of centrifugal and centripetal action were being immediately upheld by His sovereign will when the hammers described their arc to hit the nails being driven through those blessed hands and feet, which hands and feet are seen in the ministry of grace in Luke's Gospel, and which He showed to His disciples (Luke 24:40); and which we shall see!

While v. 5 carefully lets us know that the Christ is not exclusively Israel's, the immediate connection of v. 5 with what went before is that Messiah's glory is the crowning truth – the glory of the One whom Israel had rejected though they will be made willing in the day of His power (Psa. 110).

The Jews had made it clear to Paul how much they hated the gospel going out to the Gentiles. In their view, it jeopardized their distinctive place. In vv. 3-5 he had already spoken of Israel's distinctive place as a certainty. There is also the connection of v. 5 with what follows, namely the preaching of the gospel to both Jew and Gentile, for "the Christ" does not belong exclusively to Israel.

The Christ is over all; *all* -- things in heaven, things on earth, and infernal beings (Phil. 2:10). This is a statement of absolute sovereignty, so fitting for the subject matter of Rom. 9-11. He is God, as is the Father and as is the Spirit. His people will worship Him forever: God blessed forever. Amen.

We should also note how admirably the Apostle brings forward with such force the affirmation of the seven things (a number speaking of completeness) that most surely are Israel's, while He brings out the glory of the One that had been rejected by the nation, the rejection of Whom he will have more to say about as being the occasion of the nation's present excision from the olive tree. It is He Himself, very Jehovah come down, Emmanuel, who is the Hope of Israel, who cannot lie (1 Tim. 1:2). Thus while affirming the special place and blessings of Israel, their sin is also brought out.

Next, then, he addresses the fact that the Word of God has not failed. Of

course not. It is man who has failed and sovereign grace is the only remedy; for as the Apostle is demonstrating throughout Rom. 9-11, blessing is because God sovereignly shows mercy.

Matt. 18:18: Bound When?

Q. Matt. 16:19; 18:18 -- What is the true force of the future with the perfect part. in these texts? Does it teach, what has been drawn from it and apparently by more than one Christian recently, not a ratification in heaven consequent on the binding on earth, but that what was bound on earth had been previously bound in heaven?

A. I am of opinion that there is no ground grammatically, any more than in the scope of our Lord's doctrine, to suppose that the participle *δεδεμμένο* expresses time past relatively to that which is signified by the future *ἔσται*. The idea is that of a certain condition viewed abstractedly from consideration of actual time. "Whatever thou mayest bind on the earth shall be a thing bound in the heavens," &c. It is well known that, according to the grammarians, the *futurum III* or *exactum* in many verbs (*as διω κόπτω παύω πιπρά*) supplies the place of the simple future passive, as may be seen in Jelf's Gr. Gr. second ed. Vol. II. p. 71. The difference, I would add, is that the complex form before us views the result as permanent (*δεδεμμένο*) but, beyond doubt, of a future act (*ἔσται*). Had the meaning contended for been meant, care would have been taken to express it distinctly, as *ἤδη δεδεμμένο ἔσται ἐν τ. οὐ.*, or *ἔσται τὸ δεδεμμένο*, or in some other way quite different from the actual construction, which appears to me to admit of no other translation than that which is given in the Authorized Version {KJV}.

(W. Kelly, *The Bible Treasury* 6:304.)

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"Everything you do here is according to the state you are in at the time, not according to your standing, but according to your state."

The Mystery of Christ and the Church and The Covenants

Chapter 5.2

(Continued)

Genesis 4:

The Seed of the Serpent Murdering the Righteous and Developing Its World

Genesis 4 and 5 bring before us the two seeds. First we have the account of the natural seed (Gen. 4) then the spiritual seed (Gen. 5), a not uncommon order in Genesis, and one in keeping with the principle given in 1 Cor. 15:46. A great difference between the two chapters is seen in the opening verse of each chapter. Chapter 4 opens with what appears as a natural continuation of the sin brought out in ch. 3. We shall see the consequences of sin in the line of Cain, beginning with murder and ending in Lamech, the seventh from Adam in Cain's line, in whose family the world is developed in its complacency away from God. We shall find things typical of the ungodly in Cain's line; but in contrast, things typical of the godly in Seth's line in ch. 5. These chapters show us two lines, one line choosing to make themselves as comfortable in the world of sin and death as they can, and the other walking in separation in the light of the coming Seed of the woman.

The two lines began with two men both seeking *acceptance* by Jehovah. One came before Jehovah for acceptance in virtue of death (the offering of the firstlings of the flock, and the fat thereof). The other came without the sense of where he was spiritually -- he had not learned from God's question to Adam, "where are you," and brings an offering of the fruit of the cursed ground. So one recognized and bowed to Jehovah Elohim's judgment and the other ignored it. One brought, as it were, the blood; the other, in effect, mocked the blood -- typically speaking, mocked the blood of Christ, though such might like to see the blood of the righteous spilled upon the ground.

One represents the first man, the other the second man -- and the first man

killed the second man. Is there nothing typical in *that*?

The one was the seed of the serpent and the other was of the coming Seed of the woman. One had the carnal mind; the other was born of God, one in whom faith worked. One was of the flesh; the other was of the Spirit.

Another is appointed in Abel's place, Seth, speaking of Christ in resurrection. A line of born-again ones follows (Gen. 5).

The line of the carnal man is traced to the seventh, Lamech, in whose children the world of Cain comes to full expression. The line of the born-again one (Seth) has a seventh one also, noted for being translated from Cain's world, a type of the saints' rapture before the coming judgment. The line of born-again ones continues through Noah, a type of the Jewish remnant preserved for the millennial earth.

We must remember that it was Cain's world that was swept away by the flood. Is there nothing typical in *that*? *Man's* civilization will be swept away when

The great city was [divided] into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath . . . (Rev. 15:19, 20).

Gen. 4 divides into two main parts. Typically speaking, Gen. 4:1-15 is the rejection of Jehovah by the first man and Gen. 4:16-26 brings before us the consequent development of the world by the first man.

Genesis 4:1, 2: False Expectations of Nature

(1) And Man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore Cain, and said, I have acquired a man with Jehovah. (2) And she further bore his brother Abel. And Abel was a shepherd, but Cain was a husbandman.

The name of Adam's firstborn was Cain, which means acquired (or possession), as the text itself indicates. First, we note that it appears that *she* named the son, whereas in Seth's case Adam named him (Gen. 5:3). Perhaps she had not yet learned what could be learned from her forwardness in Gen. 3, though after what transpired with Cain and Abel she might have deferred to Adam regarding naming Seth.⁷

It is indicated that Eve thought that the Seed announced as coming (Gen. 3:15) had been born and that she had acquired him of Jehovah. The line of the

7. It might seem from Gen. 4:25 that Eve named Seth, but Gen. 5:3 says that Adam "called his name Seth."

natural was at work in her thought and she did not know that God must appoint the deliverer. She connected nature and its expectations with the name of Jehovah. She did not know that great principle set forth in 1 Cor. 15:46. Nor had it been announced:

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son and call his name Immanuel (Isa. 7:14; cp. Matt. 1:23).

She wrongly expected the deliverer according to the order of the natural. But we know that the incarnation was by the overshadowing power of the Spirit. However, she did have faith that Jehovah would provide a deliverer. As we learn about the character of Cain subsequently, that character would indicate that by the time Abel was born, she had learned that the deliverer was not Cain. He was not the Seed. The next son is named Abel, which means a breath, or vanity. That name expresses that she perceived she was mistaken about Cain even before Abel was born.

Let us jump ahead a little, for a moment to connect this with Seth and his son. After the death of Abel, God appointed Seth (meaning, appointed) in Abel's place, a type of Christ's resurrection. There is an indication of better spiritual judgment in the words,

Eve recognized God's working, setting aside expectations according to nature. Then Seth had a son he named Enosh, meaning frail man, and in a footnote to the text, JND's note says, "Man, as weak, mortal: Psa. 8:4; 103:15." The cross and the resurrection of Christ has fully exposed what man is. Seth naming his son Enosh points to this.

To return, the occupations of Abel and Cain are noted next, and in that order, not in the birth order. God has had eternally before Him the Lamb for sacrifice that would glorify Him in the place where sin abounded -- in Cain's world, so to speak. Cain, who represents "the first man," would have the earth as his until the slain Lamb, the lion of the tribe of Judah, takes to Himself His great power and reigns. He that humbles himself shall be exalted in due time (Matt. 23:12), and so Christ *must* reign (1 Cor. 15:25).

Genesis 4:3-7:

True and False Approach to Jehovah

(3) And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah. (4) And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat. And Jehovah looked upon Abel, and on his offering; (5) and upon Cain, and on his offering, he did not look. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. (6) And Jehovah said to Cain, Why art thou angry, and why is thy countenance fallen? (7) If thou doest well, will not [thy countenance] look up [with confidence]? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; and unto thee [shall be] his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Cain and Abel: First That Which Is Natural and Afterwards That Which Is Spiritual

. . . The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit. But that which is spiritual [was] not first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual: the first man out of [the] earth, made of dust; the second man, out of heaven (1 Cor. 15:46-47).

THAT WHICH IS NATURAL IS SET ASIDE

This great principle in God's dealings with man is enunciated in connection with the first and last Adams. These refer to two headships. Consequent on the cross, God closed the trial of the first, fallen man, for He had shown that man was not recoverable. In resurrection Christ took the place of the last Adam, displacing the first as having a standing before God (during the trial). Though Christ was the second man *in person*, as being here in manhood, He took *the place* in resurrection. It is the greatest, the most momentous, exhibition of *God's moral order*, that *first is the natural and after that the spiritual*. And this also confirms that the first man has been set aside, the trial of the first man has ended -- "natural, *then* that which is spiritual." You cannot have both Christ and Adam together.

The natural man, the first man, put Christ to death on the cross. The first man cast out the second man. That act is the end of God's dealings with the first man as having a standing under trial, hence Romans declares man lost, which was never said while he was under trial. The issue is settled.

Yet, that awful deed having been done, the ancient serpent having his fangs in it, Christ is established in resurrection. And this is reflected in the case of Cain the firstborn killing the second born. There is the foreshadowing of the first man killing the second man: Cain killed Abel. But God raises up Seth.

Down through the ages the seed of the serpent is opposed to the seed of the woman, and we see that quite clearly in Cain. It came to full expression in the hatred against Christ -- and therefore the first man must eventually have the final Antichrist of prophecy.

SETTING ASIDE THE FIRSTBORN IS CHARACTERISTIC IN GENESIS

In every case in Genesis where we can determine who the firstborn was, he was not regarded by God's grace as in the prime place. This is so with Japheth, Ishmael, Esau, Reuben, Mannasseh, etc. Abraham was not a firstborn, either. The setting aside of the first man is stamped upon the book of Genesis. Is there nothing typical in *that*?

This is not the outworking of covenant promise. Covenant promise began with Abraham, and the principle we are noting was in effect before the Abrahamic Covenant. Indeed, the first Adam and the last Adam are the prime expression of God's work in this regard.

When God acts in grace, in Christ, Christ has the place of the first-begotten, or firstborn. It is not a question of priority in time, but of pre-eminence. In incarnation he enters the creation, He takes the place of first-born of all creation. If He has brethren, He is first-born among many brethren. If He rises from among the dead, he is the firstborn from the dead.

In Heb. 12:23 we read of the "assembly of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven." This is the assembly of God in a distinctive position of pre-eminence.

Abel: The First Martyr and the Sacrifice

The following article is from *The Girdle of Truth* 3:65-75.

Abel

Abel's history cannot be taken up altogether apart, since it is designedly presented to us in scripture in opposition to Cain's in its principles, and fruits, and final results. In the two there is a contrasted exhibition of righteousness and iniquity, and their correspondent fates in the world, now under the power of sin. This is the more striking as it occurs in the first two individuals of the human race which were born after the fall. But, as to the springs of life and action, it may be said that Abel's history and Cain's stretch on to the end, and characterize the two families which divide the world. They present also the irreversible opposition of righteousness and sin, and lay open the sources of the one and of the other in faith and unbelief.

Faith is the recorded characteristic of Abel's history, which, after sin had come in, was the only possible link of connection with God, the only possible ground of acceptance and pathway of restoration to His favor. For what does the

fall present, according to the truth of God's character and word, in regard to man's original position in innocence and on the grounds of nature? Is it not this -- expulsion from Eden -- sin which God will not associate himself with -- and death? And who that believes this but must either sink in hopeless despair when looking at himself, or find his hope and confidence in looking upward to the restoring power and grace of God?

But fallen man is a proud being proud under any circumstances -- and likes not to surrender the position that once was his, but which sin has forfeited. The fall that cast him down from his innocence has not quenched his ambition; and he would seek to maintain his place before God on grounds that involve the entire setting aside of His judgment of sin, and the utter subversion of His moral character as judge.

Cain's ground of approach to God is an example of this. For, with all that had so recently taken place in Eden, and with the consequences of the fall daily before his eyes, he nevertheless rushes into God's presence, and there seeks to be accepted, as if there had been no fall, no sin, no penalty of death as God's judgment of sin! He comes without faith, without confession, without bloodshedding, without a sacrifice to mark his subjection to death, without a single recognition of God's judgment of sin or a thought that "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" and yet he hopes to be accepted! But every man who seeks to have to do with God on any ground but that of the sacrifice of Christ, of which Abel's was a type, but copies the example of Cain, only under the aggravating circumstances of increased light and testimony from God. When death is not owned as God's judgment of sin, any expectation of restoration to His favor is only based upon the vain hope that God will falsify His word and that He will recede from the solemn judgment He has declared. For if I own that my *life* is forfeited under the just judgment of God for sin, it is plain that all hope in myself is for ever gone, and I am cast in faith on the death of Christ, by which sin's penalty has in grace been met.

But what in truth does Cain seek in coming with his bloodless offering before the Lord? Does he seek, and long, for restored intercourse with God because His favor is delighted in? Not in the least. He is satisfied with his position in a world of sin, and if he may but be allowed to enjoy the fruits of his toil, all that he seeks in intercourse with God is that he may obtain the divine sanction to his thoughts of himself, and thus silence the accusations of conscience and dissipate his fears.

And what does man's religion always seek? Not communion with God; not subjection to His word and will; not the sense of His light and favor to cheer the soul in a world of evil while looking onward, beyond the world and death, to an eternal dwelling in His presence! No: but it would pursue its own course in the world, without a thought in common with God, as to the world's condition, or

man's estate before Him, and then by some sacrifices, or services, or fruits of nature, would bind Him over to an approval of the worshiper's condition, and character, and aims. It would make self and not God its end, and then blindly seek to attach to its self-deceivings the sanction of God's approval and name! ⁸

Abel, on the contrary, by faith reads in the light of God's thoughts the sad history of the fall. He forgets neither his sin nor its penalty; but in his offering he puts death between himself and God, as the just judgment of sin.

But death thus owned feeds his hopes, and the divine acceptance of his person and gifts takes the place of every earthly tie and every spring of earthly blessing. For Abel is not here presented to us as a sinner seeking for pardon, but as a believer in intercourse with God, and his offering is the embodiment of his faith, as Cain's is of his unbelief.

The Lord had respect unto Abel and to His offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.

Each brought his character as well as his offering before the Lord; and Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous" {Heb. 11:4}, which was the formal reception of man back again into the place of divine favor. "God testified of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh." It was this revelation to his soul that formed his character as a witness for righteousness in the presence of the evil and hostility of the world, which is provoked by it: for Cain's spirit is the spirit of the world.

8. {Abel, the first martyr on earth, closes his history here in death at the hand of him against whom he witnessed for God as to the true manner of approach to God, and of acceptance as the fruit of it. If we could with any accuracy survey the scene and the testimony, and the different motives and ideas which produced such diverse actings in these two men, in the opening of the world's history, how impressive and grand it would become to us the more we dwelt on it, as a display of human religion against divine! Man does not, as a rule, deny altogether the claim of God, but he overlooks the moral side of it, and seeks to commend and render all acceptable by IMPROVEMENT. The Cains do not deny that there is need for improvement, but they rest everything on improvement. Abel, on the contrary, announces that all blessing to man comes from God through the intervention of one entirely *outside himself*, and therefore he is accepted; and because thus manifestly accepted of God, he is pursued with relentless hate, a hate that takes away the life of the owner -- the hatred of a murderer. The highest human religionists are, in reality, God's bitterest opponents; and in proportion as human religion is held to, so is their opposition to the divine. Abel heads the cloud of witnesses or martyrs. (The Greek word is the same for both.) He had obtained witness that he was righteous, hence he fell by the hand of his brother. What a commentary on man's goodness! and the earth which drank in his blood must answer for it. The fact of his death has a voice to man, and therefore though dead yet speaketh. Hence the Lord pronounces that, of the Jews -- the earthly people rejecting Him -- all the righteous blood shed upon the earth should be required: "from the blood of righteous Abel," &c. It called for judgment, and the world is oppressed with this additional judgment. Hence it is said of the blood of Jesus that it "speaketh better things than that of Abel"; for it on the contrary speaks of forgiveness.

The *ground* of righteousness before God, which Abel's faith lays hold of, is plain; but there is, further, *the life* of practical righteousness, which results from the faith that allies with God and brings into happy subjection to His will.

It was the blood of "*righteous Abel*" that Cain shed; and not merely of *accepted Abel*. For God in Abel's person had raised a living testimony to righteousness in the world, where sin has its course, in the harmony of Abel's spirit with His own character, who is "the righteous Lord that loveth righteousness." And it was this, we are told, that provoked Cain's hatred of his brother and his murder. For the scripture says,

Cain was of that wicked one who slew his brother. And *wherefore* slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous.

Faith wrought in Abel separation from nature's path, or the world's course (in principle) in the power of divine approval; and this awakens the hostility of the world, so that he meets death not as the consequence of sin, but as a witness for righteousness. His death becomes a sacrifice to righteousness, as his life was a life of faith, a life of hope in God as the God of resurrection, as well as the vindicator of righteousness which now had no place on earth.

Abel is, in this respect, a type of Christ, as suffering for righteousness, as Cain is a type of the world in crucifying Christ. But "the blood of sprinkling," through God's love in the gift of Christ, "speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Abel's earthly occupation and pursuits were also in accordance with his heavenly character and hopes; for we may speak of his heavenly character in contrast with Cain's, who had his home and interests on earth. "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." Both were lawful occupations; and the culture of the ground had now become, in a sense, necessary to man, who had no longer his home in paradise. But the eye of faith in Abel, looks upon the earth as the scene of the curse; and no results which labor may win by the cultivation of the reluctant soil, can take from his mind the thought that the very necessity for toil came in with the incoming of sin. In Eden and in a state of innocence, labor and the sweat of the brow had no place. Abel wanders with his flock, and his earthly necessities are met by that which is nourished by the dews and rain from heaven, and not by his laborious toil. He goes from place to place, as the pasturage of his flock demands — a wanderer in the world, having no immovable property to encumber him, or laborious improvements to attach him to an embellished home on earth. Cain tills the ground, as a settler in the world; and his toil, when rewarded with increase, brings no token to his mind of the presence of sin. The sweat of his brow to him is but the effect of honorable toil, and the fruits which his industry raises, are in his estimation, a token of the divine favor and blessing. This may seem a fatuity in Cain, almost beyond the power of

conception; but it must be remembered that though the penalty of *death* had been pronounced upon Adam's sin, Adam still lived. And unbelief, which would credit the declaration, "thou shalt not surely die," might easily persuade itself that while the sinner lived there was no proof that the penalty incurred would ever be exacted. And we know who has said,

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

But restored intercourse with God is Abel's power to judge of things around him, as it meets also the longing desires of his renewed spirit. For communion with God produces a double effect upon the character; it conforms to God in the love of holiness, and separates from the world which is in contrariety to Him, and governed by principles altogether at variance with those which He approves. Faith no more surely connects the soul with God, and gives discernment of His mind, than it forces into a path in direct opposition to the world.

Abel the righteous is cut off from the earth, and leaves neither name nor posterity there; for his record is on high. But to Cain is given a history of worldly exploits, and a distinguished posterity -- for unbelief and unrighteousness have their natural descent; but faith and righteousness are not found apart from their object and their source. Evil sustains and propagates itself, and has dominion in the earth; but righteousness is only found as sustained by Him who is its spring, while its home is above, and its hope in the "glory that fadeth not away." ❖

Abel: His Suffering and Sacrifice Typical of Christ

Abel and his offering typify two aspects of Christ. The first is that as Abel suffered as a righteous one at the hands of the man, his brother, so Christ suffered at the hands of man as *the* righteous One. Secondly, Abel's offering typifies what Christ suffered at the hands of the holy God, for sin. The fat of the offering points to the excellency of the offering. Indeed, the value and glory of Christ's Person as the God-man was imparted to the sacrifice of Himself on the cross in the three hours of suffering for sin in the darkness, and to His death, and to that precious stream of water and of blood. Some comments on this by J. C. Bayly are:

As Cain (Jude 11) represents the course of the "man of the earth" ⁹ in sin, so Abel represents the course of the righteous, and especially of the Righteous One -- Christ (Heb. 12:24). Now both Abel and the sacrifice typify Christ in suffering -- not in glory as Adam did -- but in the sacrifice He is suffering at the hands of God (i.e., by His ordinance) for sins, whereas in Abel we see Him suffering at the hands of man for righteousness. In Abel's sacrificial action we see Christ

9. {See Psa. XXX, a designation of the final Antichrist of prophecy.}

“*offering Himself.*” Three aspects are true: He suffered by the “determinate counsel of God” for the sins of others; He was by “the foreknowledge¹⁰ of God . . . by wicked hands taken and slain” {Acts 2:23} for His own righteousness; and He laid down His life voluntarily (John 10; Heb. 9) offering Himself without spot to God.

There are other aspects of the sufferings and death of our Lord, but these seem the principal ways in which they are presented. It is exceedingly objectionable to make such a theme a subject of cold critical analysis, still we cannot err in following with reverence what is revealed. It has been pointed out how distinct are these presentations, and how invariably that, when the suffering from the hand of God is presented (as in Psa. 22 and 102) it is for sin, and the result at the end of these Psalms and in the following ones is blessing to mankind; but when suffering from man is spoken of (as in Psa. 69) it is for righteousness and the result is judgment. It is in the former aspect the sacrifice is seen; in the latter aspect Abel. The characteristic of this type, then, is a Righteous life opposed in the world, hated and temporarily defeated, apparently crushed, but accepted by God, and in its results ultimately triumphant. Such a life breathes an atmosphere composed of two elements, Faith and Obedience -- kindred elements of such mutual regard that one cannot live without the other. Judged outwardly this life seems to be lamentably wasted and resultless: the very name signifies something vain and transient -- a breath {or, vanity}; but it is a breath of divine inspiration, the effects of which travel over the dismal centuries. Abel “being dead yet speaketh,” and one most definite speech is that there *must* be a future life in which wrongs are redressed and the perversions of human judgment reversed if there be such a thing as justice in the universe.

We are thus warned from the first against the crude and vulgar error of supposing that virtue is always rewarded and vice always punished in *this* life: a most mischievous delusion, which the multitude of novelists and dramatists work perpetually to uphold, notwithstanding that the daily experience of every one is otherwise. If we judge the virtue of lives by their outward success and results, then we have to account for the suffering and death of Abel the protomartyr, and the outward failure and disaster of thousands of lives, like his honorable, and like his apparently condemned and fruitless. The type of all such is Christ: there has been no such (outward) failure as that of the life and death of our Lord in human history. He said (Isa. 49:2) “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought”; and, after a dependent, laborious and devoted life, the outward result is a handful of ignorant fishermen as followers, who desert Him at the approach of danger, deny and betray Him; a crown of thorns, a scepter of reed, a cross of wood, and a borrowed grave. If God be just, such a life cannot be allowed to terminate *there*: time is thus shown to be but a part of eternity; and what is not set right in the present existence will be set right in the future.

Moreover Christ’s death in this aspect is full of comfort for many a

10. Not of course by the counsel this: observe the accuracy of the terms in Acts 2.

discouraged and broken life, apparently barren of results. It could not be more so than His; and yet, in outward defeat and disaster, He won far greater victories than when in the olden time, or in a day to come, He hurls the assaulting hosts from the battlements of heaven. The apostle is told that there is indeed One who has by the prowess of His victories acquired a right to unfold God’s purposes (Rev. 5); and this One is the Lion of Judah. But when John turns to see the Lion, he sees, instead, “a lamb as it had been slain.” It was in this way and character that Christ gained His mightiest triumphs -- in misconstruction, hatred, suffering, disastrous defeat and death. And we too.¹¹

Grace operated in Abel and this Cain would remove through murder. Our Lord said:

. . . but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father (John 15:24).

And he says to them, Behold the man! When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him they cried out saying Crucify, crucify [him] (John 19:6).

J. N. Darby remarked:

Christ has become man’s “brother” (it is not a question of God’s purpose and counsel here); and is not God demanding of the world, Where is Christ? Cain replied, “I know not: am I my brother’s keeper?”¹²

It is the world that has done this. The Jew and the Gentile had their part in it, though the Jew was the special instrument in it as the trial of the first, fallen man took place for Israel under the mosaic Covenant.

Abel’s Offering Signifies Propitiation and Acceptance

There has been discussion of whether or not there were sin-offerings offered before the giving of the law, or if they were all burnt-offerings. In Gen. 4:7 the word sin, we are told, may be rendered “sin” or “sin-offering.” The following quotation is helpful:

Abel’s sacrifice was not a sin-offering. Neither Cain nor Abel came before God with the conscience oppressed by a known transgression. It is the state of each of them that is in view, the state of man before God: the one owning himself driven justly out from His presence because of evil, yet drawing near to Him according to His grace; the other, the natural man insensible to sin. In God’s answer to Cain (Gen. 4:7), the subject is positive

11. *The Bible Treasury* 15:109-110.

12. “Cain, His World and His Worship,” *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 12:324. Read this whole, very profitable article.

transgression; and this confirms the thought that in the passage an offering for sin is meant, and not sin itself simply.¹³

So, typically speaking, that notice of a sin-offering brings Christ before Cain as the answer to “if thou doest not well.”¹⁴ Moreover, he would then maintain the elder brother’s place (Gen. 4:7b). That, of course, does not mean that the sacrifices recorded in scripture before the giving of the law were sin-offerings, though an additional aspect of Christ’s work on the cross is foreshadowed here. Let us now consider Abel’s offering as pointing to acceptance and propitiation:

Now I admit and believe that the free sovereign self-originated love of God is the source of all our joy and hopes and blessings, eternal and infinite as they are. But God exercises that love by bringing in a Mediator in death: not here by bloodshedding to meet guilt, but in perfect self-surrender to God in that which was death, as such, and the fruit of sin. Fat was offered (Gen. 4:4) as much as blood, yet not offered as such for forgiveness but for acceptance in Another, Who gave Himself wholly to God in death which had come in. And mark this was that souls might approach to God: each came with his offering.

Cain came, as if nothing had happened, so much so that he brought to God, as offering, what was the sign of the ruined state into which he had got, but which he did not reckon as ruin. There was no faith in it. In Abel’s there was. He offered by faith, which recognized that death had come in by

13. *The Bible Treasury*, New Series 2:143. W. Kelly discusses this at length in *The Bible Treasury* 19:290, concluding that sin-offering is meant. An argument used to support the idea that sin is meant is that “*lieth* at the door” means “couching,” like sin ready to spring on Cain. The following quotation may interest the reader:

Genesis 4:7 . . . The converted Jew had no authority for saying, that in the phrase “sin lieth at the door” the word “lieth” could not be applied to a quiet animal, as a sheep, but only to a wild beast, and that, therefore, the ordinary explanation was incorrect, which referred it to a sin-offering. The word לָיַח, in Gen. 4:7, “lieth,” is applied indiscriminately to a wild beast and to a tame animal. By referring to a Hebrew Bible the indiscriminate use may at once be seen, as in the following passages, in which the same Hebrew word occurs: In Gen. 49:9, “he couched as a lion”; Jer. 33:12, “shall be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down”; Psa. 23:2, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” Congleton, *The Christian Annotator* 2:90.

See also *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* 19:79.

14. {Gen. 4:7 says,

If thou doest well, will not [thy countenance] look up with confidence? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door . . .

Abel did well in presenting the offering he did; Cain did not do well. He had opportunity to judge himself, to repent, to own his state as fallen. Then for his acceptance he should bring an offering like Abel’s. Then he could look up in confidence. He had come in self-confidence, not in the confidence of the acceptable offering. He turns from refusal of the blood of acceptable sacrifice to shedding blood in murder. Is there anything typical in *that*}?

sin, but that Another had given Himself for him, an offering made by fire of a sweet savor. For there are two things: “unto Him That loveth us and washed us from our sins” {Rev. 1:5}; and “Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” {Eph. 5:2}. One was to clear foregone sins; the other, the value and preciousness of Him in Whom we are accepted -- “accepted in the Beloved” {Eph. 1:6b}. Now this was a question of acceptance in coming; and God did not accept Cain. He did accept Abel; but the witness was borne to his gifts. He was accepted, but God’s testimony was to that which he brought, the life of another in all its energies and perfectness {the fat} given up to God, in death.

Another thing we have to remark here; it was not God setting forth anything to the sinner. That was “a mercy-seat (*ἱλαστήριον*) through faith in His blood” {Rom. 3:25}. Here it is Abel presenting himself to God, but coming by the acceptance and perfectness of another who had given himself for him. And this is propitiation. Now to say that God could receive a sinner as He received an innocent person is to say that God is indifferent to good and evil. And note here, it was not by the eye of God resting on an inward change that a difference was made (there was such a change, for faith was working in Abel’s heart), but a judicial estimate on God’s part of the gifts he brought, Christ in figure, Christ offered in sacrifice; and for this we have the express authority of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It was a propitiatory sacrifice as ground of acceptance; or the whole basis of the standing of a fallen world is gone -- the whole moral basis of the preference of Abel to Cain.

That love, electing love, may have been there is admitted; but the ground of acceptance, as stated in scripture (see Heb. 11), is gone, if propitiatory sacrifice be not accepted. To win secure righteousness before God, and for the believer’s acceptance, according to the value that is in Christ, He offered Himself absolutely without spot for God’s glory.

Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.

Faith believed in it then and found its fruit. Abel was accepted, and distinctively on the ground of what he brought -- his gifts. Cain brought no such offerings; he had to be accepted in himself only, and he was not. Faith looks to this sacrifice, and finds acceptance and blessing according to the value of Christ in the eyes of God.

I only add now that God gave Christ to us for this end. He “sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” {1 John 4:10}. The self-originating work of love is in it, but the effectual work of suffering is to make good in righteousness that love. God forbid that I should weaken confidence in the Father’s love.

He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him {1 John

4:16b}.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us {1 John 4:16a}.

It is certain then, that man being fallen, Abel sought God's face and acceptance by a sacrifice, to the value of which God bore testimony, "by which he obtained testimony that he was righteous." It was a sacrifice which recognized death as come in, but which, as so presented, bore the character of perfect self-offering to God's glory. Not actual sins were in question, but the state of man and his acceptance on the ground of mediatorial death, in which God's own glory alone was sought on man's part in obedience, and in which the highest gift of grace shone out on God's part in love.¹⁵

Ed.

Quotes

There is never much use in contending with restless and disaffected people; better far leave them in the Lord's hands, for with Him, in reality, is their controversy.

We often plead *ignorance* when *indifference* would be the truer term to use.

We take some false step; we get into trying circumstances in consequence; and then, instead of meekly bowing down under the hand of God, and seeking to walk with Him, in humbleness and brokenness of spirit, we grow restive and rebellious; we quarrel with the circumstances, instead of accepting them as the just and necessary consequences of our own conduct.

From *Food for the Desert*, London: Morrish, 1876.

15. *The Bible Treasury* 17:321, 322.

Christian Zionism¹ and Present-day Israel Circumventing the Government of God

There is such a thing as the moral government of God and Israel is under it until such time as God steps in by divine sovereignty to act on Israel's behalf at the appearing of Christ in glory and judgment. The Lord Jesus had warned that God was the adverse party and He would cast them into prison if they did not make friends with Him (Matt. 5:23-26). The people heeded not. In a prophetic parable the Lord Jesus warned:

And [when] the king [heard of it he] was wroth, and having sent his forces, destroyed those murderers and burned their city (Matt. 22:7).²

Thus, from the fourth empire of the image in Dan. 2, i.e., the fourth beast in Dan. 7, came those forces. The Romans, who are the people of a future, coming Prince (Dan. 9:26), came in AD 70 and executed God's governmental sentence against that nation.

But before that happened, when Christ's blood was shed, the hand of God rent the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom. The standing of the Mosaic system thus came to an end *spiritually*. Yet, the Jews went on with the system. Moreover,

1. I doubt that "Christian Zionism" has but one definition in use. It might be used for Christians engaged in political action in favor of Israel. Since in the past postmillennialists (Jonathan Edwards, for example) looked for the salvation of Israel, and to be incorporated into the church, some might call that Christian Zionism, or at least look back to such things as a root of it. It may depend on one's own system of belief how it is defined. So it may be said that you are a Christian Zionist if you believe that Israel will be restored to her land by God, whether you believe Israel will be part of the church, or whether you believe that Israel will be restored and be distinct from the church, and distinct as a nation on earth under the reign of Christ. In this article "Christian Zionism" refers to evangelicals engaging in political action for the defense of present-day Israel.

2. J. N. Darby wrote:

Observe here, that from Matt. 21:28 to the end, we have the responsibility of the nation looked at as in possession of their original privileges, according to which they ought to have borne fruit. Not having done so, another is put in their place. This was not the cause of the judgment which was, and is in a more terrible way to be, executed on Jerusalem, and which even then accomplished the destruction of the city. The death of Jesus, the last of those who had been sent to look for fruit, brings judgment on His murderers (Matt. 21:33-41). The destruction of Jerusalem is the consequence of the rejection of the testimony to the kingdom sent to call them in grace. In the first case, the judgment was upon the husbandmen -- the scribes, and chief priests, and leaders of the people. The judgment executed on account of the rejection of the testimony to the kingdom goes much farther (see Matt. 22:7). Some despise the message, others ill-treat the messengers; and, grace being thus rejected, the city is burned up, and its inhabitants cut off. Compare Matt. 23:36, and see the historical prophecy in Luke 21. The distinction is maintained in all three gospels (*Synopsis* 3:118, note).

under the preaching of the gospel tens of thousands of Jews accepted Christ. But still they went on with Jewish things. We might call them, as such are called today, Messianic Jews. At that time God bore with it, for the Mosaic system was something God had instituted and He had patience with them while the gospel was going out to the Gentiles. He had, and has, no similar patience with saved Gentiles bringing in their heathen holidays and putting a 'Christian' face on them.

But the time drew near for the destruction of Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish order. Just before that was to occur, God directed that His Word be sent to the Messianic Jews, telling them to separate from the Jewish system. God gave opportunity to obey the Word instead of merely having to look through circumstances for the government of God, without direction being given through His Word to guide them.

The Jewish system really says that man cannot draw near to God; Christianity places the redeemed into positional nearness (Eph. 2) and indeed gives the Christian Christ's own place of nearness to the Father (Eph. 1:6). Positional nearness calls for corresponding practice. Practically, we enter the sanctuary above (Heb. 8:1, 2) by the blood of Christ (Heb. 10:19-22), because for us there is no veil to hinder access, nor do we have a temple with two-leaved doors (Ezek. 41:24) with a special priesthood (Ezek. 43:19; 44:15; 48:11), as will the New Israel under the New Covenant. Indeed, the Christian has no sanctuary but that where Christ is minister (Heb. 8:1-2). Christians having a sanctuary here on earth tells a tale of Judaizing.

But it was not Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, that gave this separating instruction to these Messianic Jews³ in the first century, AD. Rather, it was the apostle to the uncircumcision, i.e., Paul, that wrote the book of Hebrews which called them to separation from "the camp," though He did not address himself as Apostle to them, nor could he, for he was not apostle to the circumcision.⁴ Thus we read in Heb. 13:12, 13:

Wherefore also Jesus, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate: therefore let us go forth to him without the camp,

3. He may have been martyred before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

4. The evidence pointing to Paul as the writer of Hebrews is this:

1. 2 Pet. 3:15.
2. The writer was not one of the Lord's disciples when He was here on earth: Heb. 2:3.
3. Hebrews was written from Italy: Heb. 13:24.
4. The writer was hindered from leaving Italy: Heb. 13:19; cf. 2 Tim. 1:16.
5. He asks for prayer for his release: Heb. 13:23; cf. Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:19.
6. He knew Timothy was released: Heb. 13:23; cf. 1 Tim. 6:12.
7. Timothy was not in Italy, but the writer was expecting him: Heb. 13:23; cf. 2 Tim. 4:9.
8. He wanted to visit them with Timothy: Heb. 13:23.

bearing his reproach.

This passage directed the Messianic Jews of that day separate from their Messianic Judaism by going outside the camp: outside of Israel and its Mosaic ritual and practices.⁵ The king's forces were soon to come and destroy the murderers and burn their city (it is not "politically correct" to talk like this today⁶). We see that just before AD 70, the godly of Israel had warning and opportunity to act on the word of God in separating from that upon which the moral government of God was about to fall in devastating judgment.

In this way the remaining national polity and the temple worship were brought to an end by the moral government of God. "Moral government?" you ask. Yes, read Matt. 22:1-8 for the moral reason. Also read Matt. 21:33-46.

Some time ago I spoke with a young Orthodox Jew about how Jerusalem was becoming a burdensome stone to all nations (Zech. 12:3) and that the time of Jacob's trouble was coming (Jer. 30:7). He shrugged and said that he did not get into such things. Ignoring this shrug-off, I continued and pressed him that He was in a most dangerous position because he had no blood of atonement. Soon he entered into the conversation and said he was distressed that the Rabbis could not agree about Israel. I explained to him that Israel was under the government of God, and that He used Rome to destroy Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 -- no doubt as Moses had warned that they would be cast out, and, Israel must have before that casting out committed some grave sin -- and that you have no blood of the atonement, no Ark of the Covenant, no Shekinah, although Ezekiel in a vision saw the cloud return under Messiah's reign (Ezek. 43:4, 5). You have no blood of atonement, I pressed. You have no High Priest to go into the sanctuary with blood of atonement, I pressed. You are under the governmental hand of God. He lifted his finger to the side of one eye, and as if imitating tears going down the cheek, said, "On Yom Kippur {the day of Atonement} we have nothing but tears." Yes, I said, and you need blood of the atonement. I pointed out that Israel is presently *defying the government of God* which came down on them in AD 70, especially for some great sin they committed. And, I said, Israel is going to try to do something about the fact that you have no blood. Israel will build a temple and reinstate sacrifices, thus trying to get around God's judgment enacted on Israel in AD 70. Israel thinks to have a temple and sacrifices again, so having blood of atonement. But it is all effort to get around the judgmental hand of God which came down on Jerusalem in AD 70. So God is going to send the final Assyrian of the prophets, called the King of the North in Dan. 11, to once again raze Jerusalem. The confederacy against Israel may be seen in Psa. 83 and the final attack in Psa. 79. It will be the worst that has yet

5. Heb. 8:4, 5 show that when Hebrews was written the temple service was still going on.

6. It is politically incorrect because we live in a "no-fault" society -- except if you insist on Scripture and its morality, then *you are* at fault!

happened to Israel, worse than AD 70, worse than the Holocaust under Hitler. It will be the time of unparalleled trouble predicted by the prophets, the culmination of the time of Jacob's trouble. All this is because Israel seeks to circumvent God's government on them. Only Messiah can bless Israel and gather them. We must bow to the government of God and own it as deserved.

I left him with a tract that speaks of peace by the blood of Christ. We shook hands, and went our ways.

Oh, the awful blindness (i.e., hardening) that has happened, in part, to Israel (Rom. 11:25). Blinding, hardening, and reprobation follow after a course of wilfulness in the face of warning. They are not the causation of wilfulness, but the awful, judicial result of it in God's moral government. We see it in an individual, such as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. We see it in Rom. 1 regarding man. We see it in Israel's case -- the above two parables in Matthew show this, among other Scriptures.

So, we observe what is transpiring in the middle-East, praying that there may be those of Israel that God will save by the blood of Christ. But to join political endeavors to either further or weaken the cause of Israel is hardly the Christian's place.⁷ Because he was instructed in God's Word concerning Israel's future attempt to circumvent God's government on them, J. N. Darby anticipatively wrote:

The effort of the Jews to re-establish their system at the end, in despite of God, will but lead to open apostasy and definitive judgment. This will be the time of unequaled affliction, of which the Lord speaks. But from the time of the first destruction of Jerusalem by Titus until the coming of the Lord, the Jews are considered as set aside and under this judgment, in what degree soever it may have been accomplished.⁸

It is clear from Dan. 9:24-27 that the seventieth week must run its course before Israel comes into blessing. And blessed they shall be, for the gifts and calling of God are not subject to repentance (Rom. 11:29).⁹ But, their attempts at bringing in

7. Concerning terrorism, it is a government's duty to suppress evil (Rom. 13).

Let us keep in mind that the formation of the nation-state of Israel (1948) was founded with terrorism against the British occupation. Menachem Begin was the leader of a terrorist group. The book, *Terror Out of Zion*, chronicles these things. When Christ sets up Israel, it will be by sovereign, divine, and holy judgment, with all-overwhelming power. Man is trying to set up Israel first, but it will lead to Israel's greatest disaster, an attempting to circumvent the moral government of God, just before the Deliverer comes out of Zion, and all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26); i.e., the clearing of all the rebels will take place (Ezek. 20, etc.) and the righteous established.

8. *Synopsis* 3:185, 186.

9. The Gentile profession of Christianity is warned in Rom. 11 not to be wise in their own conceit, as if that Gentile profession will not come under judgment as Israel has. We learn in Rom. 11 that the Gentile profession will indeed be cut away, preliminary to Israel's restoration. That Gentile

(continued...)

God's blessing before Messiah comes will include building a temple and reinstating sacrifices (2 Thess. 2; Dan. 9:27). But God had said:

Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts saying, Behold the man whose name is [the] Branch {i.e., Sprout}; and he shall grow up from his own place, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah: even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne . . . (Zech. 6:12-13).

Israel's temple, built in defiance of God's moral government on them, will, no doubt, be razed by the final Assyrian of prophecy. This confederacy is given in Psa. 83.¹⁰ In Psa. 79:1 we read:

O God, the nations are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.

But preceding that destruction, Israel's wilfulness (except for the godly Jewish remnant) will lead to the acceptance of the final Antichrist of prophecy (1 John 2:18-23) seated in Jerusalem (2 Thess. 2:4) as king in Israel (Dan. 11:36-38),¹¹ henchman (Rev. 13:11-18) of the coming *Roman* prince (Dan. 9:26) who is the first beast of Rev. 13. Jewish sacrifices having been reinstated (Dan. 9:27), they will

9. (...continued)

profession knows what happened in AD 70, that the Jews have been set aside, and thinks that the profession of Christianity will not be similarly judged. That profession will also end in accepting the Antichrist. That will be the apostasy of Christendom.

10. This attack on Israel is noted in Zech. 14:2. More of the details are given in Dan. 11:40-45. This particular confederacy is composed of ancient enemies confederate under the King of the North. (None of this is the mythical "battle of Armageddon.") It is part of "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" (Rev. 16:14), which is composed of a sequence of battles in which the Lord, returned in glory and judgment, deals with various powers each according to their respective characters and sins -- preparatory to the inauguration of the millennial reign which will formally commence on the 1335th day from the middle of the 70th week..

11. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). The Antichrist they will receive. Luke gives a moral note on Israel's future apostasy in Luke 23:31, where "the green tree" means the earlier departure from God, while "the dry" points to the final character of their apostasy. Another moral characteristic given by Luke is that this will be the epoch of "the seven spirits" (Luke 11:23-26), i.e., completeness of spiritistic apostasy.

The rejection of the revelation of the Father in the Son is given in John 15:24:

but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.

In 1 John 2, "the last hour" refers to an epoch, one of the indicators of the fall of the Christian testimony viewed in responsibility, which began before the apostles were all off the scene. We read:

Little children, it is [the] last hour, and according as ye have heard that antichrist comes, even now there have come many antichrists, whence we know it is [the] last hour . . .

Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? *He* is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:18, 22).

be stopped in the middle of the 70th week for a new form of idolatry to be set up (Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Matt. 24:15) -- including:

- (1) the worship of Satan (Rev. 13:4),
- (2) the worship of the Beast (Rev. 13:15), and
- (3) the worship of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2), the second beast (Rev. 13: 11-18), the false prophet of Rev. 20:20.¹²

Therefore there **must be** a Desolator (Dan. 9:27) of Israel, i.e., the rod of God's judgment, the rod of God's moral government upon them (Isa. 10), to execute judgment that must exceed what happened in AD 70 and to exceed what happened under Hitler. There is a principle regarding God's rod of discipline that we should pause to consider:

Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it (Micah 6:9).

Hearing the rod is not the same as feeling the rod. Recalcitrance and stubbornness may feel the rod without listening to its lesson and bowing in repentance concerning its message. (This is true of individuals also). Israel fell under the rod of God's moral government through His use of the Romans as His rod. What Israel is presently doing, and will yet do, is recalcitrant, refusing to hear the rod, though the pain was great. So, not the Romans, but the final Assyrian of prophecy, will be the rod to smite even harder.

Therefore there lies before Israel the time of *unparalleled trouble* (Dan. 12:1; Jer. 30:7; Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 7:14¹³) -- and there can only be *one* unparalleled (i.e., greatest) trouble.¹⁴

At the consummation of the time of Jacob's trouble, the final Assyrian of prophecy¹⁵ will be the instrumental rod of God's affliction on Israel, a rod of His moral government. Yet, woe to that rod, for God will break that rod when He is finished using it (Isa. 10:12; 14:25). That rod also will fall under the moral government of God -- in a short, sharp, and summary way. This power is called the

12. This will take place during the 70th week of Dan. 9 (a seven year period). Matt. 24 has in view both half-weeks. Rabbis once (if not still) referred to the period as "the birth-pangs of Messiah." It seems more appropriate to view it as the birth-pangs of the future, restored Israel. We read that as soon as Zion travailed, the nation shall be born at once (Isa. 66:8).

13. The first four texts speak of the Jews being in it, with Jacob being saved through it; the next speaks of the present saints being kept *out of the hour* (out of *the time*) of it; and the final text speaks of Gentiles that come out of the tribulation, the great one, as blessed (cp. Matt. 25:37-40).

14. There are Christians eager to date the writing of the Revelation before AD 70 so as to get prophecies in the Revelation to be accomplished by and in, AD 70, thus leaving no prophecies of the future as we are considering it from Scripture.

15. *Notes and Comments*, vol. 4 contains an article, "The Assyrian."

King of the North in Dan. 11 (the final King of the North,¹⁶ i.e., the Assyrian, as he is called in the other prophets). In his crushing assault through the land of Israel he sweeps on to the King of the South (Egypt) and even further. But tidings out of the north-east cause him to return into Israel,¹⁷ and there this king of bold countenance (Dan. 8:22), apparently backed by Russia (cp. Dan. 8:24), meets the Prince of princes and is destroyed in the land of Israel, as Isa. 14:25 also says. Cp. Zech. 14:2, 3. God is going to settle matters His way. He will execute the counsel which is purposed concerning the whole earth (Isa. 14:26).

For it is the day of Jehovah's vengeance, the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion (Isa. 34:8).

For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed has come . . . mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I have trodden down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my fury; and their blood have I brought down to the earth (Isa. 63:4-6).

Finally, after the last power, Gog (Ezek. 38, 39; i.e., Russia), is broken by the victorious Man of God's purpose, the 1000-year reign of peace will commence and the temple of Ezek. 40-48 will be built. The sons of Zadok, the progeny of faithful Phinehas to whom God gave a covenant of the priesthood, will officiate. Israel will be the New Israel under the New Covenant, all righteous (Isa. 60:21):

Thy people shall also be all righteous: they shall possess the land forever -- the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

Israel will be restored by divine sovereignty, for all that pleases and glorifies God springs from His own sovereign work and blessing.

The linking of J. N. Darby's name with "Christian Zionism" (i.e., present evangelical political action backing Israel) is not, to me, an unexpected piece of ignorance on the part of Covenantist evangelical theologians, nor of historians, be they evangelical or otherwise. How simplistic: "why, JND came to America some seven times and spread 'dispensationalism' in the USA. And 'dispensationalists' in America are engaging in Christian Zionism, so JND may seem to some persons to have been the 'father' of Christian Zionism! And then there is the British 'Balfour

16. The designations, King of the North and King of the South in Dan. 11, come from the breaking of the empire of Alexander the Great (who is the notable horn on the he-goat (Dan. 8:5)) into four parts upon his death (depicted by the four horns in Dan. 8:8). The final ruler of one part, to the North of Israel, is called the King of the North; Egypt is meant by the King of the South. Dan. 11 gives us various intrigues of these two powers in the past, but at the end of Dan. 11:35, prophetic events are introduced. The wilful king is the Antichrist in Jerusalem, which lies between the other two powers.

17. The Beast and his armies had moved to Israel to protect the Antichrist (not killed by the Assyrian power), but were taken by the returning Lord (Rev. 20). The Assyrian hears of trouble and returns from the conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia and meets his doom.

Declaration' regarding a homeland for the Jews (which tracers-of-connections might think to trace back to JND, however tenuously). Why, British dispensational Christian Zionism was exported to America when JND taught the pretribulation rapture and the national restoration of Israel!" But note, however, he taught that *Israel will not be incorporated into the church*.¹⁸ No, to him, Israel would be distinct from the church and a distinct nation in the earth, under the New Covenant, from which the earthly government would flow forth. With an understanding of prophetic events essentially the same as the first part of this article, and viewing Israel nationally as under God's moral government until Christ's appearing in glory, along with his refusal to be involved in politics, JND is not a good candidate for father of Christian Zionism. Far from it.

It appears to me that evangelical Christian Zionism has been fostered mainly by 'dispensationalists' who have picked up some things here and there from JND, things that did not interfere with their church systems and clergy, and who have ignored other things also, some of which would bring the first man practically under the sentence of death, the testing of the first man having ceased with the cross, and consequently that man was declared lost. And this certainly includes rejecting, or ignorance of, what he taught regarding the moral government of God, as well as what he taught regarding the Christian's place as not of the world, nor of its politics and power, yet rightly acknowledging the authority of government as from God (Rom 13; etc.).

Evangelical, dispensational, Christian Zionism was not, and is not, learned from JND; it is a violation of what he taught.

Are evangelical Christian Zionists ignorant of where present-day Israel is heading? Is not the character of politically supporting Israel in what they are doing actually undermining God's moral government on the nation, even if unintentional? Our place is to recognize that what Israel is doing is man's effort to get out from under the governmental ways of God. It does not follow that this means despising Israel or not evangelizing Jews.

Ed.

JND, Patriotism, and Country

It is clear to me that a Christian, free to do as he will, could never be a soldier, unless he were at the very bottom of the scale, and ignorant of the christian position. It is another thing when one is forced to it. In such a case the question is this: is the conscience so strongly implicated on the negative side of the question, that one could not be a soldier without violating that which is the rule for conscience -- the word

18. Before JND, there were Postmillennialists that taught a restoration of Israel to Palestine, but as converted and *part of the church*.

of God? In that case we bear the consequences; we must be faithful.

What pains me is the manner in which the idea of one's country has taken possession of the hearts of some brethren. I quite understand that the sentiment of patriotism may be strong in the heart of a man. I do not think that the heart is capable of *affection* towards the whole world. At bottom, human affection must have a center, which is 'I.' I can say, 'My country, and it is not that of a stranger. I say, 'My children,' 'My friend,' and it is not a purely selfish 'I.' One would sacrifice one's life -- everything (not oneself, or one's honor) for one's country, one's friend. I cannot say, 'My world'; there is no appropriation. We appropriate something to ourselves that it may not be ourselves. But God delivers us from the 'I'; He makes of God, and of God in Christ, the center of all; and the Christian, if consistent, declares plainly that he seeks a country -- a better, that is to say, a heavenly country. His affections, his ties, his citizenship, are above. He withdraws into the shade in this world, as outside the vortex which surges there, to engulf and carry everything away. The Lord is a sanctuary.

That a Christian should hesitate whether he ought to obey or not, I understand: I respect his conscience; but that he should allow himself to be carried away by what is called patriotism -- that is what is not of heaven. "My kingdom," said Jesus, "is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." It is the spirit of the world under an honorable and attractive form, but wars come from "lusts that war in your members."

As a man I would have fought obstinately for my country, and would never have given way, God knows; but as a Christian I believe and feel myself to be outside all; these things move me no more. The hand of God is in them; I recognize it; He has ordered all beforehand. I bow my head before that will. If England were to be invaded tomorrow, I should trust in Him. It would be a chastisement upon this people who have never seen war, but I would bend before His will.

Many Christians are laboring in the scene of the war; large sums of money have been sent to them. All this does not attract me. God be praised that so many poor creatures have been relieved; but I would rather see the brethren penetrating the lanes of the city, and seeking the poor where they are found every day. There is far more self-abnegation, more hidden service, in such work. We are not of this world, but we are the representatives of Christ in the midst of the world. May God graciously keep His own.

1870.

Letters 2:110-111.

?

Question. Would you help me to understand the act of forgiving a Christian who is not gathered together to the Lord's table {name} as opposed to one who is? Is there even a difference?

Answer. The problem I see in connection with forgiving is that we might be hard and not forgive where there is true repentance, or we may be soft and -- wanting to appear to be gracious -- want to forgive when there is not really "godly sorrow unto repentance." In this case, I remember the repeated warning of A. C. Brown: "Some brethren seek to be more gracious than God Himself." Only the Word of God, used by the Spirit, can guide us.

An examination of Scripture leads to understanding that repentance precedes forgiveness. This is true for individual matters and for assembly matters. "Oh, let us just forgive him" is a sign of the flesh at work. Such are for an easier pathway for the Christian.

Let us suppose a case of fornication or adultery. In the case of the person in 1 Cor. 5, what the Apostle brought before the saints is: "for grief according to God works repentance to salvation, never to be regretted" (2 Cor. 7:10). "Grief according to God" is more than saying, "I am sorry." Let me illustrate from a situation I experienced one time. A person in the meeting confessed to two brothers to committing an act of fornication. The person was put away from the Lord's table, and allowed to be present at the meetings -- to be the last one to come into the room, and the first to exit, and sit by the door. (It is possible that there may be case(s) where persons are not permitted to attend.) After three months, at a "care" meeting, the case was brought up by several brothers concerning how sorry the person was and that it was time for restoration to the Lord's table. After those who thought this way had opportunity to speak about this matter, a brother of age, and experience, and faithfulness to the Lord, spoke up and said, Yes, the person is sorry -- sorry to have upset the brethren; sorry to have caused trouble; sorry to have gotten into this situation. But I have not seen godly sorrow unto repentance {KJV}. That means "*grief according to God works repentance*" -- which implies that there is another kind of grief which does not. One may be sorry about consequences caused by the evil, yet not be in the good of grief according to God that works repentance. It shows that "sorry" and "repentance" are not the same thing. The brother added, also, our young ones need to see that we are NOT SOFT ON SIN here. (Well, I think that was a message to all of us who listened to what he said.) I was glad to hear what that brother had to say. About three months later, there was evidence of the grief according to God that works repentance, and the person was restored. Others that are put away from the Lord's table may never come back.

The order of consideration is this:

- (1) What is due the Lord Jesus Christ -- the holy, the true.
- (2) The purity of the assembly.
- (3) The repentance and restoration of the guilty.

That order should never be violated. It is a moral order.

Repentance means taking God's view of myself and what I did, judging self with God's judgment on me; and seeking as much as I can to make the matter right. Psalm 51 is a Psalm of repentance that puts what is due God in the first place.

We must learn the principle brought out in 2 Cor. 7: grief according to God works repentance. "Sorry" may well be something else than that, and nothing but *grief according to God that works repentance* will do.

Concerning professed Christians not at the Lord's table, that does not change this principle. And it becomes difficult to the soul if family is involved. A brother -- not from here -- told me that he did not go to a meal after the funeral of a close relative of his, because of professed Christians there not repentant of their evil acts. That means that he acted on 1 Cor. 5:11 even though those persons were not such as had been excommunicated from an assembly gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus. They were professed Christians, and of course they expect others to make no objection to their course. They are disobedient to the Word but want the sanction of at least indifference to their course.

Brother Albert Hayhoe, now with the Lord, told me that one time at a conference he saw an excommunicated person sit down to the meal after a meeting, and the brethren hosting the meetings did not come and tell him to leave. So brother Hayhoe and his wife went to a restaurant. He did right. But what was permitted is a symptom of why the state of assemblies declines.

These principles often bring us into trial in our souls, especially when relatives are involved. But relatives must not be allowed to interfere with what is due the One we call Lord.

Yours in Him whose mercy we await (Jude 21)

Roy Huebner

PS:

It is possible a person repents, but does not seek to be at the Lord's table again. I was in an assembly once where we had such a case. The person made a full, candid confession, blaming self, and justifying the saints fully in their dealing with this person. We were all convinced that it was the grief according to God that works repentance. Therefore, the assembly followed the direction of 2 Cor. 7 to forgive, which is what the person desired, even though not seeking to be at the Lord's table.

Also, sin often brings consequences which cannot be removed. A sign of repentance is bowing to, and owning, God's disciplinary hand in the matter.

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