

# Unsearchable Riches

A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE

FOR GOD AND HIS

WORD

VOLUME XCVI

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## *It is Finished*

Blessed be God, our God!  
Who gave for us His well-beloved Son,  
The gift of gifts, all other gifts in one.  
Blessed be God, our God!

What will He not bestow  
Who freely gave this mighty gift, unbought,  
Unmerited, unheeded, and unsought,  
What will He not bestow?

He spared not His Son!  
'Tis this that silences each rising fear,  
'Tis this that bids the hard thought disappear.  
He spared not His Son!

Who shall condemn us now?  
Since Christ has died, and ris'n, and gone above,  
For us to plead at the right hand of love,  
Who shall condemn us now?

'Tis God that justifies!  
Who shall recall His reconciling grace,  
Or who the broken chain of sin replace?  
'Tis God that justifies!

The victory is ours!  
For us in might came forth the Mighty One,  
For us He fought the fight, the triumph won;  
The victory is ours!

Horatius Bonar  
—adapted



**UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 2005  
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-SIX**

**EDITORIAL**

**THE FACT** that I have been closely involved in the preparations of *Unsearchable Riches* for thirty-three years is a surprising one to me, but above that a source of sincere thankfulness to God. In His grace, I hope to continue being a part of this ministry. Yet I have reached an age when it seems wise to cut down on some of my responsibilities. With this in view, I have requested to be released from most of my active editorial duties for the magazine so that I can concentrate more on the preparation of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament. This means more responsibilities for Jim Coram and others involved in producing and mailing the magazine. We request your prayers on this matter.

I hope to continue, in the grace of God, to prepare the meditations on the book of Romans. It is a great source of happiness and peace for me to dwell on these words of evangel. In addition I hope to share brief, somewhat disconnected thoughts resulting from the continuing work on the Hebrew Scriptures. The translation and proof-reading chores involve certain dry and uninteresting technicalities, but there are many rewards for the spirit simply because it is God's Word that we are dealing with.

1 Timothy 4:9, 10 has long been a passage of comfort and encouragement to me, not just because it speaks of God as our Saviour and the Saviour of all mankind, but also because it speaks of Him as the living God, on Whom we rely (expect). We struggle and stumble, but always with the confidence that God will continue to perform His work among those whom He has hallowed, until the day of Jesus Christ (*cf* Phil.1:1-6).

D.H.H.



*"Blessed* be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the

disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved" (Eph.1:3-6).

To speak of our God and Father as "blessed" is to "speak well" of Him (*eulogia*, WELL-LAY [say] ing). It is to extol His goodness and to acclaim His greatness; it is to burst forth in praise, truly declaring, "How *great* Thou art"!

It is true that the course of our life is sometimes hard; there are many sorrows and discouragements. Some things may be so hurtful and enervating that at times we find ourselves becoming inordinately burdened, over our ability, even to the degree that we may be despairing of life itself (*cf* 2 Cor.1:8).

And, it is just as true that the course of our life is sometimes easy; things simply "go our way"; that is, what we want to happen does happen. What happiness it is to experience the appreciation, love, and support of friends and family, the satisfaction of worthy accomplishment, together with the countless pleasures of life that make it so good to be alive.

Accordingly, as God grants us wisdom and insight, we grow both in recognition and appreciation of the fact that our steps are indeed directed by Yahweh (Prov.20:24); thus, at least in measure in the peace of God (*cf* Phil.4:7), we perceive that "He has set a season for *every* event and for *every* deed" (Ecc.3:17b).

In this new year, besides our ongoing work in publishing *Unsearchable Riches* magazine, we are especially occupied with (and nearing completion of) the preparation of two major publications. The first of these is a new edition of the book *THE PROBLEM OF EVIL*, by A. E. Knoch; the second is a new, large fascicle of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament entitled *THE LATTER PROPHETS* (consisting of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets).

It is, then, with thanksgiving both for years of service "for God and His Word" already granted, as well as in anticipation of further labors, that I joyously asseverate, *Blessed be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

J.R.C.

## THE RESCUE OF LOT

(Genesis 19)

19 + The two messengers <sup>l</sup>came to<sup>d</sup> Sodom in the evening, +as Lot was sitting in the gateway of Sodom. +When Lot <sup>l</sup>saw them, + he <sup>l</sup>arose to meet them, and he <sup>l</sup>bowed down with his brow toward the earth. <sup>2</sup> And he <sup>l</sup>said: Behold, <sup>pr</sup>now, my lords, <sup>pr</sup>please turn in and lodge <sup>ʔ</sup>at the house of your servant and wash your feet. +Then you can <sup>c</sup>rise early and go <sup>ʔ</sup>on your way. +Yet they <sup>l</sup>said: No<sup>t</sup>, for we shall lodge in the square. <sup>3</sup> +But he <sup>l</sup>urged <sup>i</sup> them so intensely +that they <sup>l</sup>turned in <sup>ʔ</sup>with him and <sup>l</sup>entered <sup>ʔ</sup> his house. + He <sup>ld</sup>made a feast for them and baked unleavened bread, and they <sup>l</sup>ate.

<sup>4</sup> They had not yet <sup>l</sup>lain down +when the men of the city, men of Sodom that they were, surrounded <sup>on</sup> the house, from youth + <sup>fr</sup>even to old man, all the people <sup>f</sup>without <sup>end</sup>exception. <sup>5</sup> + They <sup>l</sup>called out to Lot and <sup>l</sup>said to him: Where are the men who came to you tonight? <sup>c</sup>Bring them forth to us, and let us know <sup>ʔ</sup>them.

<sup>6</sup> +So Lot went <sup>l</sup>forth to them, toward the portal, and closed the door after him. <sup>7</sup> + He <sup>l</sup>said <sup>ʔ</sup>to them<sup>0</sup>: Oh do not <sup>c</sup>do such <sup>l</sup>evil, my brothers. <sup>8</sup> Oh behold, I <sup>ʔ</sup>have two daughters who have not known a man. Oh let me <sup>c</sup>bring <sup>ʔ</sup>them forth to you, and you do to them as is good in your eyes. But do not <sup>l</sup>do anything to <sup>ʔ</sup>these men; for on <sup>so</sup>this account they have come <sup>i</sup>under the shadow of my rafters. <sup>9</sup> +But they <sup>lsa</sup>replied: Come close, yonder! And they <sup>lsa</sup>added: This one came to sojourn here as an alien, +yet he is judging, yea judging<sup>-</sup>. Now we shall <sup>c</sup>do more evil to you <sup>f</sup>than to them. And they <sup>l</sup>pressed very hard <sup>i</sup>against

the man, 'against Lot, and came 'close to break the door.

<sup>10</sup> + Then the two men 'stretched out 'their hands and 'brought 'Lot in to them, into<sup>d</sup> the house, and closed 'the door. <sup>11</sup> + As 'for the men who were at the portal of the house, they smote them 'with a dazzled perception, from the small + unto the great, +so they 'tired 'of finding- the portal.

<sup>12</sup> + The two men 'said to Lot: Do you 'have anyone<sup>f</sup> else here? Son-in-law and your sons and your daughters and all who are yours in the city, 'bring them forth from the 'riplace. <sup>13</sup> For we are about to 'bring 'this 'riplace to ruin', 'because great is the outcry over them 'before the face of Yahweh. And Yahweh has 'sent us to wreck it.

<sup>14</sup> + So Lot went 'forth and 'spoke to his sons-in-law who were to take' his daughters, and he 'said: Get up, go forth from 'this 'riplace, for Yahweh is about to 'bring 'the city to ruin'. +But in the eyes of his sons-in-law he <sup>lb</sup>was as if he were making fun'.

<sup>15</sup> + As 'dawn came up, + the messengers 'rushed Lot 'on, > saying-: Get up, take 'your wife and 'your two daughters 'who are found' here, <sup>7</sup>and come out<sup>0</sup>, lest you be 'swept off in the depravity of the city. <sup>16</sup> + Yet he was dallying, and so, with a 'fast grip, the men 'took him 'by the hand, and his wife 'by the hand, and his two daughters 'by the hand, 'for Yahweh was sparing<sup>on</sup> him; and they 'brought him 'forth and 'let him 'rest<sup>f</sup> outside > the city.

<sup>17</sup> + It <sup>lb</sup>came to pass <sup>as</sup>when they had 'brought 'them forth- 'outside<sup>d</sup> +that one of them 'said: Escape<sup>on</sup> for your soul; do not 'look<sup>af</sup> behind you; and do not 'stand still anywhere in the basin; escape to<sup>d</sup> the mountainous area lest you be 'swept off.

<sup>18</sup> + Yet Lot 'said to them: Oh certainly not, my lords! <sup>19</sup> Oh behold, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have 'magnified your kindness <sup>w</sup>that you have <sup>d</sup>shown <sup>wi</sup> me >in 'preserving 'my soul alive'. +But I, I 'can-

not › escape<sup>-</sup> to<sup>d</sup> the mountainous area, lest ›evil cling to me and I die. <sup>20</sup> Oh behold, ›this ›city is near enough to flee there<sup>d</sup>; and it is inferior. Oh let me escape there<sup>d</sup>! Is it not inferior? + Let my soul live! <sup>21</sup> + He <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him Behold, I will lift up your face even ›in ›this matter ›by my not overturning<sup>-</sup> ›the city <sup>w</sup>that you speak of. <sup>22</sup> Hasten! Escape there<sup>d</sup>, for I ›cannot ›do<sup>-</sup> anything until you have come<sup>-</sup> there<sup>d</sup>. Therefore one calls the name of the city Zoar.

<sup>23</sup> The sun came forth over the earth +when Lot came to<sup>d</sup> Zoar. <sup>24</sup> +Then Yahweh caused sulphur to rain on Sodom and on Gomorrah, and fire from ›Yahweh from the heavens. <sup>25</sup> +Thus He ›overturned ›these ›cities and ›the entire basin and ›all those dwelling in the cities, and <sup>7</sup>everything<sup>0</sup> sprouting from the ground. <sup>26</sup> +When his wife ›looked back from <sup>af</sup>behind him, + she ›became a monument of salt.

<sup>27</sup> + Abraham ›rose ›early in the morning to go to the <sup>ri</sup>place where he had stood ›before the face of Yahweh.

<sup>28</sup> And he ›gazed down on the surface of Sodom and Gomorrah and on the entire surface of the basin area, and behold, + he ›saw that the fumes ascended from the area like the fumes of ›a limekiln. <sup>29</sup> + It ›came to pass ›when Elohim wrecked<sup>-</sup> ›the cities of the basin +that Elohim was ›mindful of ›Abraham and ›sent ›Lot off from the midst of the overturning, ›as He overturned<sup>-</sup> ›the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

<sup>30</sup> +Now Lot went ›up from Zoar and ›dwelt in the hill country, and his two daughters were with him, for he was fearful to dwell in Zoar. +So he was dwelling in ›a cave, he and his two daughters <sup>7</sup>with him<sup>0</sup>. <sup>31</sup> + The firstborn ›said to the junior sister: Our father is old, and there is no man in the area to come on us according to the way of all the earth. <sup>32</sup> Do go, let us ›give ›our father wine to drink; +then let us lie with him and let us <sup>m</sup>keep seed ›alive from our father.

<sup>33</sup> +So they <sup>c</sup>gave 'their father wine to 'drink <sup>i</sup> that night. +Then the firstborn 'came and 'lay 'with her father. +Yet he did not know <sup>i</sup> when she lay down<sup>-</sup> +or <sup>i</sup> when she arose<sup>-</sup>. <sup>34</sup> + It 'came to pass <sup>f</sup>on the morrow +that the firstborn 'said to the junior sister: Behold, I lay 'with <sup>7</sup>our<sup>0</sup> father yesternight. Let us <sup>c</sup>give him wine to drink tonight <sup>mr</sup>also; +then come and lie with him, and let us <sup>m</sup>keep seed 'alive from our father. <sup>35</sup> +So they <sup>mr</sup>again <sup>c</sup>gave 'their father wine to 'drink <sup>i</sup> that night; and the junior sister 'got up and 'lay with him. +Yet he did not know <sup>i</sup> when she lay down<sup>-</sup> +or <sup>i</sup> when she arose<sup>-</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> +Thus the two daughters of Lot became 'pregnant <sup>f</sup>by their father. <sup>37</sup> + The firstborn 'bore a son and 'called his name Moab, <sup>7></sup> saying<sup>-</sup>, From my father<sup>0</sup>. He is the father of the Moabites unto 'this day. <sup>38</sup> +As for the junior sister, she' <sup>mr</sup>also bore a son and 'called his name Ben-ammi, <sup>7></sup> saying<sup>-</sup>, Son of my kinsman<sup>0</sup>. He is the father of the sons of Ammon unto 'this day.

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### JUST LOT

ALTHOUGH Yahweh said, "Descend will I and see" (Gen. 18:21), He remained behind with Abraham, while the two messengers went on to Lot in Sodom. Lot was a just man, and was "harried by the behavior of the dissolute in their wantonness, (for the *just* man dwelling among them, in observing and hearing from day to day, tormented his *just* soul by their lawless acts)" (2 Peter 2:7,8). So he was saved, but he was not in fellowship with Yahweh, as Abraham was. Instead of coming Himself to Lot, Yahweh sent His messengers. Lot, instead of being an intercessor for Sodom, like Abraham, fails to save even his sons-in-law, and loses all his own property and becomes the incestuous progenitor of idolatrous nations which were at enmity with the people of promise.

## WALLS

Abraham lived in a tent, without any defences to insure his security. In contrast, Lot lived in a city with walls and a gateway, built to insure the safety of those within. Yet Abraham was safe in Yahweh's keeping, and Lot was in direst danger from His wrath. Moreover, the city gateway, which is first mentioned here, was the place of fellowship and of judgment. It was a spacious room with vaulted entrances and seats where the elders sat and discussed the affairs of the city and dealt out justice. Abraham had fellowship with Yahweh, which was a source of joy and satisfaction. Lot, however, was disturbed and vexed by his contacts with the Sodomites, and in place of justice there was wrong and riot.

The reception given by Lot to the two messengers was much like that which Abram gave the three. Yet Lot had risen in the world, so that he sat in the gate of Sodom, the place of honor. But the messengers were not impressed by this. They had responded cheerfully to Abram's invitation, but now they refuse Lot's hospitality. They did not wish to have fellowship with him. Indeed, it was not on his account that they had come to warn him. We read that, as "Elohim wrecked the cities of the basin, Elohim was mindful of *Abraham* and sent Lot from the midst" (19:29). It was due to Abraham's intercession that Lot was warned. Lot did not have nearly as high a place in Yahweh's regard as he had in Sodom's. We may hereby note that when a believer accepts the honors of men, he thereby forfeits those which come from God alone.

## CALLING

As we also are among those who have been *called*, a special interest for us lies in the *call* of Lot. First of all, let us note that none were saved except those called by the messengers. Lot tried to call his sons-in-law, but it was

not what old theologians called an "effectual" call. But those of us who have tried to save some of our relatives will understand how he was received. If God does not call, no one else can. The very earnestness and urgency of Lot made him appear ridiculous. Just imagine, they had lived in this place all their lives, and not even a meteor had fallen. Now, without any cause, fire and sulphur were to utterly destroy them! They thought that Lot was insane, so they took it as a joke.

The contrast between the response of the messengers to Abraham's invitation to partake of his hospitality, and their reluctance to enter the house of Lot, is very suggestive. They gladly accepted Abraham's proposal to refresh themselves, and brought him the glad news that the long-promised heir would shortly be born. What rejoicing they must have left behind! At last a definite date had been fixed for the greatest event in Abram's life!

#### LOT ENTERTAINS

When the messengers entered Sodom they had a very different message to deliver, a most unwelcome and fearful threat of disaster and doom, which would be the very reverse of repayment for any favors they might receive. So they determined to lodge in the square. It took excessive urging to get them into Lot's house. Yet they finally consented to go, for in the East, it might be construed as an unforgivable insult to refuse such hospitality. So Lot had the high privilege of entertaining them, and he made a feast in their honor. But they could get no rest in a city so far gone in wickedness and immorality.

Before they could lie down, the Sodomites fully exposed the extent and depth of their depravity. Abraham felt sure that there would at least be ten righteous. Now it turns out that young and old, from the outmost parts come together to do one of the most immoral and degraded deeds that a



human can commit, and this against strangers who were their guests. Even Lot tried to shelter those under his roof by counter concessions which are shocking in the extreme. His morals had been contaminated by contact with this sinful city also. Only the superhuman craft of the messengers was able to shield them from the lust of the Sodomites.

#### THE MOB

But Lot's pride must have received a severe shock. He had a seat in the gateway as a judge, possibly because of the size of his flocks, not because of his character and mature wisdom. Now that he seeks to act as a judge, and condemns their iniquitous proposals, they remind him that he is only a sojourner, and has no right to rule over them. Then they even threaten him with the fate they had intended for his guests, so that the messengers had to intervene and bring Lot back into the house. Then they disabled the mob by means of dazzlings. One who has this cannot see anything but flashes of light, which make it impossible to recognize objects. It is very disconcerting and tiring, and they finally gave up trying to enter Lot's house.

Lot seems to have struck deep roots in Sodom, for some of his daughters had married men of the city. The messengers sent him to bring these forth, and so save them from impending ruin. But Lot had evidently lost even the respect of his sons-in-law, for they did not take his fearful warning seriously. He does not seem to have had any son, so that all his posterity was cut off except the later incestuous sons by his own daughters. He may have hoped to help the Sodomites by his presence among them. But, alas, it worked in reverse. His daughters had evidently sunk very low morally, by contact with the Sodomites, before they could make him drunk enough to father their sons. Such is the fate of faith when it is divorced from practice. The honors of the world may lead to disaster.

## ZOAR, INFERIOR

In the morning, when the rain of fire and sulphur was due, Lot himself dallied so long that the mortals took the four to be rescued by their hands and brought them outside of the city. Even then, though warned to flee to higher ground, outside the basin, on the mountain which was on its edge, and reach a place above the sphere of destruction, and depend on Yahweh alone for protection, Lot begs to enter another city, inferior to Sodom, so not as good a shelter even as it might have been.

Lot's previous conduct had shown that his faith was by no means pure, but sadly mixed with his own devices. He had, indeed, come out with Abram, but he had no promise on which to base it, as Abram had. Then, when he had to part with Abram, he did not insist that Abram have the best, as was fitting, and depend on Yahweh's blessing, but chose his portion by sight. This mixture of sight with faith continued even in his salvation, which was not a gracious one, by faith alone, but depended on his leaving the city and walking toward the mountains, and not looking back. It seems as if the messengers almost had to drag them forth at the very last.

## LOT'S WIFE

Once more, in the future, there will be a salvation similar to this when the Son of Mankind will be unveiled (Luke 17:28-33). Not only a small basin near the Dead Sea will be destroyed for its wickedness, but the whole earth will be judged by sore judgments when the Son of Mankind is unveiled. Then, also, salvation will not depend on faith alone (as it is today) but upon *prompt* obedience. Lot was warned not to look back, but his wife did so, and was turned into a monument of salt (Gen.19:26). Then they are warned not to delay an instant, not even to glance

back at the destruction. Yet we must note that Lot's wife was not destroyed with the city, and was not turned into a pillar of stone, but a *monument of salt*. She was to be *remembered*, for such monuments were erected in memory of the dead, as Rachel's monument (Gen.35:20). And, being of salt, it was a preservative, for although her faith faltered, she did believe.

#### MOAB AND AMMON

Although Lot had sought security in Zoar, he soon feared to dwell there, and went up into the mountain where he had been told to go at first (Gen.19:30). In Zoar his daughters might have found husbands, but when they dwelt in a cave, far from other habitations, the daughters carried with them some of the immoral thinking of the Sodomites. Lot, doubtless, also was affected by their decadent habits and allowed his daughters to make him drunk. And so, from merely being separated from Abram on account of his greed for gain and glory, he fathers two breeds of peoples, Moab and Ammon, who were thorns in the side of Abram's descendants when they lived in their land.

Moab (*M u ab* FROM-OUR-FATHER), as a people inhabited the country east of the Dead Sea. Unlike Lot and Abram, both Moab and Ammon were enemies of the people of promise, and were not to be received into Israel (Deut.23:3). They were subjugated by David (1 Chron. 18:2), but they broke loose after the death of Ahab. They were always a thorn in the side of Israel. Their idolatry led many astray.

Ammon (*Om m un* People-FROM-er), the son of the younger daughter of Lot, founded a nation northeast of Moab, his brother, and east of the tribe of Reuben, between the Arnon and the Jabbok, displacing a race of giants (Deut. 2:19,20,37). None of them could be received into the congregation of Israel up to the tenth generation (Deut.23:3).

There was recurrent conflict with Israel. David subjected them, but it was not permanent.

The story of Lot and his incestuous sons is given us in order to show the bitter fruit of a selfish motive. We are not told what prompted him at first, but can discern it in his actions. At first it is hardly apparent. Abram is told to leave his relatives, so could not have invited Lot to go along. Lot, unlike Abram, had no leading from the Lord, but, of his own will, imposed his presence on Abram, and prospered. But, when it came to the test, he got the best of Abram and chose to cast his lot with Sodom. This selfish choice clearly revealed his false incentive, and was emphasized by his insubjection to Abram and the Subjector, and by his reliance on earthly possessions rather than on Yahweh. These traits were intensified by his double paternity and emerged in the actual enmity of his progeny to the seed of Abram. This should help us to see the importance of a pure motive (2 Tim.3:10). Like a faulty compass on a ship, a false motive may lead one far astray, and even lead to shipwreck.

A. E. Knoch

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#### RICHMOND BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

The 2005 Richmond Virginia Bible Fellowship annual conference will be held from April 1-3. The location for these meetings is the Days Inn at 2100 Dickens Road in Richmond (804-282-3300). Please mention the Richmond Bible Fellowship when making reservations in order that the Fellowship might thereby obtain credit toward meeting room expenses.

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#### JANE LISABETH BRYAN

Our friend in the Lord, Jane Bryan, died in Scottsdale, Arizona on April 14, 2004, age 53. Her death followed a long personal battle with cancer, a battle which she lost; yet her future victory over death is assured, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

As her husband Warren wrote to us, "Many years of concordant study during trials of infirmity have brought strength and expectation: God knows the sequel, 'for He will be making the sequel also.'"

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE CROSS, AND PERSONAL ADJUDICATION

### Question:

Will *sins* be a part of judgment? Will *offenses* be a part of judgment? Are *works* (i.e., acts or deeds) sinful, yet not sin? Are these issues different between believers and unbelievers?

We are explicitly told that Jesus, as the “Lamb of God,” is “*taking away the sin* of the world” (John 1:29); and, we are explicitly told as well that God “makes [Christ] to be *a sin offering* for our sakes that we may be becoming God’s righteousness in Him” (2 Cor.5:21). Similarly, according as we are informed that God “wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4), it is likewise revealed to us that “Christ Jesus . . . is giving Himself *a correspondent Ransom* for all” (1 Tim.2:6).

Since Christ has died for our sins (1 Cor.15:3), and since God has conciliated the world to Himself and is not reckoning their offenses to them (2 Cor.5:19), it is sometimes said that God will not judge men for either their sins or their offenses, but only for their acts.

This, however, seems like a distinction without a difference. Since it is simply a fact that men’s acts are both sinful and offensive, it would seem that the very reason that their acts deserve judgment is because of their sinfulness and offensiveness. Therefore, how can it be true that God will not judge men for either their sins or their offenses, but only for their acts?

Still, and in any case, I am mindful that, in accordance with the will of God, all will eventually be saved, being mindful as well as to why this is so. It is because

Jesus, as the Lamb of God, has indeed taken away the sin of the world; it is because, as God's Christ, God has made Him our sin offering; and, similarly, it is because Christ has given Himself a correspondent Ransom for all, that all accordingly may be saved through Him. Still, I'm having a little trouble putting all the pieces of the puzzle together, not with respect to ultimate salvation, but with respect to judgment, both that of the believer and of the unbeliever.

**Answer:**

I AGREE with you that any claim to the effect that God will not judge men for either their sins or their offenses, but only for their acts, is a distinction without a difference (that is, a formal distinction without a substantive difference). It simply is not true that God will not judge men for either their sins or their offenses, but only for their acts. Such an assertion is not a rational claim, for it amounts to saying that God will not judge men for either their sins or their offenses, but only for their (sinful and offensive) acts, which is to say, for their sins and their offenses.

In light of your concern here, however, perhaps I should clarify what I said in a recent article, where I wrote: "It does not follow from the fact that, as a timeless truth, *sin* has been taken away, nor from the companion fact that, personally speaking, *offense* is not being reckoned, that God will therefore do nothing at all insofar as personal adjudication is concerned with respect to the dreadful deeds of His beloved creatures. God will still bring every *act* into judgment . . . ." <sup>1</sup>

I did not intend to make any metaphysical distinction between the word "sin" and a manifestly sinful "act," but simply to use the language of Scripture itself when speak-

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1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.95, pp.87-96, "Growth in Realization of God."

ing of what it is that is to be brought into judgment, namely, it is our acts. My thought was not at all that, because of Christ's sacrifice on behalf of our sins, when God brings our acts into judgment, they will somehow no longer be sinful deeds in His sight, but only that, as I subsequently explained, even if these deeds should be ever so "dreadful" (not to mention sinful), even so, they will not be able to preclude our salvation.

Before commenting further, I would like to address your general inquiry by making a simple and direct reply to your specific questions. In reference to our personal adjudication before God through Christ, you asked: "Will *sins* be a part of judgment? Will *offenses* be a part of judgment?" My answer is, Yes; insofar as our bad acts are concerned, it is their very sinfulness and offensiveness that calls forth *judgment* concerning them, which is to say, that calls forth *God's wise and righteous response* in answer to their occurrence.

You then asked: "Are *works* (i.e., acts or deeds) sinful, yet not sin?" Finally, you asked, "Are these issues different between believers and unbelievers?"

In regard to this last question, No, these issues as to how God views sins, offenses, and deeds are the same for all, whether one should be a believer or an unbeliever. Believers, who, first of all, are God's *chosen* ones, who as His chosen ones are graciously granted to be believing, enjoy the gracious gift of eonian life, which is not the portion of unbelievers. But whether one is a believer or an unbeliever, or whether one is or is not afforded eonian life, has no bearing on how God views their works of sin and offense.

In light of the thrust of your overall inquiry here, I think what you wish to ask is, "Even though a man's works may be sinful in themselves, since Christ has died for these very works of sin, is it the case that therefore God does not view them as sins or at least does not forensically reckon them as

works of sin?" "Forensic" as used here, means "relating to courts of law;" and, theologically, simply has in view God's lawful (which is to say, righteous) rule or determination.

The question then becomes, "Even though a man's works may be sinful in themselves, since Christ has died for these very works of sin, is it the case that therefore God has determined not to consider them as sin and *hence not to deal with them as sin*?" To this question my answer is as follows: No, it is simply not the case in the matter of the personal adjudication of sinners, that since Christ has died for our sins, God therefore no longer considers our sins to be what they actually are, nor acts in response concerning them according to their actual nature. To the contrary, God views things as they are, and responds to them accordingly, according to their actual nature.

God has no need to resort to a legal fiction. In order to save us, He need not pretend that our sins are not sins. As concerns our salvation, this is settled through Christ's sacrifice. Therefore, our sins cannot speak our condemnation. Sin shall not be lording it over us, for we are not under law, but under grace (Rom.6:14). With respect to ultimate issues, this same principle holds true for unbelievers as well as for believers. This is because, "If One died for the sake of all, consequently all died" (2 Cor.5:14); and, "... one who dies has been justified from Sin" (Rom.6:7).

Since, because of Christ, our sins cannot speak our condemnation, there is no need for God to implement any exotic forensics on our behalf. By our acts, we are no more able to render ourselves permanently lost any more than, by our acts, we are able to save ourselves. Hence, in consideration of our sins as they are, God determined that Christ should die, on our behalf (*cf* Acts 4:27,28; 2 Cor. 5:21). *And*, in consideration of our sins as they are, God has also determined that all mankind should be subjected to His personal adjudication concerning their sins. For



believers, who are vessels of mercy, their personal adjudication will take place in front of the dais of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10); For unbelievers, who are vessels of indignation, their personal adjudication will occur in the day of judging, following the thousand years (Rev.20:5; 11-15).

Insofar as man's *salvation*<sup>2</sup> is concerned, through Christ, *all that needs be done has been done* unto this end, that the dictates of God's righteousness related thereunto might be entirely satisfied. In the judgment of the cross, we are *saved* through the blood of Christ, plus nothing.

Through the work of Christ in His suffering and death, our sins (which include our offenses<sup>3</sup>) have been *salvifically* died for; thus they have already been brought into judgment with respect to our salvation.

In saying, however, that thus, *with respect to our salvation*, our sins have already been brought into judgment, this is not at all to say that therefore they have already been brought into judgment in every way that God intends to judge them.

Judgment simply speaks of *decision*; hence, in respect to God's works or divine activities, while God has decided that men are to be *saved*<sup>4</sup> through Christ, He has also decided that they are to be *subjected to personal adjudication* for

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2. Here, I have in view man's salvation from sin, in all its aspects; these include salvation both from *being* a sinner, constitutionally, as well as from having committed sinful and offensive *acts*.

3. Our *offenses* (i.e., our faulty deeds as considered in their offensiveness to God) are themselves sins, for they "miss the mark" of the ideal, that of being "good and well pleasing and perfect" in His sight (cf Rom.12:2).

4. We ourselves as well as all humanity, through Christ, will be saved as follows: we will be saved *from* dying and death, even as from having been constituted sinners with all the deleterious effects thereof; and, we will be saved *for* endless life and glory, vivification and immortality, in the enjoyment of an incorruptible and altogether righteous constitution.

all of their acts (*cp* Rom.14:12; Ecc.11:9; 12:14; Matt. 12:36). Nothing could be more false than to reason that since Christ will save us from sin and death and for endless life and glory, that God is therefore obliged to exempt us from all personal judging. Conversely, it would be equally false to reason that since we are *not* exempt from personal judging, therefore Christ will not save us at all, neither from sin and death nor for endless life and glory.

God's works of personal judgment to which His creatures are appointed, must not be looked on as separate acts of settling for our sins or offenses with a view to the determination of our "destiny." It is important to rid the word "judgment" of the notion of punishment and to confine it to the thought of adjudgement or decision. Since God's "judgment" merely refers to His decision, whether any certain divine decision, inherently, should be either salutary or adversative with regard to the human experience, is not the point. It is in the purpose of God—for His own glory and the benefit of His creatures—that men should undergo discipline and chastening. Therefore, they will undergo discipline and chastening, each one as befits his own calling and as accords with his own circumstances.

Since whatever God does is right (is right for Him to do), and since, during the eonian times, God has appointed a small part of mankind as vessels of mercy and the remaining part as vessels of indignation (Rom.9:9-24), it follows that it is right for Him to do this. And, it follows as well if we should not approve of such a design and operation, that it is not God's designs and operations that need revision, but it is instead our own ethical opinions that are in need of adjustment.

Note that both the vessels of mercy and of indignation are chosen for their respective roles by God, according to His own wisdom and purpose. No one becomes a member of either group according to how one has exercised

ultimate control over one's own affairs. Besides, it is simply a fact that humans do not have ultimate control over their own affairs.

It is evident that humans do not have ultimate control over their own affairs, since *all* is out of, through, and for God (Rom.11:36). Lest anyone should legitimately be able to claim that when Paul says "all" here that he somehow means anything less than all that exists and all that occurs, the apostle wisely precludes the legitimacy of any such claim through the logic of his argument. He declares, "O, the *depth* of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! *For*, who knew the mind of the Lord? *or*, who became His adviser? *or*, who gives to Him *first* and it will be repaid him? *seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!*" (Rom.11:33-36).

The reason that *no one*, in himself, already *knew* the mind of the Lord, and *no one* became His adviser, informing Him of something of which, hitherto, He had been ignorant, and *no one* gave something to Him *first*, something which did not originate in Him, is *because all* is out of *Him*, through *Him*, and for *Him*. Therefore, any claim that asserts that anything less than *all* that exists and *all* that occurs is out of, through, and for God, is necessarily a mistaken claim.

The standard objection to the truth of God's deity with respect to all that exists and occurs, comes in the form of a protest. Against the truth that "to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is hardening" (Rom.9:18), the *protestor* is swift to reply, "Why, then, is He still blaming? for Who has withstood His intention?" (Rom.9:19).

Far from acknowledging any force or legitimacy in the protestor's audacious complaint, the apostle simply responds: "*O man! who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God? That which is molded will not protest to the molder,*

‘Why do you make me thus?’ Or has not the potter *the right* over the clay, out of the same kneading to *make* one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor? Now if God, wanting to display His indignation and to make His powerful doings known, carries with much patience, the *vessels* of indignation, adapted for destruction, it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the *vessels* of mercy, which He makes ready before for glory—us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also” (Rom.9:2-24).

It is true that many of us who are vessels of mercy are more sinful than many who are vessels of indignation. But even so, as vessels of mercy, it is our very deep-dyed sinfulness that will serve so well to display God’s mercy, since only an abundance of mercy, as accords with *grace*, pity, and compassion (cf Rom.9:15; Ex.33:19), will suffice in the case of such ones as ourselves. This is a matter for our personal humiliation, not to trivialize our sinfulness, even as God’s choice of us is a matter for thankfulness not for pride.

It is simply a fact that it is within the purpose of God to have *vessels* both of mercy and of indignation, each one formed by the Potter, according as He is intending (Rom. 9:20,21). Since the worker is worthy of his wages, it is only fitting even as vessels of mercy, that we should be requited for our practices, both the good and the bad. Hence we will either gain or forfeit wages for our labors according to what God deems their value to be. For what we have done that, in a positive sense, is not worth anything, we will not be paid anything. Yet for all that we have done that is of positive value, we will be compensated, according to its true worth (cf 2 Cor.5:10; 1 Cor.3:14,15).

Similarly, since God also wants to make known His indignation and concomitant “powerful doings,” He has determined that those whom He has chosen to be included among the vessels of indignation, will serve in this capacity. Let it be so, and may God be glorified. J.R.C.

## THE SPIRIT SUPREME

THE VARIOUS BAPTISMS indicate clearly that the blessings of this current era are spiritual as compared with those of the future perfect earth.

As we have seen in our Lord's days upon earth, there was but one baptism—in water.

In the Pentecostal economy the baptism of spirit was *added* in some cases.

In Paul's first ministry to the nations *both* baptisms continued. But just the reverse of the days of Pentecost; *all* had the spirit's baptism, and only *some* that in water.

But now, in this new economy, there is again but "ONE baptism" (Eph.4:5), as in our Lord's time; only it is not in water, but in spirit.

So we see that gradually, a step at a time, the tendency has been away from the outward expression by means of water, towards the end—the inward reality, by means of spirit.

This may be shown graphically thus:

ONE BAPTISM	TWO BAPTISMS	ONE BAPTISM
~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~ <b>WATER</b> ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	SPIRIT
<i>John and the Lord</i>	<i>The Pentecostal Era</i>	<i>Paul's Last Ministry</i>

All the cleansing and sanctification (which the water only indicated) was really done by spirit. Water came first to instruct the lower classes in God's school. But now that spirit has replaced water, why should we cling to the outward semblance?

There are thus four distinct periods marked out in the Word. These differ from each other, not alone as to baptism, but along other lines as well. By rightly dividing off and partitioning to each the truth which God associates with it, we may hope for God's approval of our workmanship (2 Tim.2:15).

But the most important and weighty truth for us to apprehend is this: that, *in spirit*, the later ministry of the apostle Paul (subsequent to Acts 28:25-28), as recorded in the later epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians), brings the saints to a stage corresponding to the new earth of the end of the Apocalypse. *In spirit*, I say, not as it will be in that day of physical marvels. Now, as it will be then, nothing remains to be done (Eph.2:10,18; 4:12,13). Nothing can be added. Nothing can be improved. All is perfect, complete, satisfactory (Phil.3:15; Col.1:20,25; 2:9,10).

By thus comparing the physical and spiritual, we are helped much in understanding many seeming difficulties.

Take, for instance, the manifestation of the spirit in sign gifts (1 Cor.12). In the millennial age these will be present to restore and bind up. But in the perfect state how can there be gifts of healing when there will be no sickness? No lame man will be there to heal, no dead to raise to life again. The very glory and perfection of that age will make such gifts void.

These gifts abounded in Paul's ministry at the first, and in his earlier epistles. They were common in the Corinthian assembly. But the apostle, at the crisis already noted, tells them that "they shall cease" (1 Cor.13:8-10). How? *By the incoming of maturity, or perfection*, just as will be the case in the day of God. The perfection of that age will make void many a millennial blessing.

If Paul's earlier ministry corresponds with Israel's millennial ministry (only with a spiritual tendency and lacking the measure of material blessing that will obtain then),

it is easy to see why they were done away in this succeeding ministry, which includes the present grace; and why they are not mentioned in his later epistles.

In the apostle's own experience a great change is strikingly manifest. At one time the earth shook open the prison doors and set him free (Acts 16:26). But his last years were spent a prisoner of the Lord in Rome. This fact, and contrast, is specially emphasized in each of the later epistles written by him who was now the "prisoner of Christ Jesus." 01 At one time kerchiefs taken from His body availed to heal the sick (Acts 19:12). Later he endures the thorn in the flesh (2 Cor.12:7-9). Timothy suffers "often infirmities" (1 Tim.5:23), and Trophimus is left at Miletus sick (2 Tim.4:20).

It is manifest that, if perfection has indeed come, it is not in the physical sphere; in fact, the flesh does not receive the comfort that it once obtained. The only medicine for Paul's thorn was sufficient grace.

From all this it is clear that the tendency towards spirit which we have observed in the various baptisms is continued to perfection. *From the former extreme, where spirit seemed to have no place, we have arrived at the latter where flesh has none.*

All is spirit. The greatest glory of this spiritual completeness is its manifestation in the midst of the utter weakness of the flesh. Let us then not look at our flesh to gauge God's thoughts towards us. Some day the spirit, of which we have but an earnest, will energize our bodies, too, and *they will become spiritual bodies*—perfect and complete as the bodies of those who will people the new earth, and with powers which will far transcend what even they will enjoy.

Till then let us enjoy to the full the exceeding riches of God's grace as shown in the high and overwhelming and superabundant spiritual blessings He has bestowed upon

us in the heavenly spheres. Our home, our hope, our destiny is there. Let us drop those earthly concerns which are fitted for a people whose hope is earthly, and set our hearts and minds on things above. We cannot be there in flesh, but we can in spirit. Just as in that future day His presence will be our Paradise, so now let us go in spirit to where He is, at God's right hand, and find our All in Him.

#### BAPTISM *IN* AND *INTO*

A most instructive and helpful distinction exists in the original text between baptism *in* a place or element, and *into* a condition or result. This is clearly seen in the declaration that, *in* one spirit, we all were baptized *into* one body (1 Cor.12:13). The spirit is the element in which we were baptized: the body in the resultant condition. We have thus become identified with the body of Christ. It is a pity that this distinction cannot be consistently carried out in an English version, without offending the fastidious ear of the modern student. We almost regret that we have yielded to this weakness in rendering it "*in* the name of Paul" (1 Cor.1:13,15), and are glad that the sublinear, at least, does not hide the truth under the veneer of elegant English. Indeed, we are more and more inclined to associate attempts to make musical English with the warning of the apostle concerning itching ears. Let us have the truth!

In some texts the force of *into* is easily seen. John the baptist and Peter both baptized *into* the pardon of sins (Mark 1:4; Acts 1:38). *In* could not be used here, for the pardon was not the place or element, but the effect which the rite produced. The same is true of our baptism into the death of Christ (Rom.6:3), the baptism of the sons of Israel *into* Moses (1 Cor.10:2), but best of all, our baptism *into* Christ (Gal.3:27) or Christ Jesus (Rom.6:3). In all these cases there is identification with the thing or person indicated by *into*. This is the point in Paul's appeal to



the Corinthians. If he had baptized *into* his own name it would have created a party in Corinth. It would have identified those thus baptized with Paul, just as it did identify those who were baptized with Christ Jesus.

It is a notable fact that baptism into Christ—whether in Jesus Christ, as proclaimed by Peter, or Christ Jesus, as proclaimed by Paul—baptism into the Anointed was always followed by manifestations of holy spirit. The reason is found in the title itself, for His anointing was by holy spirit. If we should expand the expression, we would say “baptism into the One anointed by holy spirit.” It follows as a matter of course that those baptized *into* Him must partake of the spirit which is His essential characteristic. This is emphasized by the fact that, when this title is not used the spirit is not given. Baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16; 19:5) is expressly denied this virtue.

With these distinctions firmly established in our minds we are in a position to explore two much misunderstood passages, to which they are the key. One is, the so-called “great commission” in the twenty-eighth of Matthew. The other is the double baptism of the disciples whom Paul met at Ephesus, as recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts.

To do anything *in the name* of another signifies that the power and authority behind the act is supplied by the one whose name is mentioned. Some cast out demons in His name (Mark 9:38, see 16:17). Pardon was proclaimed in His name (Acts 2:38). The apostles had authority to baptize in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:38; 10:48). And this is the usual, and, in fact, the only possible sense in which the formula in Matt.28:19 can be understood if we follow the common version. The Revisers have happily changed it to *into*. The verse should read: “baptizing them *into* the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.” Just as Paul baptized a few into Christ Jesus and thus they were introduced into a sphere of blessing in accord with

the title, so, in the day of the Lord, when this commission will be carried out, the nations will be blessed in accord with the formula He gave them.

The name of the Father indicates that, in millennial days, the nations who become disciples will find entrance into the family of God. They will become His children. And this relationship will be based on the propitiation provided by the Son. The apostle John, in his gospel and epistles, which have a special application to that day, treats of the truth which baptism into the Father and the Son indicates. In contrast to the present grace, it is not based on Israel's dejection, but on their redemption. "He is the propitiation concerning our sins, yet not concerning *ours* only, but concerning the whole world also" (1 John 2:2). This is the reason the millennial nations will be baptized into the name of the Son.

It is notable that the title Christ is not used in this formula. It would imply that the nations had a portion in Messiah, which is exclusively Israel's. They could not be baptized *into* the name of Christ without sharing in the administration of the kingdom. Because we, by faith, have been identified with Christ Jesus in baptism, we are associated with Him in His celestial rule. But the nations will have no share in Messiah's reign during the thousand years. It will be the kingdom of the heavens, when Israel alone is the ruling nation.

Why will they be baptized *into* the name of the holy spirit? Is it not clear that this indicates that they will receive the spirit and its manifestations? At that time God will pour out of His spirit on *all flesh* (Acts 2:17). No doubt this will be most evident in Israel, but it will extend to all the other nations also. Seeing that they will enjoy the manifestation of the spirit, this is incorporated into the baptismal formula. They are baptized into the holy spirit.

The baptismal formula used in the end of Matthew indi-

cates the sphere of blessing into which the nations will be ushered when all earthly authority is vested in the hands of Messiah.

When Paul came to Ephesus he found some of John the baptist's disciples who had not received holy spirit. Indeed, they had not heard whether holy spirit "is." They must have heard from John that holy spirit was to come, for his constant theme concerning baptism was to the effect that he baptized in water, but He who was to come after him would baptize in holy spirit (Luke 3:16).

Paul immediately questions them "*Into* what, then, were you baptized?" As it was into John's baptism, Paul explains that that baptism was in anticipation of the Lord Himself, and was into the name of the Lord Jesus. Now baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus does not confer the spirit. Even after the Lord had come and had died and had risen again, this formula failed to communicate spiritual endowments. Philip used it in Samaria and, in explanation of the fact that they did not get the holy spirit, we are told that they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16).

In view of this fact it is not likely that Paul would use this formula and re-baptize the men. Yet such is the usual interpretation, fostered by a faulty punctuation. Paul, rather, is rehearsing what John the baptist did, and telling us that the formula used by him was the same as that used by Philip in Samaria.

What possible use could there be to re-baptize them, choosing for a formula the very one which was *not* calculated to accomplish the effect he had in view? Instead, as in the case of the Samaritans, where the apostles communicated the spirit by the laying on of hands, Paul imposes his hands on them, and the holy spirit came on them, and they talked languages and prophesied.

The conclusion that Paul did not re-baptize in Ephe-

sus is confirmed by several other considerations. It was at this time that he wrote to the Corinthians that Christ had *not* sent him to baptize, but to preach the evangel. The form of the verbs in the original are conclusive proof as to where we should divide what he said from what he did. His rehearsal of the Baptist's ministry is in the indefinite tense as far as possible for he refers, not to any specific act, but to the whole tenor of his course. This is difficult to carry over into English.

But when he speaks of the imposition of his own hands the tense is changed to present active, indicating an action in progress at the time. That this is the point at which his speaking ends and his acting commences is finally settled by the fact that, after saying that they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, the narrative proceeds, "At the placing of *Paul's* hands on them . . ." If Paul had just been before us as their baptizer, his name should have been mentioned in that connection, and we should read "at the placing of *his* hands on them . . ." It is evident that his name must be mentioned as soon as he begins to act.

A. E. Knoch

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### INTERLINEAR SCRIPTURE ANALYZER

Our friend André de Mol of Katwijk aan Zee, the Netherlands, is the author of the Bible study program for Windows, *ISA* (Interlinear Scripture Analyzer). *ISA* incorporates the Concordant Version, and the Concordant Greek Text sublinear (or interlinear), along with other valuable resource tools.

*ISA* is designed to close the gap between translations and the original Bible text. A transparent organized database structure is used to make sure that all (other) renderings of a Greek word are instantly visible. The English concordant sublinear in combination with Greek word parsing, makes *ISA* a unique and powerful tool.

*ISA* is available from: [www.scripture4all.org](http://www.scripture4all.org); the companion program, *CBrowser for ISA* (which is an electronic edition of our publication, *THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY*), is available from a link at [www.concordant.org](http://www.concordant.org), under the subsection "Language."

## DAVID AT MAHANAIM

(2 Samuel 18)

18 + David <sup>ln</sup>mustered <sup>`</sup>the <sup>w</sup>soldiers who were <sup>`</sup>with him and <sup>pl</sup>set over them chief officers of contingents and chief officers of hundreds. 2 + Then David <sup>l</sup>sent out <sup>`</sup>the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers, <sup>`</sup>a third <sup>i</sup>under the hand of Joab, + <sup>`</sup>a third <sup>i</sup>under the hand of Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and <sup>`</sup>a third <sup>i</sup>under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king <sup>l</sup>said to the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers, I myself shall <sup>mr</sup>also march forth, yea march forth<sup>-</sup> with you. 3 + But the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>lsa</sup>protested, You should not march forth! For if we should retreat, yea retreat<sup>-</sup>, the heart of the others would not be <sup>pl</sup>stirred <sup>`</sup>about us; <sup>+</sup>even if half of us should die, the heart of the others would not be <sup>pl</sup>stirred <sup>`</sup>about us. For <sup>7</sup>you<sup>~s</sup> are worth ten thousands of such as we. + <sup>now</sup>Therefore it is better that you should <sup>b</sup>be ready to <sup>c</sup>send help<sup>-</sup> to us from the city. 4 + Then the king <sup>l</sup>said to them, I shall do <sup>w</sup>what seems <sup>l</sup>best in your eyes.

+ So the king <sup>l</sup>stood <sup>`</sup>at the side of the gate + as all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers marched forth <sup>`</sup>by hundreds and <sup>`</sup>by thousands. 5 + The king <sup>l</sup>enjoined <sup>`</sup>on Joab and <sup>`</sup>on Abishai and <sup>`</sup>on Ittai, <sup>`</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, Deal <sup>`</sup>gently <sup>`</sup>with the young man <sup>`</sup>Absalom, for my sake! + Thus all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers heard <sup>i</sup>when the king instructed<sup>-</sup> all the chief officers on behalf of Absalom.

6 + The <sup>wi</sup>soldiers marched <sup>l</sup>forth into the field to meet Israel, and the battle <sup>lb</sup>was fought in the wildwood of Ephraim. 7 + There the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers of Israel were <sup>l</sup>stricken before the conscript servants of David; and there the stroke <sup>lb</sup>was great <sup>i</sup>that day—twenty contingents. 8 + From there

the fighting <sup>lb</sup> was scattered<sup>l</sup> over the surface of the whole area, and the wildwood <sup>›</sup> devoured<sup>-</sup> <sup>l</sup>many more <sup>i</sup>of the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>f</sup>than <sup>w</sup> the sword devoured <sup>i</sup>on <sup>t</sup>that day.

<sup>9</sup> + Then Absalom <sup>lmeet</sup> encountered <sup>›</sup> the presence of the conscript servants of David. <sup>+</sup> Now Absalom was riding on <sup>a</sup> mule; and as the mule <sup>l</sup>came to pass under the meshes of <sup>a</sup> great terebinth, <sup>+</sup> his head caught <sup>l</sup>fast in the terebinth. <sup>+</sup> He was <sup>7</sup>hanging<sup>~Q</sup> between the heavens and <sup>bt</sup> the earth, <sup>+</sup> while the mule <sup>w</sup> under him passed on. <sup>10</sup> + One of the men <sup>l</sup>saw it and <sup>l</sup>told <sup>›</sup> Joab, <sup>+</sup> <sup>l</sup>saying, Behold, I saw <sup>l</sup>Absalom hanging in a terebinth. <sup>11</sup> + Joab <sup>lsa</sup>replied to the man <sup>l</sup>who told<sup>l</sup> <sup>›</sup> him, <sup>+</sup> <sup>bd</sup>Since you saw <sup>~</sup>him<sup>~</sup>, for what reason did you not smite him there to<sup>d</sup> the earth? <sup>+</sup> I would have been <sup>on</sup>obliged to give <sup>›</sup> you <sup>7</sup>fifty<sup>~Q</sup> pieces of silver and one girdle. <sup>12</sup> + But the man <sup>lsa</sup>answered <sup>›</sup> Joab, <sup>+</sup> Even if I were weighing a thousand pieces of silver on my palm, I would not <sup>l</sup>stretch forth my hand <sup>›</sup>against the king's son. For in our ears the king enjoined <sup>l</sup>on you and <sup>l</sup>on Abishai and <sup>l</sup>on Ittai, <sup>›</sup> saying<sup>-</sup>, <sup>7</sup>For my<sup>cs</sup> sake keep watch <sup>i</sup>over the young man <sup>i</sup> Absalom! <sup>13</sup> <sup>or</sup> Otherwise I would have <sup>d</sup>dealt falsely <sup>i</sup>against my own soul; <sup>+</sup> for no<sup>t</sup> matter at all is <sup>l</sup>suppressed from the king. <sup>+</sup> Yet you yourself would <sup>l</sup>stand by aloof.

<sup>14</sup> + Joab <sup>lsa</sup>replied, Let me not thus <sup>l</sup>wait before you. <sup>+</sup> So he <sup>l</sup>took three <sup>7</sup>javelins<sup>~</sup> in his palm and <sup>l</sup>plunged them into Absalom's heart. <sup>fr</sup> While he was still alive in the heart of the terebinth, <sup>15</sup> + ten of Joab's youthful <sup>all</sup>gear bearers<sup>l</sup> <sup>l</sup>surrounded <sup>l</sup>Absalom and <sup>l</sup>smote him and <sup>c</sup>put him to <sup>l</sup>death. <sup>16</sup> + Then Joab <sup>l</sup>blew <sup>i</sup> the trumpet, and <sup>l</sup>his <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>l</sup>returned from pursuing<sup>-</sup> after Israel; for Joab kept <sup>l</sup>the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers back. <sup>17</sup> + Then they <sup>l</sup>took <sup>l</sup>Absalom and <sup>l</sup>flung <sup>l</sup>him into <sup>a</sup> large <sup>l</sup>dark hole in the wildwood, and they <sup>lst</sup>set up over him a very large mound of stones. <sup>+</sup> As for all Israel, they fled, each man to his tent.

<sup>18</sup> + <sup>i</sup> During his lifetime Absalom had taken <sup>l</sup>the mon-

ument which is in the vale of the king and <sup>lst</sup>set it up for himself; for he said, I <sup>y</sup>have no son in <sup>p</sup>order to <sup>c</sup>keep my name in remembrance. <sup>+</sup>So he <sup>l</sup>called <sup>y</sup> the monument <sup>on</sup>after his own name, and <sup>y</sup> it' is <sup>l</sup>called Absalom's sign-post <sup>fr</sup>to <sup>y</sup>this <sup>y</sup>day.

<sup>19</sup> <sup>+</sup> Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, <sup>pr</sup>Now let me <sup>l</sup>run and <sup>m</sup>bear the <sup>l</sup>tidings <sup>y</sup>to the king that Yahweh has <sup>j</sup>vindicated him <sup>f</sup>against the hand of his enemies<sup>l</sup>. <sup>20</sup> <sup>+</sup>But Joab <sup>l</sup>said to him, You are not a man of tidings <sup>y</sup>this <sup>y</sup>day. <sup>+</sup> You will <sup>m</sup>bear the tidings <sup>i</sup>on another day; <sup>+</sup>but <sup>y</sup>this <sup>y</sup>day you shall not <sup>m</sup>bear the tidings. —<sup>t</sup>This was <sup>on</sup>because the king's son was dead.

<sup>21</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then Joab <sup>l</sup>said to a Cushite, Go tell <sup>y</sup>the king <sup>w</sup>what you have seen. <sup>+</sup> The Cushite <sup>l</sup>bowed down to Joab and <sup>l</sup>ran off. <sup>22</sup> <sup>+</sup><sup>fr</sup>Yet Ahimaaz son of Zadok <sup>l</sup>again <sup>+</sup> <sup>l</sup>said to Joab, <sup>+</sup> Let <sup>b</sup>come what may, let me <sup>l</sup>run <sup>pr</sup>now, me <sup>mr</sup>too, after the Cushite. <sup>+</sup> Joab <sup>lsa</sup>asked, Why then have you to run<sup>l</sup>, my son, <sup>+</sup>when there are no tidings of benefit for you to be found<sup>l</sup>? <sup>23</sup> <sup>7</sup><sup>+</sup>But Ahimaaz <sup>l</sup>said<sup>c</sup>, <sup>+</sup> Let <sup>b</sup>come what may, let me run. <sup>+</sup>So Joab <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him, Run! <sup>+</sup>Then Ahimaaz <sup>l</sup>ran by way of the basin, and he <sup>l</sup>passed <sup>y</sup>by the Cushite.

<sup>24</sup> <sup>+</sup> David was sitting between the two gates <sup>+</sup>when the watchman<sup>l</sup> <sup>l</sup>went up to the roof-level of the gateway <sup>y</sup>by the wall; <sup>+</sup>as he <sup>l</sup>lifted up <sup>y</sup>his eyes, <sup>+</sup> he <sup>l</sup>saw <sup>+</sup> <sup>bd</sup>there was a man running alone by himself. <sup>25</sup> <sup>+</sup> The watchman<sup>l</sup> <sup>l</sup>called down and <sup>l</sup>told <sup>y</sup>the king; and the king <sup>lsa</sup>replied, If he is alone, there are tidings in his mouth. <sup>+</sup>While the man was <sup>go</sup>running and <sup>go</sup>came<sup>-</sup> near, <sup>26</sup> <sup>+</sup> the watchman<sup>l</sup> <sup>l</sup>saw another man running. <sup>+</sup>Then the watchman<sup>l</sup> <sup>7</sup>on<sup>~</sup> the gate <sup>l</sup>called down, <sup>+</sup> <sup>saying</sup>, <sup>bd</sup>There is <sup>7</sup>another<sup>c</sup> man running alone by himself. And the king <sup>lsa</sup>replied, That one, <sup>mr</sup>too, is a bearer of tidings<sup>l</sup>. <sup>27</sup> <sup>+</sup> The watchman<sup>l</sup> <sup>lsa</sup>continued, I can see<sup>l</sup> that <sup>y</sup>the running-style of the first one is like the running of Ahimaaz son of Zadok. <sup>+</sup> The king <sup>lsa</sup>replied, This one is a good man; <sup>+</sup> he <sup>l</sup>comes <sup>y</sup>with good tidings.

<sup>28</sup> + Ahimaaz <sup>7</sup>drew 'near~ and 'said to the king, Peace! + He 'bowed down to the king 'with his nostrils to<sup>d</sup> the earth and 'said, Blessed' be Yahweh your Elohim, Who made 'those men surrender who lifted 'their hand 'against my lord the king. <sup>29</sup> + Then the king <sup>isa</sup>asked, Was it peaceable for the lad, for Absalom? And Ahimaaz <sup>isa</sup>answered, I saw 'a 'great throng when Joab was 'sending~ off 'the king's servant and me, 'your servant. + Yet I do not know what it was about. <sup>30</sup> + The king 'said, Go around and stand by 'here~. + So he went 'around and 'stayed.

<sup>31</sup> + Just then the Cushite was coming up; and the Cushite 'said, Let my lord the king receive the 'tidings that Yahweh has 'vindicated you today 'against the hand of all those 'who rose' up <sup>on</sup>against you! <sup>32</sup> + The king <sup>isa</sup>asked 'the Cushite, Was it peaceable for the lad, for Absalom? And the Cushite <sup>isa</sup>replied, May 'the enemies' of my lord the king and all those who rise up <sup>on</sup>against you for evil become like that lad!

<sup>33</sup> + Then the king was 'disturbed. + He went 'up <sup>on</sup>to the upper chamber of the gateway and 'wept. + Thus he <sup>sa</sup>lamented 'as he went~, O my son Absalom! my son! my son Absalom! <sup>a</sup>O 'gthat I' had died~ 'instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!

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#### DAVID AT MAHANAIM

THE TIME elapsed between David's arrival at Mahanaim and the battle with Absalom's forces is likely to have been weeks or even months. Absalom would have sent out word to elders of the tribes, calling for troops to convene at Jerusalem. Meanwhile, as word of David's location spread, loyal forces were drawn to him. David organized his forces into three contingents. Three separate groups would be less susceptible to being swallowed up by a larger force than an equivalent number in a single group. The assembled



troops received provisions from landowners of substance who favored David as king.

The battle began in an open area, but migrated into the wildwood. The statement in verse 8 that the wildwood consumed more than the sword may be understood in various ways. A less disciplined group, retreating for cover, could become disorganized and individually dispersed, which would make them easy prey in wooded areas of limited visibility. As this was in the Jordan valley, there may have been marshes or quagmires, which would further inhibit mobility. The cover of the woods would also benefit a smaller, experienced force, allowing them to engage in battle much as the Native Americans did with the redcoats.

#### PRIDE AND HUMILITY

“Yet anyone who shall be exalting himself shall be humbled, and anyone who shall be humbling himself shall be exalted” (Matt.23:12). “Pride goes before a breaking down, and a haughty spirit before a stumbling. It is better to be lowly of spirit with the humbled than to split up loot with the proud. He who contemplates on the word shall find good, and who trusts in Yahweh, happy is he” (Prov.16:18-20).

Chapters 15-18 provide a contrast between Absalom and David. Absalom is the handsome prince, with the unbelievably glorious head of hair (2 Sam.14:25,26), who is the apple of the nation's eye. He rumbled through the streets of Jerusalem in a chariot, surrounded by his squad of men, making his appearance in public places. The aging and sickly David is nearly absent from the narrative till he must flee Jerusalem for his life. David fled under the cover of darkness, barefoot and mourning, until he was lent a humble donkey to ride. David humbled himself before Yahweh, accepting the curses of Shimei, and waited for His deliverance. Absalom came into Jerusalem being acclaimed as

king, receiving homage from his subjects. He rode a mule, perhaps David's own. Mules were preferred for royalty (2 Sam.13:29), inasmuch as their gait provided a more comfortable ride than horses.

High up on the mule, fleeing from the battlefront, Absalom's proud and glorious head became stuck fast in the branches of a tree. Hanging between heaven and earth, he fulfilled the scripture that those hung on a tree are cursed (Deut.21:22,23). Absalom had driven his own father from his home and threatened his life. Now, he hung helplessly awaiting execution, undeserving of the mercy and gentleness his father hoped he would receive. At this point the Scriptures set another contrast before us. Evidently, Absalom's three sons had all predeceased him, and Absalom had set up a monument in Jerusalem as a remembrance to himself, there being no one to carry on his family name. But Absalom's monument was far overshadowed by the disgraceful pile of stones covering his broken body in that large dark hole in the wildwood. It marked with shame the place of a criminal's execution.

#### A SOLDIER'S WISDOM

Joab knew Absalom's ambition, and he also knew David's weakness for his son. It was for the good of Israel that Absalom be killed. This would bring an immediate end to the battle; it would save many lives; and it would quench the rebellion. In raising the mound of stones over Absalom, Joab probably vented his own disgust and enmity for the king's undisciplined son (*cf* 14:28-32).

#### A FATHER'S LOVE

In studying the Scriptures, many times we find passages in which we wish additional details were given. But the 18th chapter of 2 Samuel may cause us to wonder why so much detail is given! Verses 10-14 and 19-33 give unusu-

ally detailed accounts of what may seem to be little more than passing conversation. Such passages are interesting for a number of reasons. It is likely that Ahimaaz was interviewed personally by the historical recorder whose writings eventually became part of the inspired text of the Scriptures. This would account for the accuracy and detail of the conversations.

Such passages also bring us into the emotional heat of that moment, enabling us to more fully grasp all that was taking place while deepening our realization of what transpired. The brazen reply of the soldier to Joab, his commander in chief, leads us to suspect that he had seen a few soldiers shortchanged, and perhaps even killed, by the fair promises of captains who considered their men expendable. "50 shekels and a girdle! I wouldn't stretch forth my hand against the king's son, even if I felt the weight of a thousand shekels in my hand! The king will search out every detail of this episode, and you won't be there standing up on my behalf when my neck's on the chopping block!" This verbal exchange verifies how well known was David's love for Absalom, even at such a time as this.

The fleet-footed Ahimaaz loved his king. Obviously, he yearned somehow to soften the blow to David of Absalom's death. He persistently requested leave till Joab finally sent him. Then, he outran the other messenger in order that he might reach David first. David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the city. The city walls were doubled at the gates for extra strength, and double gates were built. Under siege the area between would be filled with dirt and stones to absorb the blows of battering rams.

The father of the profligate saw his son returning home from a great distance (*cf* Luke 15:11-32). Like him, David was anxiously waiting for news about Absalom. In all the details of conversation between the watchman, David, Ahimaaz and the Cushite, one thing is clear: David's chief concern was Absalom's welfare.

Absalom had taken David's concubines as if they were his own. He had murdered his half-brother, David's first-born son, in cold blood. He had driven David from his home and was trying to kill him. But all we see from David is the long-suffering love of a father. What kind of love is this? The world would say, "That is the love of a fool." No one wants to give unrequited love, yet everyone wishes that that kind of love would always be there for them. It is. While we are still infirm, while we are still in accord with the era in which we live, while we are still irreverent, while we are still sinners, God has commended His love to us through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:6-8).

J. Phillip Scranton

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### GREEK ELEMENTS FLASHCARDS

Our friend William Steidtmann of Winona, Minnesota, has developed *Greek Elements Flashcards*, which is a Windows computer-based flashcard system for learning New Testament Greek vocabulary. It operates within *MemoryLifter*, an automated flashcards educational software program.

The *Flashcards'* vocabulary is derived from our publication, **THE GREEK ELEMENTS**, which is an analysis of the vocabulary of the Greek Scriptures into the elements of which the words are composed, and a grouping of the words under the elements each contains, followed by the nearest English equivalents, as used in the Concordant Version.

The Elements, then, are the foundational components of the Greek language as used in the Scriptures, from which all the more complex words are formed. Bear in mind that these basic components are abstracted into higher-order word concepts, and are not to be memorized as if they were the literal (sub-) meanings of fully constructed words, *per se* (it is true, incidentally, that some word elements are complete words in themselves; this is so most often in the case of proper nouns). A study of these elements will, however, lead one to a much deeper appreciation of, and insight into, the Greek language, and thus, also, into the Scriptures themselves.

Both the *Greek Elements Flashcards* and the *MemoryLifter* program are available from links supplied on our website, [www.concordant.org](http://www.concordant.org), under the subsection "Language."

## THE EVANGEL AND GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

IT IS RIGHT in view of human unrighteousness that God should be indignant toward us. It is right that this indignation should lead to a righteous judgment. Furthermore, it is right that this judgment be fair, that it be conducted impartially and that every act of every human being, good or bad, boasted in or hidden in shame, should be taken into account.

Then also, it is right that this righteous judgment should result in a righteous verdict, and it is right, in view of all the evidence given concerning the acts of humanity, that this verdict should be: No flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight (Rom.3:20).

What then? In view of the evidence presented, the righteous judgment is made, and the righteous verdict is in. What then? What is the sentence?

*The sentence is not pronounced!*

The 64 verses of Romans starting with 1:18, concerning humanity in its relation to God, filled with condemnatory evidence of human irreverence and injustice, embracing the entirety of the race, do not close with a sentence of condemnation. The passage goes only to the point of the just verdict, and then it stops.

### NEW EVIDENCE

The somber verdict is succeeded by a new examination of the entire issue, presenting new and remarkable evidence. This new evidence does not involve a new way by which the sinner can get himself right with God. It is presented apart from any list of steps human beings

must take in order to avoid the sentence of condemnation; in very fact, it is apart from law and from what law requires of humanity.

The opening words of this evidence are startling. Instead of directing attention to human unrighteousness it directs attention to God's righteousness. How is it that God's righteousness can save humanity from that sentence of condemnation which appears to be the logical and righteous result of the just verdict? Would it not be best to leave out the matter of divine righteousness from this context?

Yet God's righteousness is brought *to the fore*. To be sure, in Romans 3:23 Paul will sum up the evidence given in Romans 1:18-3:20 concerning human unrighteousness. But he begins with a twice-stated reference to God's righteousness. That is the source of justification. In the evangel the fact of human unrighteousness is fully recognized, yet not for condemnation but as that deeply entrenched evil from which God's righteousness delivers us.

#### NO SENTENCE PRONOUNCED

If the righteous verdict of Romans 3:20 had been followed, in Romans 3:21, by a sentence made solely in light of the evidence given, that sentence would have had to be the utter ruin and destruction of humanity. Such a sentence would be right if the record of human acts and thinking were the only factors to be considered. But it would be contrary to countless revelations of God given in His Word, including what we learn of Him in Romans 1:18-3:20.

In such a case God could not be blessed as the Creator of the human race (*cf* Rom.1:25), which would no longer exist. Instead of being a matter of riches, God's kindness and forbearance and patience toward unrighteous humanity (*cf* Rom.2:4) could only be seen finally as wasted effort. In a sentence of extermination for all sinners, the benefit and prerogative set before the nation of Israel in God's ora-

cles and sayings would come to nothing, instead of being "much in every manner" (*cf* Rom.3:1,2). God's faithfulness to His promises would have to be nullified (*cf* Rom. 3:3,4), or else it would have to be maintained at the price of unrighteous and arbitrary partiality.

Where would be the value of the commendation of God's righteousness as it is set in comparison with human unrighteousness (Rom.3:5) if the human race ended up being destroyed? Indeed the work of judgment itself would only highlight a failure of God's purpose to create humanity in His image and likeness.

Obviously Romans 1:18-3:20 was not written to bring us to that sentence of condemnation which its evidence seems to require. It has taken us only to the verdict in order to lead us forward to that all-important piece of evidence called "the evangel of God" (Rom.1:1). The record of human behavior is still there. The testimony to God as Creator, Who acts with forbearance and then judges with impartiality and fairness, and Who is faithful to His words telling of benefit to a people who themselves have been unfaithful, is still there. The commendation of God's righteousness which human unrighteousness affords remains an important factor within the evangel. But all these considerations now are to be seen in relation to that critical revelation of God's righteousness by means of Christ's death for us all.

#### GOD'S RIGHTEOUS ACHIEVEMENT

Hence, in Romans 3:21 our attention is turned away from the record of humanity's unrighteousness and human failures in relation to the just requirements of the law. The matter of justification brought up in Romans 3:20 in negative terms (Not justified!), is now to be viewed "apart from law" and is to be seen as it relates to God's righteousness as it is made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ.

We turn from the impasse stemming from human activity in relation to law to the record of God's operations of righteousness centered in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in His death for sinners.

ROMANS 3:21-8:39

Romans 3:21 begins the most important section of the entire epistle. It consists of 154 verses continuing to the end of chapter 8, taking us from this manifestation of *God's righteousness* to a declaration of the absolute inviolability of *God's love*. This section of Romans begins with God's righteousness being made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ. It ends with nothing separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The perimeters of Romans 3:21-8:39 clearly focus on God, and so, in reality, does all in between. That we are being justified through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus highlights God's grace (Rom.3:24). That Christ should die for the sake of sinners commends the love of God (Rom.5:8). That we may be enjoying the peace and access of the conciliation is a matter that instills in us a boasting in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.5:11; 8:35-39). All that is said about the blessing of faith (Rom.3:27-4:25) and our identification with Christ in His death, entombment and resurrection (Rom.6:1-7:6), is a matter of God's gracious gift. The mighty rescue from the wretchedness of human weakness which the law exposes generates outpourings of thanksgiving to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom.7:7-25). The provision of that blessed position of sonship in which we cry, "Abba, Father!" and that peace and endurance which is given in expectation (Rom.8:1-27), stirs up our awareness that God is working all together for good (Rom.8:28-34). For it is God Who foreknows and designates and calls and justifies us. Altogether the evangel is a message to the glory of God.



That is the bottom line, expressed succinctly later in the epistle by these words: "... out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: *to Him be the glory!*" (Rom.11:36).

#### A THREEFOLD PATTERN

At the very beginning of the epistle we noticed an important pattern in Paul's presentation of the evangel. Our attention was drawn first to God, then to Jesus Christ, and finally to us who receive the evangel. The evangel is (1) the evangel of God, (2) concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, (3) for our faith-obedience (Rom.1:1-7).

These three steps appear again in Romans 3:21-23, and again in reverse order in 3:24-26, as shown in the following arrangement:

*Yet now, apart from law, a **righteousness of God**  
is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets),  
yet a **righteousness of God***

*through **Jesus Christ's faith,***

*for all, and on all who are believing, for there is  
no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the  
glory of God.*

*Being justified gratuitously in His grace,*

*through the deliverance which is in **Christ Jesus** . . .*

*toward the display of [**God's**] **righteousness** . . . .*

The evangel, in its primary and highest and final unfoldings, directs attention to God. In the presentation given in Romans Paul begins with the evangel's focus on God's righteousness. From this initial unfolding, and with it firmly in view, we continue to become acquainted with God, from glory to glory (*cf* 2 Cor.3:18; Col.1:9,10). Here in Romans the manifestation of God's righteousness is the grand prelude to the focus on His love in Christ Jesus, from which nothing in all time and space can separate us.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Hence, in this exposition of the evangel of God which focuses our attention on God, what He is and what He has done and does and will do, the apostle begins not with a consideration of God's power (which was noted in Romans 1:16) or wisdom (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-25) or even of His grace (which is soon underlined in Romans 3:24) or His love (which will be brought to our special attention in chapters 5 and 8), but with His *righteousness*. All of these revelations concerning the character of the Deity are based on that death and resurrection of Christ which is announced in the evangel (*cf* 1 Cor. 15:1-4). But first of all, the focus of attention is on the manifestation of God's righteousness.

Already, in Romans 1:16,17, the apostle had written of God's righteousness being revealed in the evangel. There it was associated with God's power for salvation. This earlier passage connects directly with Romans 3:21,22 which carries forward its thought, now in association with justification. This theme of the revelation of God's righteousness in the evangel has not been forgotten. It was always there in the background throughout the intervening passage. (In Romans 3:5 the apostle referred specifically to God's righteousness, though not directly in connection with the evangel.) But now it is once more brought into the foreground, where the association of God's righteousness with God's powerful work of salvation is being expressed in terms of justification. The parallels are clear:

*For not ashamed am I of the evangel, for it is God's power for **salvation** . . . . For in it **God's righteousness** is being **revealed**.*

*Yet now, apart from law, a **righteousness of God** is **manifest** . . . for all, . . . for all sinned . . . .*

*Being **justified** gratuitously . . . .*

It is God's righteousness which comes to the rescue of

sinners who stand under the righteous verdict: "Not justified." The new pronouncement, "Justified," stands on the foundation of the righteousness of God. The evangel defines this righteousness of God as that which demands and brings about the good outcome of *salvation* from the expected sentence of condemnation to the assured achievement of *justification* for sinners. We need to focus on this righteousness which is God's own righteousness if we are to appreciate the full significance of our justification.

### GOD'S GLORIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS

In a notable reflection on Romans 3:21, A. E. Knoch wrote: "We are apt to be unduly concerned with our *own* righteousness, either through our acts, or our faith in God. The first thing to be established is *God's* righteousness. If *He* is not just, our righteousness, even if we had any, would be of no avail."<sup>1</sup>

That righteousness of God which is now made manifest is glorious beyond human imaginings. It retains all the characteristics of righteousness presented in the previous section of Romans. It is a righteousness that is without partiality. Therefore it is concerned with *all of humanity*. It refuses to overlook any wrong, even the hidden things of humanity. Therefore, it is concerned with *all the many sins and offenses* of Adam's seed. This is what Paul tells us with clarity and joy in Romans 5:12-19, but it is also found here in 3:22, I believe, in the words "for all," and in the logical connection between Romans 3:23 and verse 24. We will look into this in more detail when we come to those passages.

Also, in accord with Romans 3:3,4, God's righteousness as it is made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ involves His *faithfulness* to His Word. What He has spo-

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1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.40, p.43.

ken He will bring about in full realization. Indeed all the features of divine righteousness which are commended by human unrighteousness are carried forward in the message of the evangel.

This leads us to that aspect of divine righteousness which is revealed in the evangel and which could not be shown by God's righteous work of judgment. God's righteousness as it is now being made manifest apart from human works is one that demands and achieves an end of good for humanity and glory for God. It is God's righteousness that His stated purpose for humanity, that it be created in His image and likeness (Gen.1:26), and that all be seen as very good because it is very good (Gen.1:31), be realized.

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SALVATION

That God's righteousness always leads to, and must lead to a good end was foreshadowed in the Hebrew Scriptures. The types, of course, are never perfect. God's righteousness as it was perceived by the psalmists or prophets does not exhibit its full glory as we may perceive it now in faith within the message of the evangel. But the pattern of divine righteousness was there.

We note this pattern in Psalm 98:2, where God's righteousness is paralleled with His work of salvation, a passage which perhaps was in Paul's mind when he penned the words of Romans 1:16,17.

*Yahweh has made known His salvation;  
To the eyes of the nations He has revealed  
His righteousness.*

Here is a picture of the fulfillment of God's promises going back to Genesis 12:2,3 when God told Abram He would make of him a great nation which would be blessed and would become a blessing to all the families of the ground. Hence the psalmist adds (Psa.98:4):

*Raise a joyful shout to Yahweh, all the earth!*

The righteousness of God in His work of salvation from sin and death, through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus lies behind this work of which the psalmist sang. That salvation of Israel into the promised kingdom under the Messiah's reign could never come about apart from the faith of Jesus Christ exhibited in His death for sinners. For us these words of the psalmist's joy serve as a type of that highest manifestation of God's righteousness which comes through the "one righteous act of Jesus Christ" which is for all mankind for life's justifying.

So also, in Isaiah 59:16, we read of Yahweh's deliverance of Israel from His enemies. No one else can turn back transgression from Jacob:

*Yet His own arm shall save for Him,  
And His own righteousness, it will support Him.*

The work of God in rescuing His chosen people, spoken of in these passages, is great and glorious, but it does not reach to the fullness of salvation and revelation of God's righteousness announced in the evangel of God which we are so privileged to believe. Nevertheless the pattern is the same. For Israel and for the nations in the coming kingdom, and for the promised Saviour and Anointed One, Jesus Christ, in setting up this kingdom, God's righteousness is seen in an achievement of salvation.

These operations of salvation will be seen as operations of righteousness. But what could not have been fully manifest to the prophet and the psalmist was that these righteous and saving works of God have a solid and sure basis in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, in His death on the cross for the salvation of sinners. That basis has now been laid down, and it is that which is declared in the evangel of God. It is in that message of salvation in terms of justification that we who are believing can even now see this righteousness of God. We are believing that we are justi-

fied in His blood and conciliated through His death, and that all on the earth and all in the heavens shall be reconciled to God through the blood of the cross of the Son of God's love (Col.1:13-20).

#### THE OUTCOME

It is this good end resulting from our Lord's faithful obedience which defines the righteousness of God, as no other operation and outcome can do, that is made manifest to us who are believing. We may not see just how all this end of glory is achieved by means of the death of God's beloved Son, His entombment and resurrection on the third day, but we do see, in faith, with the eyes of our heart, that it is achieved. For that is what the evangel declares. In our believing, it is *what* God says that is the prime issue, having precedence even over the happy searching for the wondrous details of the perfection of God's ways. In faith we stand with this assurance, that God's righteousness being revealed in the evangel concerning Christ's faithfulness to the death of the cross is directed to the justification of sinners.

Hence we read: "As it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one [righteous act] for all mankind for life's justifying. For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just" (Rom.5:18,19).

This is spiritual grace indeed. God is revealing His righteousness by means of His righteous work of salvation and deliverance and justification of sinners, indeed of all sinners, which is brought about through the faith of Jesus Christ. We are believing this!

Praise God for His righteousness!

D.H.H.

## EDITORIAL

WHEN our hopes are not realized and our longings are not gratified, we may well become despondent and suffer dejection. This is especially so in cases where sincere, noble hopes are met with long-term disappointment.

Ongoing lowness of spirits and melancholy, even when not extreme, is still debilitating. In such cases, even if substantial strength remains, significant diminution nevertheless obtains.

Such "depression" is especially hard to endure in a society whose best advice even to the most intractable of problems is, "Just say, No." In the matter of confronting one's failings, the counsel of religious people is hardly any better than this, and in fact it is worse. While they tell us to "look to God" or to "turn our problems over to the Lord," in the end, they too only appeal to the flesh. This is evident since they insist that God's deliverance will only be granted in response to our having appealed to Him *in the right way*, with the necessary intensity and steadfastness. Hence if, subsequent to extended, earnest prayer, one's weakness or failing should still remain, the claim is that this too is our own fault—due to the inadequacies of our "technique" as supplicants.

Therefore, when our way is hard and our course is painful—when God's own deliverance is not presently forthcoming and yet the "help" of our fellow humans is worse than no help at all—we simply have no recourse but to turn to God for more opportune help. In this case, then, our prayer becomes—and may it be so that He *will* be pleased to grant us *this* grace—that He would endue us "with all power," as needed, "for all *endurance* and *patience* with *joy*" (Col.1:11).

J.R.C.

## ABRAM'S JUSTIFICATION

ABRAM BELIEVED IN YAHWEH, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gen.15:6). He had been complaining that Yahweh had not given him the promised seed, so he was told to look heavenward and count the stars, if he was able. Then Yahweh said, "*Thus shall become your seed.*" *The belief of this statement constituted Abram's righteousness.* No act of flesh was necessary. He probably did *look*, but he certainly did *not count* them. He did not exert himself in any way. There was no room for boasting (Rom.3:27). It was of faith that it may accord with grace (Rom.4:16). Abram was invigorated by faith, giving glory to God (Rom.4:20).

However, on Yahweh's side there were to be innumerable generations, a task, in its way, more incomprehensible than the enumeration of the stars.

## SISTER AND WIFE

Sarah was misrepresented by Abram on two separate occasions, when he said that she was his sister, which was true, but *implied* that she was not his wife (Gen.12:10-13; 20:1-18). Such misleading statements of fact may be worse than open prevarication. These two events had much in common, although in some ways there is a contrast, so it may be helpful to consider them together. In both cases Abram was *afraid*. He had lost the sense of divine protection.

It seems that, in those days, a beautiful wife was a perilous possession, apt to excite the cupidity of kings. Lacking faith in his Subjector, and too conscientious to tell an



open lie, he decided to protect *himself* (not his wife!) by telling a half truth, for Sarah actually was the daughter of his father, though not of his mother, and so really was both sister and wife. Such a union was quite correct according to the customs current in that day.

#### THE ADVERSARY

As Abram is the foremost example of faith, which he afterward fully exhibited in the offering of Isaac, it is very helpful to see how God strengthened his faith when it faltered, as in these cases. Behind the scenes we can see, in these two examples, an attempt of the Adversary to spoil Sarah for the conception of the seed in her old age. Abraham seems to have fallen into this trap, and helped Satan to accomplish it, but God interfered, and saved her for her special mission.

#### THE OUTCOME JUSTIFIES

As Abram was such a wealthy man, any alliance with him, especially by marriage, would be most welcome, while, on the other hand, if he was out of the way, they could not only take his wife, but all his possessions as well. Yet, on the divine side, how could the promises of Yahweh be fulfilled if he died before his heir had been begotten? God used Abram's faltering to confirm his faith. In both cases his subterfuge was brought to light, yet the one whom he feared was made mortally afraid of him, and insisted on enriching and honoring him, so that the outcome actually *justified* Abram's defection!

The account of Abram's deception of Pharaoh is as follows:

#### GENESIS 12:10-13

<sup>10</sup> <sup>+</sup>Now there <sup>b</sup>was a famine in the land; <sup>+</sup>so Abram went <sup>1</sup>down to <sup>d</sup>Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was heavy

in the land. <sup>11</sup> And it came to <sup>1</sup>be just as <sup>7</sup>Abram<sup>0</sup> <sup>c</sup>got near to enter Egypt<sup>d</sup> <sup>+</sup>that he <sup>1</sup>said to his wife Sarai: Behold <sup>pr</sup>, I know that you are a woman, lovely of appearance. <sup>12</sup> <sup>+</sup>So it will <sup>b</sup>occur <sup>t</sup>when the Egyptian men see you, <sup>+</sup> they will say, This is his wife. <sup>+</sup>Then they will kill me, <sup>+</sup>but <sup>m</sup>keep you <sup>1</sup>alive. <sup>13</sup> <sup>pr</sup>Please say that you are my sister, so that it may go <sup>1</sup>well <sup>›</sup>with me <sup>i</sup>for your <sup>p</sup>sake, and my soul will remain alive due to you.

#### DOWN TO EGYPT

Soon after Yahweh had assured Abram that the land was his and his seed's, Abram journeyed toward the south rim, that is, near the southern border of the land. Then a famine came, a heavy one. Abram had no instructions to leave the land, or to go to Egypt. He even told his wife that he does so at the risk of his life. So he not only goes without orders, but without the conscious protection of Yahweh. He deserved to lose his wife and his riches and his life. And, under law, he probably would have received his "just" deserts. Why is Abram "allowed" to do such things with impunity? It is most important to see that Abram *was not righteous in himself, or in his actions*, yet, nevertheless, was justified *by God's* activity on his behalf.

This lesson is repeated in Genesis twenty when Abraham misled Abimelech, king of Gerar.

#### GENESIS 20:1-18

**20** <sup>+</sup> Abraham <sup>1</sup>journeyed from there to<sup>d</sup> the Negev area and <sup>1</sup>dwelt between Kadesh and <sup>bt</sup> Shur. <sup>+</sup>While he <sup>1</sup>sojourned as an alien in Gerar, <sup>2</sup> <sup>+</sup> Abraham <sup>1</sup>said <sup>›</sup>of his wife Sarah, She is my sister, <sup>7</sup>for he feared to say, She is my wife, lest the men of the city <sup>1</sup>kill him on account of her<sup>0</sup>. <sup>+</sup>Then Abimelech king of Gerar <sup>1</sup>sent and <sup>1</sup>took Sarah. <sup>3</sup> <sup>+</sup>But Elohim <sup>1</sup>came to Abimelech in a dream by <sup>1</sup>night and <sup>1</sup>said to him: Behold, you are to die<sup>1</sup> on account

of the woman whom you have taken, <sup>+</sup>for she is the spouse<sup>l</sup> of a possessor.

<sup>4</sup> <sup>+</sup>Now Abimelech had not gone near <sup>></sup> her, and he <sup>l</sup>said: My Lord, are You going to kill<sup>l</sup> even an <sup>7</sup>unknowing and<sup>0</sup> righteous nation? <sup>5</sup> Did not he himself say to me, She is my sister? And moreover, did not she herself say, He is my brother? In the sincerity of my heart and in the innocence of my palms have I done this. <sup>6</sup> <sup>+</sup> The One, Elohim, <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him in the dream: I' <sup>mr</sup>too know that you have done this in the sincerity of your heart, and I' was <sup>mr</sup>also keeping <sup>></sup>you back from sinning<sup>-</sup> <sup>></sup>against Me. Therefore I did not <sup>g</sup>allow you to touch <sup>></sup> her. <sup>7</sup> <sup>+</sup> Now restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet <sup>+</sup>that he may pray about you, so <sup>+</sup>that you may live! <sup>+</sup>But if you are not restoring her, know that you shall die, yea die<sup>-</sup>, you and all who are yours.

<sup>8</sup> <sup>+</sup>So Abimelech <sup>c</sup>rose <sup>l</sup>early in the morning and <sup>l</sup>called <sup>></sup> all his servants and <sup>lsp</sup>reported <sup>'all</sup> <sup>'these</sup> <sup>'things</sup> <sup>'l</sup>before their ears. And <sup>7all<sup>n</sup></sup> the men became exceedingly <sup>l</sup>fearful. <sup>9</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then Abimelech <sup>l</sup>called <sup>></sup> Abraham and <sup>l</sup>said to him: What have you done to us? And <sup>wt</sup>wherein have I sinned <sup>></sup>against you that you have brought on me and on my kingdom so great a sin? You have done <sup>wi</sup>to me <sup>d</sup>things <sup>w</sup>that should not be done. <sup>10</sup> And Abimelech <sup>l</sup>said to Abraham: What did you have in <sup>see</sup>view that you did <sup>`this</sup> <sup>'thing</sup>?

<sup>11</sup> <sup>+</sup> Abraham <sup>lsa</sup>replied: <sup>t</sup>Because I said to myself, there is surely no fear of Elohim in <sup>'this</sup> <sup>ri</sup>place: and they will kill me on <sup>sp</sup>account of my wife. <sup>12</sup> And <sup>mr</sup>besides, she is truly my sister, the daughter of my father <sup>y</sup>though not the daughter of my mother. And she <sup>l</sup>became my <sup>></sup> wife. <sup>13</sup> <sup>+</sup> It <sup>l</sup>came to pass, <sup>as</sup> <sup>w</sup>when Elohim <sup>c</sup>made <sup>`me</sup> stray from my father's house, <sup>+</sup>that I <sup>l</sup>said to her: This is your kindness <sup>w</sup>that you should <sup>d</sup>show <sup>wi</sup> me; <sup>></sup>at <sup>'every</sup> <sup>ri</sup>place where<sup>d</sup> we shall come, say <sup>></sup>of me, he is my brother.

<sup>14</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then Abimelech <sup>l</sup>took <sup>7a</sup> a thousand shekels of sil-

ver and<sup>n</sup> a flock and a herd, + menservants and maidservants, and gave them to Abraham; he +also restored his wife Sarah to him. <sup>15</sup> And Abimelech said <sup>7</sup>to Abraham<sup>0</sup>, Behold, my land is before you; dwell where it is good in your eyes. <sup>16</sup> + To Sarah he said, Behold, I have given a thousand shekels of silver to your brother. <sup>bd</sup> Now this will serve you as a covering of eyes before all who are with you. +So in all respects you are +now publicly vindicated!. <sup>17</sup> +Then Abraham prayed to the One, Elohim, and Elohim healed Abimelech and his wife and his maidservants, so +that they could bear again; <sup>18</sup> for Yahweh had restrained, yea restrained tightly every womb in Abimelech's household on <sup>sp</sup>account of Abraham's wife Sarah.

#### ABIMELECH

Abimelech, king of Gerar, had received many intimations that the Elohim, the Subjector was with Abraham. When Abraham had deceived him in regard to Sarah, his wife, He had warned the king, and no harm had come to Abraham, but rather gain. And so this prophet, as God had called him, had prospered enormously while sojourning in the king's country. So it was that the ruler of the land actually sought to make a treaty with Abraham, as though he already had a sovereign right to tenant in it!

Abimelech was a Philistine, a people who descended from Ham, like the Egyptians, but not through Canaan, like the Canaanites. The Hebrew lexicons all seem to make them descendants of *Shem*, but give no scriptural evidence.

In the tenth of Genesis and the first of 1 Chronicles we have the line of Ham, Mizraim, Casluhim, after which is the parenthesis: "from where the Philistines came forth" (1 Chron. 1:12). They must be distinguished from the Canaanites, who were under a curse. The Philistines stretched along the shore of the Mediterranean, up to Carmel at times. They spread out somewhat in the south, and were often subject to the Egyptians, who were also Hamites.

## GENESIS 21:22-34

22 + It <sup>l</sup>came to pass <sup>i</sup>at <sup>t</sup>that time <sup>+</sup>that Abimelech, <sup>+</sup>with Phicol the chief of his military host, <sup>l</sup>sa<sup>a</sup>spoke to Abraham, <sup>></sup>saying<sup>-</sup>: Elohim is with you in all <sup>w</sup>that you are doing.  
 23 + So swear now to me <sup>bd</sup>here <sup>i</sup>by Elohim that you shall assuredly not deal falsely <sup>></sup>with me <sup>+</sup>or <sup>></sup>my progeny <sup>+</sup>or <sup>></sup>my posterity. According to the kindness <sup>w</sup>that I have <sup>d</sup>shown <sup>wi</sup>to you, you shall <sup>d</sup>deal with me and with the land in which you sojourn.

24 And Abraham <sup>l</sup>said: I' <sup>l</sup>swear it.

25 + Then Abraham reproved <sup>l</sup>Abimelech on account of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had snatched.

26 + But Abimelech <sup>l</sup>sa<sup>a</sup>replied <sup>7</sup>to him: I do not know <sup>a</sup>who has done <sup>~</sup>this <sup>~</sup>thing; and moreover, you' did not tell <sup>></sup>me; and <sup>mr</sup>besides I' had not heard of it until today.

27 + Then Abraham <sup>l</sup>took a flock of sheep and a herd of cattle and <sup>l</sup>gave them to Abimelech; and the two of them <sup>l</sup>contracted a covenant. 28 + When Abraham <sup>l</sup>st<sup>t</sup>set <sup>~</sup>seven ewe lambs of the flock aside by themselves, 29 + Abimelech <sup>l</sup>said to Abraham: What is the meaning <sup>bd</sup>here of <sup>~</sup>these seven ewe lambs <sup>w</sup>that you have <sup>st</sup>set aside by themselves? 30 + <sup>7</sup>Abraham<sup>o</sup> <sup>l</sup>sa<sup>a</sup>replied: <sup>t</sup>You must <sup>l</sup>take <sup>~</sup>S<sup>n</sup>the<sup>n</sup> seven ewe lambs from my hand in <sup>p</sup>order that it may <sup>b</sup>be <sup>></sup>a testimony for me that I have delved <sup>~</sup>this <sup>~</sup>well. 31 Therefore one called <sup>></sup>this <sup>ri</sup>place Beer-sheba <sup>t</sup>because there the two of them had sworn an oath.

32 + When they had <sup>l</sup>contracted the covenant <sup>i</sup>at Beer-sheba, + Abimelech <sup>l</sup>got up <sup>+</sup>with Phicol the chief of his military host, and they <sup>l</sup>returned to Philistine country.

33 + Then <sup>7</sup>Abraham<sup>nc</sup> <sup>l</sup>planted a tamarisk <sup>i</sup>at Beer-sheba and <sup>l</sup>called there <sup>i</sup>on the name of Yahweh, <sup>S</sup>the<sup>n</sup> eonian El. 34 + Abraham <sup>l</sup>sojourned many days as an alien in Philistine country.

## SELF-RIGHTEOUS ABIMELECH

Self-righteous Abimelech made a good foil for God-righteous Abraham. He evidently realized that God was with Abraham in *all* that he did, good or bad. But, alas! he only wanted Abraham to be as good as he was! That was easy, so Abraham did not hesitate. But Abimelech was a king, so he was responsible for what his subjects did, and they had committed what was a serious crime under the circumstances. They had snatched a well of water which belonged to Abraham. In such a land water is the most valuable possession. And such a well as this in this location became famous, as it is today, for few travelers to the holy land do not go to see it. But, typically, it is a symbol of the spirit of God, and the life that wells up in the believer for life eonian.

As the land was promised to his seed, he could not swear *never* to eject the Philistines, but, as he knew that his seed would not dwell in it until four hundred years later, he was free to make a conditional agreement with Abimelech. The AV suggests that he made it with "my son" or "my son's son," but the Hebrew reads "my progeny +or . . . my posterity" (Gen.21:23), that is, to his whole family. So the treaty was well within the limits, and probably lasted only as long as Abraham's son and grandson were in his country, until Jacob went down to Egypt.

All that he stipulated was that Abraham would not be *false* to him and his family! Why this? Because Abraham *had* been false to him in the matter of Sarah. Can we visualize the situation? Here was a Philistine king, who did *not* have Yahweh for his Subjector, asking His prophet, to whom He had promised the land, not to deceive him again! Abraham had been afraid of *him*. Yet now *he* was afraid of *Abraham*! Of course Abraham had nothing to say but, "I swear."

## BEER-SHEBA

In order to make the matter sure, Abraham paid for the well-site with a flock and a herd (21:27), as the basis of a covenant. For the well itself, which he had delved, they entered into a covenant, and Abraham gave seven ewe lambs to Abimelech as testimony to the fact that the well belonged to him. Besides, it was given a name which records that fact. Beer-sheba means WELL-OATH, and that name remains to this day. When in Palestine, I made a special point of visiting the spot. There seem to have been seven wells later. The stem of the word *oath* and *seven* is the same: *shbo*. This probably kept the name from being changed, as was done with many other sites.

The AV says that Abraham "planted a *grove* in Beer-sheba and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God." (Gen.21:33). This is most misleading, for, in all other places where the word "grove" occurs, they indicate false worship. They were often cut down on that account. Those "groves" are named *ashre* happiness, to express the licentious worship which they concealed. The CV calls them "*Ashera poles*." The word here used, *ashl* TAMARISK, looks very much like this, for the *r* and *l* are easily confused in Hebrew. The AV renders it "tree" in the only other occurrences (1 Sam.22:6; 31:13). We may be sure that Abraham would not plant a grove in which idolators could conduct their orgies.

## THE WELL

Abraham was encouraged to assert his rights. Doubtless he had been afraid to do so before. Besides all the wealth, especially in cattle, which Abraham had amassed, he owned wells of water. Particularly for a herdsman, drinking-water is of inestimable value, and has caused countless clashes, especially in the western plains of the

United States, for cattle cannot live long without water. The servants of Abimelech evidently had not learned to fear Abraham's Protector, so they took his well away from him. It was the easiest way that they could keep him out of their preserves. But Abimelech was afraid, and profuse in his excuses.

Neither did Abraham call on the LORD there, but on the name of Yahweh (Will-be-ing-was) El (SUBJECTOR) *eonian*. This was most appropriate. He did not trust the Philistine king or his covenant, for the man might not live another year, nor did he depend upon his army, for it might be destroyed in a day. We know that there is no trace left of them now. But the well is still there, and Beer-sheba has been in the hands of his descendants most of the time since then. For four hundred years his descendants, from Jacob to Joshua, lost it, and so for long periods later. So he called on the *eonian* Subjector, Who not only *was* in Abraham's day, but will be throughout the eonian times. In the day of Yahweh, and the day of El, then the promises given to Abraham will find a glorious fulfillment, and his descendents will be refreshed by the water from the Well of the Oath.

Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days, and Beer-sheba, about as far south of Hebron as that is of Jerusalem, though a little to the west, seems to have been the center of their sojourn until Jacob went down to Egypt at the request of Joseph.

#### NOT OF ACTS

We read that, "by *faith* Abraham, being called, obeys, *coming out* into the place which he was about to obtain to enjoy as an allotment, and came out, not versed in where he is coming. By faith he *sojourns* in the land of promise . . ." (Heb.11:8-9). Later we have the result, "And he believed Yahweh, and it is accounted to him for right-



eousness." (Gen.15:6). He was not justified by going to the land of promise, or remaining there, or building an altar there, or interceding for Sodom, or any other *act*, good or bad. Neither was he condemned by any bad *acts*, such as prevaricating as to his wife's status, or by going, to Egypt without orders.

#### TURNING BAD INTO GOOD

Abraham was chosen to give us simple illustrations and public exhibitions of how acts, bad in themselves, are not only justified by Yahweh, but actually bring blessing! Even Pharaoh, whom Abram had wronged, did good to Abram, so that he came to have a flock and a very heavy herd of cattle, and donkeys, and menservants and maidservants. But poor Pharaoh must suffer, even though he had done no wrong! As a result of his journey the *culprit* is very heavy in cattle and in silver and in gold. Here, put into concrete, tangible, substantial form, we have the results of faith righteousness. The Subjector, by His intervention, turns all Abram's sins into undeserved blessings, simply because he *believed* Him in regard to His plans, even though he did not trust Him at all times.

How thankful we should be that we are not justified by the *amount*, or the *firmness* of our faith, or the *steadfastness* with which we believe! If it had depended on these things Abraham would *not* have been justified! We can understand and, perhaps, condone his deception when he went down to Egypt and caused so much damage to Pharaoh there, by his conduct. Yet after this had shown Yahweh's care and beneficence (Gen.20:14-15), how could he fall for the same fear again? Yet we should be thankful that it was so, for do we not do the same? And when we do, does it not tempt us to doubt His grace? How can we expect Him to extend His justification to repeaters, who do not seem to benefit by the lessons of the past?

## GERAR

One would think that his experience with Pharaoh, in Egypt, would have cured Abram of misrepresenting his relation to his wife. Even if his words were technically correct, for Sarah *was* his sister, the natural implication was that she was not his wife. Such a relationship was evidently rather rare. Should he not have had enough confidence in Yahweh's ability to protect him, so that he could openly confess the truth?

When Abraham sinned the second time (Gen.20:2), he did not leave the land promised to him and go into an alien country. Gerar may be included in the territory of Israel today. He journeyed toward the Negev (*ngb*, ARCH), or *south* rim. Just as *im* SEA is often used to indicate the *west*, so *ngb* is often rendered *south*, or southward, in our versions, although *drum* is the real word for SOUTH. It refers to the border country between Israel and Egypt. The actual border seems to be indicated by *shur* REGARD, which indicates a *barricade*. Abraham does not seem to have made this territory his permanent dwelling place, but was temporarily sojourning in *Gerar*.

Abimelech is called the king of Gerar here. But later he is called king of the Philistines (Gen.26:8), so it may be that this was his capital, or a place of temporary sojourn (*gur*). At any rate, this descendant of Ham was the *supposed* ruler of the land. Yet here he came into touch with Abraham, the *real* title-holder. Abraham, however, made a very poor showing, so the Subjector stepped in and, by means of a dream, did not dethrone him and put Abraham in his place, for that time had not yet come. Yet He put Abimelech below him, by making Abraham, not only the possessor of Sarah, who might avenge the kidnapping of his wife, but a prophet of the Subjector, on whose word his very life depended.

## THE PHILISTINE NATION

The language used by Abimelech is very suggestive. It shows us what the Philistines thought of themselves. The Subjector did not threaten the whole *nation* with death on account of his taking of Sarah, yet the king expostulates, "... are You going to kill even an unknowing and righteous *nation*?" (Gen.20:4). Did he, in his inmost consciousness, have an intimation of the fate of the nation, and fear its fulfillment at that time? Abimelech had been sincere, in this transaction, but the *nation* certainly was not *righteous*. This they afterward showed, when they stopped up the wells which Abraham's servants had dug (Gen.26:15,18). In closing, the Subjector broadens His threat to include all of Abimelech's servants (Gen.20:7).

## A PROPHETIC SCENE

Abraham does not make much of a showing in his role as a prophet, but the *scene* which follows certainly is a miniature prophecy of the kingdom of his greater Son, although Abraham makes a poor representation of Him (Gen.20:8-18). First, the fear of the Elohim is felt by all Abimelech's servants. Then he not only restores Sarah, but presents him with much money and a flock and a herd, and servants and maids. All that Abraham did was to pray for the king, that God would heal him and his house, for they had not only been threatened, but had actually been given a foretaste of the impending afflictions.

Why is it that these disgraceful stories of Abraham's duplicity are recorded in the Scriptures of truth? To be sure, they are seldom mentioned, and do not seem to have seriously dimmed the luster of his fame. We may be sure that they have a profound lesson for all who *believe*. We suggest that the reason is this: They illustrate the righteousness of *faith*, which is *altogether of God*, for it needs

a background of Abrahamic *unrighteousness* to properly display and emphasize it. This is so seldom realized that we feel compelled to over-emphasize it, otherwise the great truth of justification by faith can hardly be fully grasped and enjoyed.

#### GOD JUSTIFIES

The subjects of these episodes in the story of the life of Abraham seem to most of us out of line with the rest of the narrative, for they record a *lack* of faith on the part of the great example of faith. We are prone to base his righteousness largely on his *acts*, rather than his *faith*. This is extremely misleading, when we apply it to ourselves. Are we justified by faith in *the acts of Christ and God* on our behalf in the past, or must we add to these our own faulty actions in the present? None of *us* would justify Abraham's conduct in Egypt or in Philistia. Yet *God did justify both of them, by their outcome!* They brought much material wealth and spiritual prestige to Abraham, as the exponent of that righteousness which comes from faith in God alone.

#### EXHORTATION

Let us hope that these two episodes in the life of the father of the faith-filled, will be blessed to the readers of these lines, so that they may enjoy fully the righteousness which is theirs by faith *alone*, not based on any of their faulty acts, and, as a result, enter into perfect peace with God, based *only* on the acts of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Only so may we have access to the grace in which we stand and glory in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:2).

May these acts of Abraham help us to enjoy the great foundation truth of Romans 4:5, "to him who is *not* working, yet is *believing* on Him Who is justifying the irreverent, his faith is reckoned for righteousness."

A. E. Knoch

## SEDUCTIVE, PRIDEFUL DELUSIONS; VARIED USAGES OF “EONS”

### **Question:**

I have purchased the Concordant New Testament, Greek Text, as well as all of the Old Testament translations in the past year. Upon looking into Galatians chapter six, I came across a bit of confusion (which I am sure would not be confusion to you) concerning verse three. The Concordant NT says, “For if anyone is supposing himself to be anything, being nothing, he is imposing on himself.” Now the part, “. . . he is imposing on himself,” is the confusing part to me. I looked in WIGRAM’S ENGLISHMAN’S CONCORDANCE (also recommended by CPC) and compared the Greek word there with what the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT has, and they were the same. How is it that Wigram’s translates this word as “deceiveth” and not as “he-is-imposing-on” as the Concordant sublinear renders it? Both of these translations make a huge difference in the context of the passage. The idea of “deceiveth,” in my opinion, does not flow with the context of the first five verses.

### **Answer:**

THE LINE in Wigram’s Concordance for Galatians 6:3 which includes the word “deceiveth” is not Wigram’s own translation, but merely his listing of that verse as it appears in the Authorized Version itself.

Idiomatic usage between languages is sometimes quite similar, while in other cases it is very different. Our goal, in translation, is to remain substantively close to the sense

of the Original, even in cases where, in order to maintain a reasonable level of good diction, we cannot be formally literal and can only be literal in the sense of in accordance with essence of meaning.

The problem which Paul addresses herein, in Galatians 6:3, is not, *per se*, one of deception (though by corollary that is true as well), but of *seduction*, namely, of self-seduction.

The elements of the Greek word *phrenapataō*, signify "DISPOSE-SEDUCE." The element *phren* (as in the English "phrenology") is the Greek stem which speaks of mental inclination, which we render accordingly as "disposition" (see Keyword Concordance, p.79, entries "disposed" and "disposition"). The element *apataō* is the Greek verb which means "seduce" (see KC, p.262, entries "seduce" and "seduction").

If anyone, then, failing both in meekness and as a bearer of the burdens of others (Gal.6:1,2), instead, should be supposing himself to be anything, being nothing, he is "dispose-seducing" on himself (Gal.6:3). As a matter of mental inclination or disposition, he is thus involved in self-seduction (as opposed to seduction imposed on him by someone else). What such a one has seduced himself into thinking is that he is, as it were, "hot stuff," that is, one who is quite superior to others, so much so that he has no need either for meekness or for objective—and necessarily negative as to one's own flesh—self-evaluation (*cf* "noting yourself," 6:1).

Furthermore, since he is so superior, he need not waste his putative greatness in selfless service to others in consideration of their manifest burdens (6:2). Such a one, then, in his *disposition*, is involved by way of corollary in an act of *imposition*, that of imposing the false (yet very seductive) notion upon himself which is referred to above. Thus, idiomatically: "If anyone is supposing himself to be anything,

being nothing, he is imposing on himself." Namely, he is imposing on himself a false and harmful notion, albeit one that by its enticing, seductive nature (since it tells us what we, in our pride, would like to hear) we are apt to entertain and perhaps even freely accept as well.



### Question:

I am relatively new to the teaching that all men will be saved. However, as you can imagine, there are still a few wrinkles I need to iron out. My question concerns Revelation 20:10. First of all, I guess I must ask that since everything comes from God, exists in God, and will return to God, then will Satan himself be saved? Or, if not, what will be his ultimate outcome?

Revelation 20:10 speaks of the Adversary, as well as of the wild beast and the false prophet. And then it says, "And they shall be tormented day and night for eons of the eons." If, in fact, even today, only two eons lie ahead, namely, the millennial kingdom followed by the eon of the eons, then what does "eons [plural] of the eons" mean here?

Most translators render this as "for ever and ever." However, it does mention day and night which indicates time divisions, hence, ages. I would have supposed that it should say "the eon of the eons," which would indicate the final eon. But to say "eons of the eons," seems to indicate, at least, many more eons.

Or, could traditional Christianity be right in translating it "for ever and ever"? If they are not correct in this translation, then is not the thought of eternity expressed anywhere in the Bible at all? Or if this thought does appear, what words are used for this purpose?

### Answer:

Since all of creation is in the Son of God's love, through

Whom God delights to reconcile all, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens, there is no more reason to suppose that Satan is not included therein than that any other certain creature is not included therein. Therefore, it must be that that notable creature who had rightly long been termed "the Adversary," is very much included in the reconciliation of the universe, at which time this title ("Adversary" or "Satan") necessarily will no longer apply, since he will be reconciled and be at peace.

Your next question concerns Revelation 20:10, in regard to the torment spoken of there which will be "for the eons of the eons." The usual question here, as it is ordinarily expressed, is: "How can there be only one 'age' after the millennium when the devil, at the end of the thousand years, is to be tormented unto ages of ages?"

The problem here is a loose usage of terms. The "thousand years" of the saints' reign does not constitute the entirety of the coming epochal *eon* or duration. The two do not end at the same time.

"The period of time covered by the word 'eon' depends upon the context. The expression 'for the eon' does not necessarily include the entirety of the eon intended. While some seem to think that it must include the whole of a given eon, on the contrary, when an action occurs in an eon, it usually refers only to the rest of it. Our Lord spoke to the barren fig tree, 'No longer, by any means, may fruit be coming of you *for the eon*.' Did He forbid fruit from the deluge to His coming? The tree was not even planted until a thousand years after the flood, and it *did* produce fruit in this eon, but was to do so *no longer* (Matt.21:19; Mark 11:14; *cp* John 13:8; 1 Cor.8:13).

"So also in the plural. 'For the eons' does not denote the whole of them. Christ shall reign over the house of Jacob 'for the eons,' yet only two of them will be left when the kingdom commences (Luke 1:33). This passage also shows



that the rendering 'unto the eons' is impossible, for then He would not reign at all!

"The same is true of the phrase 'for the eons of the eons.' We read that the saints will be reigning for the eons of the eons (Rev.22:5). But some of these saints will not be alive at the commencement of the millennial eon. We cannot delay this eon after the advent of the Messiah. Yet Daniel and the dead circumcision saints are not raised until seventy-five days later. Part of the eon will be past when they commence to reign with Him the thousand years (Rev. 20:6). The same usage is found with reference to the torment of the Adversary. Although the wild beast and the false prophet have been in the lake of fire a thousand years before him (Rev.19:20), only one phrase is used for both: "the eons of the eons" (Rev.20:10). At that juncture, how much of that eon still remains, we do not know. But no matter how little, so it was that our Lord and His apostles spoke, and we should follow His example. This *usage* (in Revelation 20:10) of the word 'eon' does not affect its *meaning*. The limitations are in the *context*, not in the word."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that "eons" speaks of a plurality is no indication whatsoever of any particular plurality, certainly not of a very numerous plurality such as "(at least) many more," as you suggest.

Then you asked, "Or, could traditional Christianity be right in translating [this phrase] "for ever and ever"?"

The traditional rendering "for ever and ever," the sense of which being the idea of endlessness, is unquestionably wrong as a translation, even if it could somehow be shown to be correct as an interpretation. As a translator, one must be objective if he would remain a translator, lest he should become an interpreter, sharing his own subjective opinion as to sense of usage. The Greek always reads

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1. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.40, p.144.

*aiōn*; the CV always reads “eon,” the latter simply being an anglicized transliteration of the Greek (a parallel case is the Greek *baptizō* and the English anglicized transliteration “baptize”).

By our translation “eon” we mean the idea of “(inherently) indefinite duration.” As *translators*, we do not mean for “eon” to be understood in any other way, including as an “age,” or “eon” where “eon” is understood as a finite period. As *expositors*, in our own writings, since we find that all eonian time-durations revealed in Scripture have in view finite periods, we interpret the usage of these words accordingly, as finite time periods. But that is an entirely separate point from what these words themselves mean and how they must be *translated* (and, understood as well, at the translative level) if we would be objective and accurate in translation.

Finally you asked, “If the [usual translations are incorrect in their rendering ‘for ever and ever,’] then is not the thought of eternity expressed anywhere in the Bible at all? Or if this thought does appear, what words are used for this purpose?”

Yes, the idea of endlessness does occur in Luke 1:33: “And He [i.e., ‘the Son of the Most High,’ v.32] shall reign over the house of Jacob for the eons. And, *of His kingdom* [i.e., ‘reign’] there shall be *no consummation*.” Concerning that which is “of” (i.e., “pertains to”) His reign as the accomplishment thereof, there shall be no consummation.<sup>2</sup>

That which Christ achieves through (or as a result of) His reign, will be endless; and *that* will never consummate, which is to say, it will be interminable, in that there will always be new goals to achieve and still further glories to bring into realization.

J.R.C.

2. In the nature of the case, concerning the phrase “*of His kingdom*,” this is the ablative (i.e., “from-sense”) usage of this Greek genitival case ending, represented in English by the preposition “of.”

## DAVID'S MOURNING

(2 Samuel 19:1-40)

19 +Then > Joab was <sup>bd</sup>told that the king was weeping and mourning over Absalom. <sup>2</sup> And the victory <sup>i</sup>that day <sup>lb</sup>was turned >into mourning for all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers, for <sup>i</sup>that day the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers heard it > said~, The king is grieved over his son. <sup>3</sup> + The <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>l</sup>stole away <sup>i</sup>that day to enter the city just as <sup>wi</sup>soldiers would <sup>l</sup>steal away who are put to shame<sup>l</sup> <sup>i</sup>when they have fled~ in battle. <sup>4</sup> +As for the king, he wrapped up his face. And the king <sup>l</sup>cried out in a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!

<sup>5</sup> +Then Joab <sup>l</sup>came <sup>7</sup>into<sup>o</sup> the house to the king and <sup>l</sup>said, Today you have <sup>c</sup>put to shame the faces of all your servants, who <sup>m</sup>provided an escape<sup>l</sup> for your soul this day and the souls of your sons and your daughters, and the souls of your wives and the souls of your concubines, <sup>6</sup> >by loving~ those who hate<sup>l</sup> you and > hating~ those who love<sup>l</sup> you. For you have professed today that chief officers and conscript servants are nothing to you. <sup>t</sup>Now I know today <sup>t</sup>even if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead<sup>l</sup> today, then that would be upright in your eyes.

<sup>7</sup> + Now arise! Go forth and speak <sup>on</sup>to the heart of your servants! For I swear <sup>t</sup>by Yahweh, <sup>t</sup>if you are not going forth, assuredly no man shall lodge with you tonight; and this will be worse for you <sup>f</sup>than any evil plight <sup>w</sup>that has come over you from your youth until now. <sup>8</sup> +So the king <sup>l</sup>arose and <sup>l</sup>sat down in the gateway; and when > all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers were told, > saying~, Behold, the king is sitting in the gateway, + all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>l</sup>came before the king.

+ Israel had fled, each man to his <sup>M</sup>tent~. <sup>9</sup> + All the

people came to <sup>1</sup>be speculating <sup>i</sup>among all the tribes of Israel, <sup>></sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, It was the king who rescued us from the palm of <sup>7</sup>all<sup>cs</sup> our enemies<sup>1</sup>, and he<sup>'m</sup> provided our <sup>-</sup>escape from the palm of the Philistines. <sup>+</sup>Yet now he ran away from the land, from control over <sup>7</sup>his kingdom and from<sup>0</sup> Absalom. <sup>10</sup> <sup>+</sup>But Absalom, whom we had anointed over us, has died in battle; <sup>+</sup> why <sup>now</sup> then do you <sup>c</sup>keep silent<sup>1</sup> <sup>></sup>about bringing back<sup>-</sup> <sup>-</sup>the king? <sup>7</sup>And the word of all Israel came to the king<sup>c</sup>. <sup>11</sup> <sup>+</sup>So king David himself sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, <sup>></sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, Speak to the elders of Judah, <sup>></sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, Why should you <sup>b</sup>be the last to bring <sup>-</sup>the king back to his <sup>in</sup>palace, <sup>+</sup>since the word of all Israel has come to the king <sup>></sup>at his house? <sup>12</sup> You are my kinsmen, you are my bone and my flesh. <sup>+</sup> Why should you <sup>b</sup>be the last to bring <sup>-</sup>the king back? <sup>13</sup> And to Amasa you shall say, Are you not my bone and my flesh? Thus may Elohim do to me, and thus may He add, if you do not <sup>1</sup>become chief of the military host before me all <sup>-</sup>your days <sup>u</sup>instead of Joab. <sup>14</sup> And Amasa <sup>1</sup>won over <sup>-</sup>the heart of all the men of Judah as one man; and they <sup>1</sup>sent word to the king, <sup>7</sup> <sup>></sup>saying<sup>-cs</sup>, Return, you and all your servants!

<sup>15</sup> <sup>+</sup>So the king <sup>1</sup>returned and <sup>1</sup>came as far as the Jordan; and <sup>7</sup>the men of<sup>0</sup> Judah had come to<sup>d</sup> Gilgal <sup>></sup>on their <sup>go</sup>way<sup>-</sup> to meet the king, to <sup>c</sup>bring <sup>-</sup>the king across<sup>-</sup> <sup>-</sup>the Jordan. <sup>16</sup> <sup>+</sup> Shimei son of Gera the Benjamite <sup>w</sup> from Bahurim made <sup>1</sup>haste and came <sup>1</sup>down with the men of Judah to meet <sup>-</sup>king David, <sup>17</sup> and with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. <sup>+</sup>Also Ziba, the young attendant of Saul's <sup>in</sup>estate, <sup>+</sup> his fifteen sons and his twenty servants <sup>-</sup>with him, <sup>+</sup> they prospered in arriving at the Jordan before the king; <sup>18</sup> and <sup>7</sup>they<sup>~</sup> crossed the ford to <sup>c</sup>bring across <sup>-</sup>the king's household, and to do <sup>-</sup>whatever was good in his eyes.

<sup>+</sup>As for Shimei son of Gera, <sup>i</sup>when he had crossed<sup>-</sup> <sup>i</sup> the Jordan, he fell down before the king; <sup>19</sup> and he <sup>1</sup>said to the king, Let not my lord <sup>1</sup>account depravity to me, and do

not <sup>l</sup>remember <sup>w</sup>what <sup>-</sup>depravity your servant <sup>c</sup>did <sup>i</sup>on the day <sup>w</sup>when my lord the king went forth from Jerusalem, so <sup>></sup>that the king should <sup>pl</sup>take<sup>-</sup> it to <sup>his</sup> heart. <sup>20</sup> For your servant knows that I, yea I have sinned. <sup>+</sup>So <sup>bd</sup>here I have come today, the first <sup>></sup>of all the house of Joseph, to go down <sup>></sup>and meet<sup>-</sup> my lord the king.

<sup>21</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then Abishai son of Zeruiah <sup>l</sup>responded, <sup>+</sup> <sup>l</sup>saying, Should Shimei not be <sup>c</sup>put to death <sup>u</sup>for this <sup>t</sup>because he has maledicted <sup>-</sup>Yahweh's anointed? <sup>22</sup> <sup>+</sup>Yet David <sup>lsa</sup>replied, What is it to me and to you, sons of Zeruiah, that today you have <sup>l</sup>become my <sup>></sup> adversary? Should anyone in Israel be <sup>c</sup>put to death on <sup>-</sup>this day? For do <sup>7</sup>you<sup>~</sup> not know that today I am again king over Israel? <sup>23</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then the king <sup>l</sup>said to Shimei, You shall not die. And the king <sup>l</sup>swore an oath to him.

<sup>24</sup> <sup>+</sup>Also Mephibosheth, grandson of Saul, came down to meet the king. <sup>+</sup> He had neither <sup>d</sup>cared for his feet, nor had he <sup>d</sup>cared for his upper lip, nor had he laundered <sup>-</sup>his clothes <sup>></sup> from the day the king <sup>go</sup>departed<sup>-</sup> until the day <sup>w</sup> he came back in peace. <sup>25</sup> <sup>+</sup>So it <sup>lb</sup>was <sup>t</sup>when he came <sup>7</sup>from<sup>0</sup> Jerusalem to meet the king <sup>+</sup>that the king <sup>l</sup>said to him, Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?

<sup>26</sup> <sup>+</sup>He <sup>lsa</sup>replied, My lord the king, it was my own servant who deceived me. For your servant had said <sup>7</sup>to him<sup>c</sup>, <sup>7</sup>Saddle<sup>~s</sup> the donkey for me <sup>+</sup>that I may ride on it and <sup>l</sup>go <sup>-</sup>with the king. For your servant is lame. <sup>27</sup> <sup>+</sup> Ziba has <sup>l</sup>vilified <sup>i</sup> your servant <sup>></sup>before my lord the king. <sup>+</sup>But my lord the king is like a messenger of the One, Elohim; <sup>+</sup>so do <sup>-</sup>what is good in your eyes. <sup>28</sup> For all of the household of my grandfather <sup>b</sup>were nothing <sup>t</sup>now <sup>if</sup>but men doomed to death <sup>></sup>before my lord the king. <sup>+</sup>Yet you <sup>l</sup>set <sup>-</sup>your servant <sup>i</sup>among those who ate<sup>l</sup> at your table. <sup>+</sup>So what righteous claim have I<sup>fr</sup> then <sup>+</sup> to cry out any<sup>fr</sup> more to the king?

<sup>29</sup> <sup>+</sup> The king <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him, Why should you speak any<sup>fr</sup> longer of your <sup>sp</sup>affairs? I <sup>sa</sup>decree that you' and Ziba

'apportion `the field. <sup>30</sup> + But Mephibosheth 'said to the king, <sup>mr</sup>Just let him take `the whole, inasmuch as my lord the king has come to his home in peace.

<sup>31</sup> + Also Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim and had 'passed on `with the king to the Jordan to see him off `at the Jordan. <sup>32</sup> + Barzillai was very old, eighty years of age. + He' had <sup>all</sup>provided `the king with food 'during his <sup>sit</sup>stay 'at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. <sup>33</sup> + So the king 'said to Barzillai, You, cross over `with me, and I will <sup>all</sup>provide `for <sup>7</sup>your old age~ with me in Jerusalem.

<sup>34</sup> + Yet Barzillai <sup>lsa</sup>replied to the king, How many days of the years of my life are left that I should go up `with the king to Jerusalem? <sup>35</sup> I am eighty years of age today. Would I 'know the difference between good >and bad? <sup>if</sup>Or can your servant 'taste <sup>w</sup>what I 'eat and <sup>w</sup>what I 'drink? <sup>if</sup>Or can I <sup>fr</sup>still 'make out <sup>i</sup> the voice of singing men and singing women? Why +then should your servant become a further >load to my lord the king? <sup>36</sup> Your servant could barely 'cross `the Jordan `with the king! + Why should the king requite me with `this `requit? <sup>37</sup> I pray, let your servant return +that I may die in my own city <sup>wi</sup>near the tomb of my father and my mother. +But <sup>bd</sup>here is your servant Chimham, <sup>7</sup>my son<sup>c</sup>; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him <sup>w</sup>what is good in your eyes.

<sup>38</sup> + The king 'said, Chimham shall cross over `with me, and I myself will 'do for him `whatever is good in <sup>7</sup>my~ eyes. And anything else <sup>w</sup>you 'choose to ask <sup>on</sup>of me, I will 'do that for you too. <sup>39</sup> + Then all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers 'crossed over `the Jordan. +When the king was ready to ~cross, + the king 'kissed > Barzillai and 'blessed him; and Barzillai 'returned to his own <sup>ri</sup>place. <sup>40</sup> + Then the king 'crossed over to<sup>d</sup> 'Gilgal, and Chimham crossed with him, and all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers of Judah; + they <sup>c</sup>brought `the king ~across, <sup>mr</sup>together +with half the <sup>wi</sup>force of Israel.

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DAVID'S MOURNING

David had lost Amnon, his firstborn son. Now he had lost another son, one who had certainly appeared to all as a likely successor to the throne. David loved his children deeply, and the knowledge that his own sins were at the root of these losses surely caused him feelings of deep guilt for Amnon's and Absalom's deaths. But how could David safeguard someone who declared war against him and sought to kill him? David was long overdue to choose between his friends and enemies, and to let go of Absalom.

## JOAB'S REBUKE

Joab was practical and fearless, though sometimes unscrupulous. He was probably younger than David. It is likely that he had been with David while Saul was still alive, but he is not mentioned in a position of leadership until his confrontation with Abner in 2 Samuel 2. Joab and David had been together through many battles and other trying experiences. Joab was the one who carried out David's order to see that Uriah was killed. Joab "had the goods" on David—good and bad. This deep familiarity with David, and a realization of the country's immediate condition, provided Joab with the boldness to rebuke the king so harshly.

Like a hard resounding slap in the face, Joab's rebuke brought David back to his senses. "Better is exposed reproof than love that is concealed. Faithful are the injuries of one in friendship, yet shiftily are the kisses of one who hates" (Prov.27:5,6). It was imperative for the unity and stability of the country that David mask his feelings for Absalom. David returned to the gate and commended his loyalists, and the healing of the nation was begun.

## REGAINING THE THRONE

Absalom was defeated. What should David do next? Should he not march back to Jerusalem and resume his challenged position? David showed a surprising degree of patience by waiting to be invited back to the throne. Then he gently chided his own tribe, Judah, for being the last to call for him.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of David's grace toward the rebellious nation was illustrated in his treatment of Shimei. Shimei had cursed David vehemently when David was fleeing Jerusalem (2 Sam.16:5-13). Now Shimei repented, bringing 1,000 Benjamites with him, besides Ziba and his house. They crossed the Jordan to meet the exiled king and to help bring him home. Abishai, who was vocal at the time of Shimei's cursing, spoke up calling for Shimei's execution. But David refused, saying it was a time of peace and restoration, and swore to Shimei that he would not die for his cursing. This grace is much like that of the Lord Jesus Christ to another Benjamite (Phil.3:5). "Grateful am I to Him Who invigorates me, Christ Jesus, our Lord, for He deems me faithful, assigning me a service, I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim.1:12-14). Similar to the overwhelming grace of Christ, David's grace toward Shimei shocked even those who knew him best.

## BARZILLAI

Barzillai and David had a sincere friendship rivaled only by that of Jonathan and David in earlier years. Barzillai freely gave of his substance to support the king's needs during his time across the Jordan, and asked for nothing



in return. The nation of Israel owed much to this man's generosity for the peace and prosperity enjoyed during the latter days of David's reign.

In Barzillai's son Chimham, David may have found a replacement for his deceased sons. It is likely that Chimham received a portion of the king's inheritance near Bethlehem (Jer.41:17). Other descendents of Barzillai are mentioned generations later in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh.7:63).

When Israel wandered 40 years in the wilderness, the death of the older generation was typical of the death of the flesh that precedes full enjoyment of the promises of God. This principle was emphasized again with the circumcision that accompanied the crossing of the Jordan at Gilgal under Joshua's leadership. David's crossing of the Jordan to return to Jerusalem also took place at Gilgal. There is much evidence of the flesh in the bickering of the tribes of Israel, but Barzillai stands as a beautiful example of the flesh left behind. He no longer could taste the delicacies that delight the tongue, or hear the melodies that stir the soul, but, in the person of his son, he crossed the descending river to dwell with the king.

J. Phillip Scranton

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## JOHN BRAUCHT

Our brother in the Lord, John Braucht, of St. Petersburg, Florida, was put to repose on March 10, 2005. In his 89 years, God gave him his own unique arrangement of experiences, both good and evil, many of which he described in his autobiography entitled, *A Life Worth Remembering*. One that was especially good was his acquaintance with the Concordant Version and the truth of the reconciliation of all. After his retirement from the military, John gave much of his time and strength to his ministry of distributing biblically related literature, including that of the Concordant Publishing Concern. Now he sleeps to await the glorious time when we will be snatched away together to meet our Lord in the air. Thanks be to God for this happy expectation!

## BAPTISM IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

THE distinctive truth for the present time is given us through the apostle Paul (Eph.3:8,9) in the epistles written after Israel is set aside, or in view of that fact. In perfect accord with the grace revealed, the least of all saints is chosen to enlighten all as to the secret administration hitherto concealed by God.

If we seek to "reconcile" the various administrations in which baptism obtains and fuse them all into one general and indistinct whole, we only obscure the truth. Truth must be rightly apportioned, or it is no longer truth.

Even in Paul's letters there are various presentations of this subject which *seem* contradictory. If, however, we remember the administration in which each truth finds its place, all is clear. What seemed contradictory falls into perfect order. Thus we are enabled to give each Scripture its full weight. We are not forced to tone down or clip His word to make it fit some other passage.

Paul wrote nine epistles to seven ecclesias. Seven speaks of the perfection and completeness of the revelation God gave through him. Every subject in which we require instruction is dealt with. True, Peter and John deal with the same subjects, but their viewpoint is radically different and not at all in keeping with the present fullness of grace.

They fall into three groups, according to the measure of the manifestation of God at the time when they were written.

Two were written before the truths most characteristic of the present dispensation had been made known. These are 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

Four were written on the verge of the present period, and were sent to the Romans, the Corinthians and the Galatians.

Three were given after the public repudiation of Israel (Acts 28:25-28), in the full blaze of the glorious grace which is now dispensed. These were written to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians.

The remaining four are personal epistles.

This is the key to the various ways in which the truth of baptism is presented in each. Perfect harmony prevails when we apprehend the progress of revelation.

## THE EARLY LETTERS

The subject of baptism is entirely foreign to Thessalonian truth. Its scenes are laid in that future glory where baptism has no place.

In Galatians it is mentioned once. "Now at the coming of faith, we are no longer under an escort, for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ, in Whom there is no Jew nor yet Greek, there is no slave nor yet free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:25-28).

Those under the law were children, kept in ward by its wall of ordinances and commandments. But when faith had come, the saints were given the place of a grown son.

This was not a matter of attainment for some. It was the portion of *all*. It is not a question of individual experience. It is not, as in nature, that saints become sons through infancy and youth. It is a question of God's administration.

All under law, however godly or experienced, were children. All who are of faith are sons. To illustrate this the apostle points to those among them who had been baptized into Christ. They had been clothed with Christ. And so, being clothed with Him, they themselves were not seen,

but Christ. All fleshly distinctions are obliterated. The differences between the Greek and the Jew, the slave and the freeman—even the sexes—all are gone in Him. But this was true, not alone of those who had been baptized, but of all. They were “all one in Christ Jesus.”

Let us for a moment allow that baptism in water made them one, as it did those in Jerusalem and Samaria. Then only those baptized were clothed with Christ. There would then be a fleshly distinction—a conclusion diametrically opposite to the apostle’s words.

No ordinance could make them one in sonship. That was by faith alone. Having begun by spirit, it was impossible for them to be perfected by flesh.

#### THE TRANSITIONAL LETTERS

The epistle to the Romans contains a retrospective glance at the ordinance of baptism as administered under the “evangel of God,” or what Paul terms “*my* evangel.”

It follows from that most astounding revelation of God’s favor found in the fifth chapter. The sovereignty of sin, from Adam till Moses, was absolute. No less so is the present reign of grace. Much as sin may abound, grace always superabounds.

“A most dangerous doctrine,” some would say. “Then a man may do just as he pleases! He may revel in sin and still be saved. Why his very sin will call forth still greater grants of grace!”

Just so.

“What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing? May it not be coming to that! We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever were baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into His death, that, even as Christ was roused from

among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life" (Rom.6:1-4).

The Received Text reads "Jesus Christ," which is unfortunate indeed. His personal name Jesus, followed by His title, Messiah, or Christ, refers us to the days of His humiliation. It was unto Christ as having been baptized at the cross, as having died and been buried, and as having been raised again; it was unto Christ Jesus that they were baptized. And this united them to Him. They too had been put to death, had been buried, and had been raised again. And this put them beyond the boundaries of sin's realm. Indeed, "We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it?"

#### UN-BAPTIZED INCLUDED IN CHRIST

The fact of having undergone the washing of water was no guarantee of a sinless life. It was only as they apprehended its spiritual meaning that its power was seen.

But some had not been baptized. Were they excluded from this unity with Christ? Were they forbidden to identify themselves with Him in His baptism? Or were they charged to undergo the ordinance in order to obtain these privileges?

None are told to be baptized. The apostle carefully distinguished between "us," those with him, and "*ye*" (emphatic or contrastive in the Greek), the Roman saints. Not even all of those with him had been baptized. He could only say "*as many* of us," not "*all*." Nor does he drop any hint which would lead us to infer that those with him had any intentions in that direction.

But still more strongly are we led to believe that it was not his object to teach the Romans to observe the rite, for a more fitting juncture could not be found in which he might have charged them to fulfil it. But he does not do so. And more than this, he does charge them to "reckon" it so. All the precious truth which the observance conveyed

to its subjects was to be *reckoned* theirs, just the same as though they had gone through it. The fact that God does not charge them to be baptized is a clear indication that it was not according to His will.

The uncertain footing upon which baptism in water rested during Paul's ministry among the nations, previous to the present administration, is in sharp contract to its firm hold in early Pentecostal times. This becomes very apparent by Paul's course at Corinth, and his subsequent thankfulness that he had not baptized more freely (1 Cor.1:14-16).

He regarded baptism as a unifier, or rather, in their case, a possible cause of division, by uniting them to another center than Christ. If he had baptized more of them he might be called upon to answer the charge of baptizing into his own name; thus creating a unity apart from the unity God had made by spirit-baptism. He goes on to say: "For Christ does not commission me to be baptizing, but to be bringing the evangel, not in wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ may be made void."

#### FLESH PROFITS NOTHING

The cross put an end to man as to flesh. Oceans of water applied to his body could not cleanse; neither could it sanctify for God's presence, nor produce a spiritual unity. The power of that cross, once known, put an end to all that concerns the flesh. Flesh avails nothing. If it be reckoned, if I be baptized in water, then I deny the cross and its condemnation of the flesh.

And here we arrive at the very pith and marrow of our subject. Though our Lord had been baptized by John, still He speaks of another baptism, yet future, which would give relief from the hindrances in which He exercised His earthly ministry (Luke 12:50).

All baptism hitherto had been but shadows. But there

can be no shadow without the substance. The washings of the law and the waters of Jordan did not even remove the filth of the flesh, much less did they touch the moral defilement which separates between the creature and the Creator. What can wash away such defilement?

Nothing but the death of Christ.

That was the baptism He spoke of. Not His death at Pilate's hands, but His death in that deeper spiritual sense of which the physical is but a parable. Just as all fellowship and recognition ceases between a dead man and his friends, so He was severed from the smile and fellowship of God. And more than this, when He was made the sin offering, as in days of old, God sent fire from above into His bones, and it prevailed against Him.

How great a marvel that He became a real Man, at times hungry and weary and worn! But how much greater is the marvel as we see Him, till then untainted, undefiled, holy, having no need of any cleansing, any baptism, become sin for us!

For Himself He could acknowledge no sin; for us He took all sin.

Then was cleansing needed; then was baptism needed. Water would not do; no, nor literal fire. Nothing less than the fierce fury of God's wrath could consume the sin: His hot displeasure alone could cleanse.

What all this involved we may never know. He alone could bear it. But we know that it laid Him in the grave, and that He rose triumphant, and has ascended to God's right hand.

And as we see Him in that holy place we know that all the sins that He bore are gone. They never could find entrance there. And we whisper to our hearts: "His is the baptism that cleanses and purifies and satisfies. And since it was not for Himself He bore it (for He had no need), then it was for me. Whatever means God has provided, that will

I use to obtain the benefits of this baptism of baptisms, the cross of the Christ of God."

As we have seen, baptism into "Christ Jesus" meant more than into the "Lord Jesus" (for Samaritans), or "Jesus Christ" (for Israel's sons in their national standing and for proselytes of the nations). It was unto Him as having died and being risen and glorified. Not death alone, but resurrection also.

#### THE CLAIM OF NO RESURRECTION

In his great argument on resurrection the apostle makes a point of this: "Now if Christ is being heralded that He has been roused from among the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? Now if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been roused. Now if Christ has not been roused, for naught, consequently is our heralding, and for naught, is your faith . . . Consequently those also, who are put to repose in Christ, perished. If we are having an expectation in Christ in this life only, more forlorn than all men are we. . . . Else what shall those be doing who are baptizing? It is for the sake of the dead absolutely if the dead are not being roused. Why are they baptizing also for their sake? Why are we also in danger every hour?" (1 Cor.15:12-29).

Paul died daily. The death here spoken of is that which baptism sets forth—death with Christ. What shall we do for those who have died with Christ if there is no resurrection (Rom.6:3)?

If death is the end of all, if there is no resurrection, then those baptized into "Christ Jesus," acknowledging their death with Him, are, simply sealing their own doom and destruction. It is the hope of resurrection alone that puts meaning and joy into the rite for them. But they *did* rejoice in "Christ Jesus" (1 Cor.15:31). The apostle bases his protest upon this.



How inconsistent to rejoice in Christ Jesus (the title of His glory) when they had destroyed the only real cause of rejoicing—the resurrection! How inconsistent to identify themselves with Him in death and then deny His glorious resurrection and their part in it! Such teaching, instead of leading to a resurrection experience in this life, leads to looseness and carelessness and indifference.

In 1 Corinthians 10 (one of the earlier transitional epistles) the baptism of the fathers into Moses is made the point of a solemn warning.

Many of their descendants were sheltering themselves under the fact that they had been baptized. But, like Simon of Samaria, their hearts were not right in the sight of God. Every one of the fathers had been baptized into Moses, and enjoyed the same spiritual gifts, but this did not shield them from God's displeasure. The great bulk of them were strewn along the wilderness. "So that, let him who is supposing he stands beware that he should not be falling."

This passage has often been used by the enemy to destroy confidence in Christ. But the very opposite is its intention. Those who base their assurance on baptism or spiritual gifts, let *these* take heed! They may *think* they stand, but they are certain to have a fall. The *baptism of Christ* with holy spirit is the only one that can establish our hearts forever in God's sight.

The warning follows the fact that the consummation of the eons had been attained. The drama of earth's history had reached its crisis by the apostasy of Israel. This apostasy was burdened with baptism and religious ceremonies. Hence the warning.

The last Scripture in the transitional epistles remains to be noticed. "For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, thus also is the Christ. For in one spirit also we all are baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks,

whether slaves or free, and all are made to imbibe one spirit" (1 Cor.12:12,13).

The Corinthians had been the subjects of the washing of baptism. Not, indeed, necessarily in its outward ceremonial form, in water, but in the substantial spiritual cleansing of which water was but the shadow. After mentioning various classes of the wicked, the apostle says: "And some of you were these, but you are bathed off, but you are hallowed, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the spirit of our God" (1 Cor.6:9-11). The bathing which resulted in their sanctification was by the spirit of God. "Bathing" really cleanses the flesh; "baptism" does not. So the thorough spiritual cleansing is here spoken of as "bathing," rather than "baptism."

#### SPIRIT BAPTISM MUCH GREATER THAN WATER

Unity had hitherto been by water. Now for the first time we read of a unity by spirit-baptism. We have seen how the laver gives place to the sea, which in its turn is transformed into a life-giving river, the source of life and fruitfulness wherever it flows. The spirit which baptizes us into one body is a river of life. Neither laver nor sea furnished a draft for the thirsty soul. Cleansing exhausted their mission. They were not "living" or running water, like the river. But the spirit He bestows not only binds us one to another, but it is a draft of delight and life. We have all been caused to imbibe the same spirit. We all have the same life. We all are one. This is the "unity of the spirit," which cannot be broken, which He charges us to keep with diligence (Eph.4:1).

Thus is baptism set forth in the transitional epistles. We are pointed back to what has been, and are led on to look forward to still clearer light. "For out of an instalment are we knowing," says the apostle, "Now whenever maturity may be coming, that which is out of an installment shall be

discarded" (1 Cor.13:9,10). Childhood is past. Manhood is future. Upon its threshold he says: "When I was a minor, I spoke as a minor, I was disposed as a minor, I took account of things as a minor. Yet when I have become a man, I have discarded that which is a minor's" (1 Cor.13:11).

#### ADVANCING TO MATURITY

The apostle had the unique experience of emerging from one administration, of passing through a second, and was about to enter the third. The first was characterized by the concrete forms of childhood; the next, the dignity of sonship; the last is to be the maturity of the full grown man.

Thus we can easily see the ground for "putting away" things he once held dear.

The present secret administration was gradually approached in the Acts, and those epistles written before its close. The mystery or secret of the present administration was not made known until Ephesians was written. Still there is symptom after symptom pointing forward to it. The manner of Paul's conversion was itself a very remarkable indication, even though he was brought into the (then) existing order of things. He was called *as an enemy, outside the land*. His baptism has been already mentioned. His preaching Messiah as the Son of God is another very prominent point of divergence from the rest. His separation along with Barnabas and his sermon at Pisidian Antioch drove the wedge in still further.

There was a great difference, too, in the effect of his ministry on those who heard him. All received the spirit. When the secret was finally revealed, it was not given to those alone who should thenceforward be saved, but to those who had previously received the gift of the spirit in connection with his ministry (Eph.1:13).

At that time they had no hope of their own, but the hope of Israel. But they were to be saved from the wrath about

to visit this earth by being caught up into the air. They and those who had fallen asleep would be changed in the resurrection. They were to bear a heavenly stamp.

The secret (or mystery) of Israel's blindness had been revealed to the initiated as well as the mystery of the Gospel, or secret good news—the conciliation.

After all this Israel is publicly and finally repudiated, and the way is thus cleared for the acknowledgment of the nations (Acts 28:25-28).

So we see that, before the present secret administration was revealed, things were in a ripe state to receive its wondrous message.

#### ISRAEL'S CONTINUAL REJECTION

All the while the evangel of God was being proclaimed among the nations, God was still holding out the offer of the kingdom to His disobedient people.

Before this, while our Master was still on earth, He had proclaimed the kingdom as Yahweh's prophet. When they reject the offer, He quotes the words Yahweh spoke to Isaiah, blinding their eyes and stopping their ears. He no longer proclaims the kingdom openly, but veils His teaching in parables concerning the interval of its rejection (Matt.13).

When, later on, they rejected the King Himself, He hid himself from them, and the Word through Isaiah (which he heard when he saw His glory) was again announced (John 12:37-41).

All manner of sin and blasphemy was forgiven them, even though they rejected Yahweh and His Messiah. Only one more way was open. After He ascended, the promised holy spirit was given, renewing the offer of the kingdom, and promising to send back their Messiah if they would repent (Acts 3:20). It is the last call. If the spirit is rejected there is no other resource. Sin against the holy spirit can not be pardoned for the eons.

The book of Acts is the record of this final ministry. It begins with the coming of the spirit: it chronicles the rejection of the spirit: it ends with the spirit's repudiation of Israel. Its subject is the kingdom of God—the same kingdom which they had twice rejected in Messiah's preaching and His person. Isaiah's thrice quoted testimony against them (this time referred to as the holy spirit's specially solemn words) concludes the history. Their dreadful wars and the sickening horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem pass unnoticed in the Word of God. Thenceforward they are out of His reckoning.

They have rejected Yahweh.

They have rejected Messiah.

Now they have rejected the holy spirit.

This is final.

How solemn and far-reaching, then, must be the proclamation from Rome, the seat of earthly sovereignty, of the spirit's withdrawal of the offer of the kingdom to Israel!

In the first proclamation of the kingdom, by the Master Himself, the nations had no place. The Son of David was not sent but to the house of Israel.

Neither had they any part in the King. The Greeks who desire to see Him are not accommodated.

And when the kingdom first began to be proclaimed by the spirit's power, no one dreamed of such a thing, even though Israel, by the murder of Messiah, had forfeited every claim to the kingdom. After this dreadful deed they really had no more right to God's blessing than the other nations.

The spirit must needs act upon the principle of *grace*, even with the people of the covenant. But this principle takes in the other nations, too!

The first hint we get of this is in Cornelius' case. The spirit's gifts are freely bestowed on aliens. Fleshly distinctions are ignored. Through Paul's ministry among the

nations the spirit gets a larger and still larger place. The nations receive the spirit. Israel rejects the spirit.

Israel is not cast aside for failure to carry out the ordinances. Far from it. They were fiercely zealous for the ritual, and even tried to force the other nations under its yoke. This is why Isaiah's words at the close of Acts are quoted as the words of the *holy spirit*, and not, as previously, as Yahweh's words or the Master's.

The first rejection of the kingdom drew from Him the secrets of the kingdom, which the disciples alone could understand.

The rejection of Himself led Him to further unbosom Himself to His own, though He hid Himself from the multitude.

What, then, shall we expect from the rejection of the spirit?

Publicly and outwardly the spirit seems to withdraw. No mighty works henceforth display its presence. But to His own He reveals the greatest secrets that God's purpose has ever revealed—the full secret of Messiah, and the present secret administration which God had concealed from all previous eras.

The public proclamation of the spirit's rejection of Israel is the monument God has erected to guard the boundary-line between the previous and the present dispensation. On one side is inscribed Isaiah's solemn repudiation. On the other, "*to the nations was dispatched this salvation of God.*"

While we have observed with profit the *tendency* of the truth before this time, we must not stop here. We must look to Paul's letters, written after this great and distinct dispensation-marking event, to get clear, conclusive, and final teaching on our subject. But we must not open the letter to the Ephesians without first having closed the book of Acts.

A. E. Knoch

## MANIFESTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

THE EVANGEL OF GOD as it is presented in Romans 3:21-26 is, first of all, a manifestation of *God's* righteousness; this manifestation is centered in the faith of *Jesus Christ* in His death on the cross, which is the means for the justification of *sinner*s. These three points of emphasis: that which concerns God, that which concerns His Son, Jesus Christ, and that which is directed to sinners, may be distinguished by the following arrangement:

A. Yet now, apart from law, a **righteousness of God** is manifest (*being attested by the law and the prophets*), yet a **righteousness of God**

B. through **Jesus Christ's faith**,

C. for **all, and on all who are believing**, for there is no distinction, for **all sinned** and are wanting of the glory of God.

C. Being **justified** gratuitously in His grace,

B. through the **deliverance which is in Christ Jesus**, Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through **faith** in His blood,

A. for a display of **His righteousness** because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God, toward the display of **His righteousness** in the current era, for **Him to be just and a Justifier . . . .**

It is a simple matter of A B C. If we are to grasp the goodness and glory of the evangel of God we need to begin with what it says about God ("A"). Then we need to relate

that to what it says about Jesus Christ ("B"). In this way we are led ideally to what the evangel says about us and the blessing of our justification ("C").

Justification is a work of God's righteousness in sparing not His own Son but giving Him up for us all. It is channeled through the faith and faithfulness of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners. It is for all, and it is presently placed "on" those who have been graciously granted to believe.

#### IT IS MANIFEST

God's righteousness is manifest in the evangel. The Greek verb rendered, "is manifest," is, grammatically speaking, in what is called the "perfect tense." This tense speaks of that which has been done, that which is completed. The righteousness of God has been made manifest by means of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for sinners, as announced in the evangel ("Christ died for our sins").

How is it manifest? It is manifest in words that come from God, in what God has said to us, in His message of powerful salvation resulting from the faith-obedience of Jesus Christ. It is revealed "in" the evangel (Rom.1:17) of which Paul was not ashamed, for which he was severed from his fleshly connections (Rom.1:1). In making known this evangel Paul was bringing a message that makes God's righteousness apparent with a clarity never before perceived.

The Scriptures given to Israel, the law and the prophets (and the "literature" sections as well), *attest* to this righteousness of God, but the evangel that Paul was bringing makes it *manifest*. Later, we will look at the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures to God's righteousness and its distinctive character in relation to salvation, but now we wish to look into the evangel itself in order to appreciate more clearly the way in which it actually manifests God's righteousness to us.



## ROMANS 1:19,20

Paul had used the word “manifest” in Romans 1:19 in a passage concerning God’s revelation of Himself in His work and achievements of creation:

*. . . that which is known of God is apparent among [mankind], for God **manifests** it to them. For His invisible attributes **are described** from the creation of the world, **being apprehended** by His achievements, besides His imperceptible power and divinity . . . .*

Just as the creation round about us manifests much concerning God that otherwise could not be “apprehended,” so also the evangel manifests God’s love and grace, His power to save, and, as now being noted, His *righteousness*, in a way that otherwise could not be known. While living in this world filled with multitudes of living things which come forth and are sustained by means outside of themselves, we do not actually see with our eyes of flesh and perceive with our physical senses something we can call divine “power and divinity” (Rom.1:20). But what we do see does indeed speak of God as powerful and divine. We physically view the *effects* of His power and divinity. These point emphatically to a Creator of tremendous ability and intelligence.

Similarly, regarding the evangel, we may perceive, to some extent, such effects as love and joy and peace and discipline in righteousness in the lives of the believers (*cf* Gal.5:22,23). But we do not yet view empirically that finished salvation in which we are constituted righteous and conformed to the image of God’s Son (Rom.5:19; 8:29). Our justification in its full realization is not experienced physically, but rather it is known in faith. Nevertheless, in accepting and believing this message of justification the definition of God’s righteousness becomes clear to our understanding. What we believe informs us what God’s

righteousness is. It is manifest, as Paul later puts it, to the eyes of our hearts (*cf* Eph.1:18).

What the believer perceives is that God's righteousness demands justification. It demands that all ultimately be right. Everything that is clearly wrong at present must be clearly found in the end to have been right. All is right in the long run. The end achieved by God justifies the means He employs to reach that goal. There will be nothing left that can be termed "wrong."

The evangel also shows us that God's righteousness does not employ sinful, human beings in any way in His work of justification. Its manifestation in the evangel is apart from human works of law. There is no place for human boasting. Our justification is in grace and is gratuitous as far as we are concerned. This applies even to human faith. Literally speaking we are *not* justified by our believing, but rather in the blood of Christ (Rom.5:9). That which God's righteousness has gained for all is now, in God's grace, "on all who are believing." No good that we can do is more righteous than believing God. But all the righteous acts that we do now, including our believing of the evangel, are, in themselves, tainted with the fact that we are sinners.

These are characteristics of God's righteousness: it is purely of God, uncontaminated with human imperfections, and it achieves full and undeniable justification for all sinners where no sin is left as a blot against the glory of God's consummation.

That is what the evangel says when it declares that sinners are justified gratuitously in God's grace, through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus. We are not talking about something that we can presently prove by the evidence of our physical senses of observation. We are talking about the essential meaning of what God says to us in the evangel. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim.1:15). As it was through one offense for all

mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one just [act] for all mankind for life's justifying (Rom.5:18). This is what we believe, and in believing it we are coming to see the glory and perfection and incomparable right-ness of God's righteousness.

#### A MINISTRY OF ENLIGHTENMENT

As a slave of Christ Jesus, as a called apostle, as one severed to evangelize the evangel of God (Rom.1:1), Paul was involved in a work of making God's word of good *known* so that God Himself might be *realized* (cf 2 Cor.4:6; Col. 1:9,10). Note some further descriptions of Paul's activities found in Romans: "we obtained grace and apostleship for faith-obedience among all the nations" (Rom.1:5); "For God is my Witness, to Whom I am offering divine service in my spirit in the evangel of His Son" (Rom.1:9); "I am longing to see you, that I may be sharing some spiritual grace with you" (Rom.1:11); "Thus this eagerness of mine to bring the evangel to you" (Rom.1:16).

Indeed, he closes the epistle with this word of praise to the God Who has revealed Himself in the evangel Paul was commissioned to bring:

"Now to Him Who is able to establish you in accord with my evangel, and the *heralding of Christ Jesus* in accord with the *revelation* of a secret hushed in times eonian, yet *manifest* now and through prophetic scriptures, according to the injunction of the eonian God *being made known* to all nations for faith-obedience—to the only, and wise God, through Christ Jesus, be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!" Rom.16:25-27).

Through his epistles, the apostle continually uses verbs of revelation, such as: "make known," "manifest," "commend," "display," "herald," "evangelize," along with such general terms as "say," "write" and "teach." Paul draws attention to God's revelations of which we have become

“aware” and “understand” and “know,” and of which he would have us not be ignorant, while always encouraging us in our believing.

#### WE ARE AWARE

In believing the evangel the believer becomes aware of God in a way that is hidden from those who do not believe. We should ask ourselves: Do we understand what we believe? Are we aware that God's giving of His Son, Who died on the cross for sinners and Who was roused the third day, tells us what kind of righteousness God possesses, as well as informing us of His wisdom, power and love?

Later in this epistle Paul writes (Rom.8:28):

*Now we are aware that God is working all together for the good . . . .*

The next words might well be rendered as follows: “[This awareness is] for those who are loving God, who are called . . . .” The Greek does not literally say “of” those who are loving God, but “to” or “for” those who are loving God. God is working all together for the good, but most people are not aware of this fact. But if we are believing the evangel, we are becoming aware of this sure and certain aspect of God's character and pattern of His operations.

Romans 8:28 corresponds with telling harmony to what Paul writes in Romans 3:21,22. As believers being justified gratuitously in God's grace, as those who are called, we are becoming aware of God's righteousness. This righteousness is one that sees to it that *all is for good*. This is the character of God's active and all-inclusive involvement in all that occurs. He is working all together for good.

As believers we are aware of this because this is what God tells us in the evangel we are believing. We are told that God has a purpose, and that we are called into a special calling in accord with that purpose. But this purpose

involves all that happens and all that exists. It is, as Paul will later write, God's purpose in Christ, "to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth" (Eph.1:9,10). This purpose is the purpose of God, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). From the very beginning of revelation, this principle has been laid down, that what God does is all for good (Gen.1:31). But now that Christ has died for our sins and has been roused, the goodness of God's operations and purpose has become apparent.

The evangel itself, concerning Christ's death for sinners, is not presented immediately in a direct way in Romans 8:28-30, but it is there in such words as: "He calls" "He justifies" and "He glorifies." This is what God does according to the evangel. And so it is that Paul very soon brings in the words of the evangel itself, reminding us that God spares not His own Son but gives Him up for us all (Rom.8:32). The righteousness of God is that God works all together for good. This working of all together for good is centered upon God's giving of His Son for sinners. It is built upon the faithfulness and obedience of Jesus Christ in dying for our sake. We who believe the evangel are aware that this is so. It is manifest to us.

What we are aware of has to do with God. Of course, in believing the evangel we are believing that *we* are being justified in the blood of *Christ* and conciliated through His death. But in believing what Christ's death for sinners accomplishes for us and for all mankind, we find ourselves growing in the realization of God. He is a God of glorious righteousness! This is of overwhelming consequence.

#### NO OBSCURITY

That which is manifest is not mysterious or hidden. If, then, Paul refers here to God's own righteousness being

revealed in the evangel and being manifest through the death of Jesus Christ for sinners, we who believe this evangel ought to be able to perceive God's righteousness in this message of salvation and justification. It should certainly not be an obscure matter to us.

The concept is not difficult. The idea that God is working everything for good is clear enough. But the evidence of present experience, what we see with our eyes and hear and touch, is all against it. Nevertheless, God tells us this is so because His Son, Jesus Christ, dealt with sin and death, in such a way that all will enjoy justification of life and be constituted righteous. God tells us that, in the giving up of His Son, He has done that which puts His righteousness on display in His work of justification.

But, even for those who have heard the evangel and claim to believe it, certain traditions of human origin and propagation have made it almost impossible to see God's righteousness in the evangel. We have fewer problems (or at least think we do) in seeing God's love, which is commended to us in the death of Christ on the cross. Yet who can have any sort of clear grasp of God's righteousness in His giving of His Son on our behalf, while still holding to a concept of everlasting torment or annihilation for some human beings?

There are other human reasonings that are especially harmful to our appreciation of the righteousness of God as revealed in the evangel. To see the human will as independent of God in His will and intention can only make that which has been made manifest by the evangel hazy and obscure. Insertions of human works into the evangel, are harmful to our appreciation of God's righteousness and our assurance of the justification He has achieved.

Paul is bringing us spiritual grace. He is bringing us a message for our joy and peace in believing (*cf* Rom. 15:13). It manifests God's righteousness and is wholly to His glory.

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 2005  
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-SIX

EDITORIAL

"REMEMBER Jesus Christ, Who has been roused from among the dead, is of the seed of David, according to my evangel" (2 Tim.2:8).

This grand entreaty of the apostle Paul may be more clearly perceived by setting off its interjectory phrase by dashes while emphasizing its primary thought by italics: "*Remember Jesus Christ*—Who has been roused from among the dead, is of the seed of David—*according to my evangel.*"

Thus, Paul's entreaty here, most succinctly declared, is: "*Remember Jesus Christ . . . according to my evangel.*"

Indeed, Christ has been roused from among the dead, and is of the seed of David; but these vital revelations may be learned apart from Paul's evangel (e.g., Matt.28:6,7; John 7:42).

There are many additional and most glorious revelations of God's grace which are only revealed *in and through* Paul's evangel: life's justifying for all mankind (Rom.5:18,19); the conciliation of the world to God through Christ (2 Cor.5:19); God's revelation of Himself as the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.2:4; 4:10); the secret of God's will to have an administration of the complement of the eras to head up all in the Christ (Eph.1:10), and to reconcile all to Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:20). All of these blessings are to be granted for the laud of the glory of God's grace (*cf* Eph.1:6), unto the end that *every* knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and *every* tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father (Phil.2:10,11).

It is in an awareness of these uniquely Pauline revelations, then, that we would gladly heed Paul's entreaty here: *Be remembering Jesus Christ . . . according to my evangel.*

J.R.C.

## FAITH PERFECTED BY SACRIFICE

(Genesis 22:1-19)

22 + It <sup>l</sup>came to pass after <sup>t</sup>these <sup>t</sup>things <sup>+</sup>that the One, Elohim, He probed <sup>t</sup>Abraham and <sup>l</sup>said to him: Abraham! And he <sup>lsa</sup>answered: <sup>bd</sup>Here I am. <sup>2</sup> + Then He <sup>l</sup>said: Take <sup>pr</sup>now <sup>t</sup>your son, <sup>t</sup>your only one, whom you love, <sup>t</sup>Isaac, and go <sup>t</sup>by yourself to the land of Moriah and <sup>c</sup>offer him up there <sup>t</sup>as an ascent offering on one of the mountains which I shall <sup>sa</sup>indicate to you.

<sup>3</sup> + So Abraham <sup>c</sup>rose <sup>l</sup>early in the morning, <sup>+</sup> <sup>l</sup>saddled <sup>t</sup>his donkey and <sup>l</sup>took <sup>t</sup>his two lads and <sup>t</sup>his son Isaac <sup>t</sup>with him. <sup>+</sup> When he had <sup>l</sup>split the wood for the ascent offering, <sup>+</sup> he <sup>l</sup>set out and <sup>l</sup>went to the <sup>ri</sup>place which the One, Elohim, had <sup>sa</sup>indicated to him. <sup>4</sup> It was <sup>i</sup>on the third day <sup>+</sup> that Abraham <sup>l</sup>lifted up <sup>t</sup>his eyes and <sup>l</sup>saw <sup>t</sup>the <sup>ri</sup>place from afar. <sup>5</sup> + Then Abraham <sup>l</sup>said to his lads: <sup>></sup> You sit here with the donkey <sup>+</sup> while I and the youth shall go thus <sup>fr</sup>far; <sup>+</sup> there we shall worship, and we shall return to you.

<sup>6</sup> + Now Abraham <sup>l</sup>took <sup>t</sup>the wood for the ascent offering and <sup>l</sup>placed it on his son Isaac <sup>+</sup> while he <sup>l</sup>took <sup>t</sup>the fire and <sup>t</sup>the knife in his hand; and the two of them <sup>l</sup>went along together. <sup>7</sup> + Then Isaac <sup>lsa</sup>spoke up and <sup>l</sup>said to his father Abraham: My father! And he <sup>lsa</sup>replied: <sup>bd</sup>Here I am my son. <sup>+</sup> Now he <sup>l</sup>said: Behold the fire and the wood; <sup>+</sup> yet where is the flocking for the ascent offering? <sup>8</sup> + Abraham <sup>lsa</sup>answered: Elohim' shall see for Himself as to the flocking for the ascent offering, my son. And the two of them <sup>l</sup>walked on together.

<sup>9</sup> + They <sup>l</sup>came to the <sup>ri</sup>place <sup>w</sup>that the One, Elohim, had <sup>sa</sup>indicated to him. <sup>+</sup> Abraham <sup>l</sup>built <sup>t</sup>the altar there



and 'arranged 'the wood. + He 'trussed up 'his son Isaac and 'placed 'him on the altar<sup>f</sup> above 'the wood. <sup>10</sup> + Then Abraham 'stretched out 'his hand and 'took 'the knife to slay 'his son, <sup>11</sup> + when the messenger of Yahweh 'called to him from the heavens and 'said: Abraham! Abraham! And he <sup>isa</sup>replied: <sup>bd</sup>Here I am. <sup>12</sup> + He <sup>isa</sup>continued: Do not 'stretch out your hand 'on<sup>n</sup> the youth, and do not 'do anything to him; for now I know that you fear<sup>i</sup> Elohim, + since you have not kept back 'your son, 'your only one, from Me. <sup>13</sup> + When Abraham 'lifted up 'his eyes, + he <sup>isee</sup>observed, + behold, there was 'one<sup>ncs</sup> ram, held<sup>i</sup> af<sup>i</sup> back in the thicket 'by its horns. + So Abraham 'went and 'took 'the ram and 'offered it 'up 'as an ascent offering 'instead of his son 'Isaac<sup>s</sup>. <sup>14</sup> + Abraham 'called the name of 'that 'place Yahweh-yireh, of which is it 'said today: 'On the mount of Yahweh it shall be seen.

<sup>15</sup> + The messenger of Yahweh 'called to Abraham a second time from the heavens. <sup>16</sup> + He 'said: 'By Myself have I sworn, averring is Yahweh, that because <sup>w</sup> you have done 'this 'thing and have not kept back 'your son, 'your only one, 'from Me<sup>nc</sup>, <sup>17</sup> + I shall bless, yea bless<sup>-</sup> you, and 'increase, yea increase<sup>-</sup> your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the sand <sup>w</sup> on the sea shore. + Your seed shall take over 'the gateway of its enemies<sup>i</sup>, <sup>18</sup> and all the nations of the earth will bless themselves in your seed, inasmuch as you have hearkened 'to My voice. <sup>19</sup> + Then Abraham 'returned to his lads; + they 'set out and 'went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham 'dwelt in Beer-sheba.

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JUSTIFICATION, in the contexts in Genesis, has two different, yet interrelated aspects; divine and human. The divine phase is concerned with the *gift* of the innumerable seed (Gen.15:5), and the human phase with the *sacrifice* of Isaac (Gen.22:1-18). It is very important to note

that, in the divine act, Abram was *not allowed* to perform a single duty toward its attainment (Gen.21:1-3), but in the human act he *did many things* when his Subjector told him to offer up his son as an ascent offering in obedience. God has graciously given us these two contrasting examples of faith in the annals of the father of the faithful to help us to discriminate between them (Genesis chapters 15 and 22).

In examining the divine record, it will be helpful to consider not only the bare statements, but the whole context, and to note carefully those particulars which have a bearing on the theme. Both Paul (Rom.4:5; 4:20-22), who wrote to the saints among the nations whose blessings are spiritual and among the celestials; and James (2:21,24,26), who wrote to the twelve tribes with the physical, terrestrial calling, refer to Abraham's justification.

This will give us the inspired background needed to apprehend the difference between these two aspects, and to see that they do not conflict, but are two ways of God's dealing with His own.

#### DEPENDENCE ON YAHWEH

We already know that Abram was not righteous in himself or in his actions (Gen.12:10-13; 16:1-4; 17:17; 20:2). Nevertheless he was justified by God's activity on his behalf (Gen.12:17; 13:1-4; 16:7-16; 21:17-22; 20:3-18; 21:1-3).

In what might be called the first "world war" of which God gives us any record, an "eastern" confederacy threatened to conquer the "west" (Gen.14:1-14). This confederacy even captured Lot and carried him off (Gen.14:12). Abram had not yet become a strong nation, so, humanly speaking, he was no match for them. Regardless of this, he not only chased them out of the promised land, but restored the booty taken from Lot and Sodom. Abram had been given the land, so he was able to defeat those who had no divine title to it. However, he could go no further.

All this would give him a tendency to lean on the flesh. Consequently, Melchizedek met him to remind him that El, the Subjector, is supreme, and the Owner, not only of the land, but of the heavens and the earth. It was Yahweh Who awarded the foe into his hands (Gen.14:18-21). This battle occurred just before Yahweh announced the faith covenant to Abram. Referring to Abram's victory, Yahweh assures him that he could not have accomplished this unless He had been his Shield and Reward (Gen.15:1). Abram's power, for the skillful use of which he was richly repaid, was a gift of Yahweh to be used exclusively for the reclamation of that which was taken by the foe. This experience, given to Abram and recorded for us just before he was promised the star seed, was an exhibition of Yahweh's power and was intended to illustrate to Abram His ability to fulfill His promises, protect His chosen, and reward those who rely on Him at all times.

Up until this time Abram had received only a partial revelation, the promise of a seed countless as the soil grains of the land (Gen.13:16). He was well aware of the fact that he was heirless except for Damascus Eliezer (*Aliozr* SUBJECT-OR-HELPER), whom he termed "a son of my household" (Gen.15:3), and who had been adopted for the express purpose of filling the vacant place of Abram's heir. It was a feeble attempt of Abram *to help God*.

However, Yahweh had other plans. He bids Abram "'Now look up toward the heavens and count off the stars, if you can number them . . . Thus shall become your seed.' And Abram believed on Elohim and He reckoned it to him for righteousness." (Gen.15:5-6). Yahweh asked Abram to number the stars, thereby taking him far above the sphere of human operations, and promising him that his seed shall be as the stars of heaven. This celestial revelation of divine glory overwhelmed all of Abram's reasoning, showing him the folly of seeking to *help* Yahweh.

Later, Sarah, his wife, proposes to *help* Yahweh by obtaining an heir by means of Hagar, Sarah's maid (Gen.16:1-4). Why did Abram try to help his God again? Perhaps it was the realization that the procreative powers of his wife could not produce even one son, let alone an innumerable progeny. At this point he failed to fully apprehend the omnipotence of God, and was unable to realize that Yahweh Elohim has no limitations. Yet, as offensive as this action was, and as much as it might have deserved condemnation, it was justified by Yahweh! (Gen.16:7-21).

Once again, after Yahweh has established His covenant, Abram doubts His word and scoffs at the suggestion of a son being born to him (Gen.17:17). Sarah is also in agreement (18:13). But Yahweh, as faithful as His word, visits Sarah (Gen.21:1-3), and Sarah bore for Abraham a son named Isaac. Even though Abram questioned the human or physical possibility, the promise of Yahweh was not doubted in unbelief (Rom.4:20-22).

Abram, who was already practically dead, becomes to us a picture of resurrection. We must recognize the fact that, like Abram, we are dead in ourselves. Our justification is not based on *acting* righteously, but on *believing* God and resting our *faith* in Him alone (Rom.1:17). God needs no help and will accept no help. This is what He taught Abraham. Let us pray that His ability, in Christ, will inspire us to increase our dependency on the One Who is able to raise the dead. Faith such as this is not a dead principle, but a *vital force* which leads a believer to act according to God's revelation.

#### THE HUMAN ASPECT

The second aspect of justification deals with the sacrifice of Isaac. Yahweh said to Abraham, "Take now your son, your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go by yourself to the land of Moriah, and offer him up there as an

ascent offering on one of the mountains which I shall indicate to you" (Gen.22:2). Without hesitation, Abraham takes his beloved son to the appointed place on the third day (Gen.22:4) and, with Isaac carrying the wood, and Abraham himself taking the fire and knife, they both ascend to the place of sacrifice. Abraham does not falter, not even when Isaac asks, "Where is the flocking?" (Gen. 22:7). Nor does he cry aloud as he trusses up his only son (Gen.22:9). It is only after he stretches out his hand about to slay Isaac that the messenger of Yahweh restrains him (Gen.22:11,12). This was the *work* which *perfected*, or *matured* his faith.

James tells us "Abraham, our father, was he not justified by works when offering up his son Isaac on the altar? You are observing that faith worked together with his works, and by works was faith perfected. And *fulfilled* was the Scripture which is saying, 'Now Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called 'the friend of God.' You see that by works a man is being justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:21-25).

As the basic distinction between Paul and James is that of faith versus works, let us consider closely the context in each case. At first Abram did nothing but *look*. Yahweh even *brought him forth* outside! (Gen.15:5).

In contrast to this, note the many *acts* of Abraham's which are recorded in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen.22:2): *take*; *go*; *offer* (3) *rose*; *saddled*; *took*; *split*; *set out*; *went* (4) *lifted*; *saw*; (5) *said*; *sit*; *go*; *worship* (6) *placed*; *took*; *went* (7) *behold*; (8) *answered*; (9) *came*; *built*; *arranged*; *trussed*; *placed* (10) *stretched*; *took*; *slay* (11) *here*; (13) *lifted*; *observed*; *behold*; *went*; *took*; *offered* (14) *called*.

#### ACTIONS BASED ON FAITH

In summing up, the messenger of Yahweh said (v. 16),

“you have *done . . . not kept back*.” This should show that the faith that justified him was “perfected” by action, or deeds, *based* upon the faith which justified him. Apart from faith, he could not have done any of this.

But this theme is viewed from various standpoints in divine revelation, which are indicated by their names and their place in God’s plan, and their corresponding acts. We greatly regret that English usage compels us to use “James,” in place of Jacob, especially as the title of his epistle to the *twelve tribes* in the dispersion. He writes in the character of a *slave* (James 1:1). His real name, Jacob, means **HEEL**, which characterized the son of Isaac only until he came face to face with God at Peniel. Then it was changed to Israel, Upright-with-SUBJECTOR (Gen.32:28). Before this he was far from being upright (Gen.32:24-32).

#### JAMES TO TWELVE TRIBES

James did not affirm that *we* of the nations are justified by works, as many seem to suppose. He writes to the *twelve tribes*, as such, before the close of Acts, when the prophecy of the sixth of Isaiah was being fulfilled (Isa.6:9-10). Now that the twelve tribes are not in view, and there is no distinction between them and the other nations, it has no application to us today.

James’ epistle reads, “You are observing that faith worked together with his works, and by works was faith perfected. And fulfilled was the scripture which is saying, Now ‘Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness,’ and he was called ‘the friend of God.’ You see that by works a man is being justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:22-24). According to this the basic truth that *justification is by faith in God’s word* is taught by James also. But he wants to see it *operating* in the believer, as it did in the ease of Abraham later on.

James does not assert it, but asks the question, “Abra-

ham, our father, was he not justified by works when offering his son Isaac on the altar?" In contrast to the statement, "Abram . . . *believed* . . . and He *reckoned* it to him for righteousness." (Gen.15:6), this sacrifice of Isaac brings blessing and power to him and his physical seed, and will make them a blessing to all the *nations of the earth* (Gen.22:16-18). They will have physical blessings among the terrestrials.

#### ABRA[HA]M TYPICALLY

Abram means FATHER-HIGH. This expresses his position in both the physical and spiritual sphere, for his physical progeny will be the highest in terrestrial rule, and his spiritual sons will be supreme over all. This is suggested by using the figures of soil and sand and stars of those who believe, and who will be roused from among the dead, as he figuratively was before generating Isaac.

#### ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

But he also represented the Highest Father in the offering up of Isaac on mount Moriah (Bitterness). This goes far beyond mere righteousness. Like Abraham, the Divine Father had one Son, His Firstborn, and His immanent affection yearned for the love of all the rest. Righteousness would shield them from His indignation, but would not bind them to Him with the fetters of affection. This He accomplishes by the sacrifice of His Son. Abraham and Isaac are used to shadow beforehand the greatest revelation of divine love that can be, by giving a preview of the great Sacrifice on the very mount on which the innumerable types of it were to be slaughtered later, on the brazen altar. And quite near the place where it was perfected "outside of the gate" (Num.19:9,10), as the law prescribed for the burnt offering for cleansing.

At the same time Abraham, as the father of those who believe, enacts the part that should be played by every other

believer in this administration. They are called upon, not to put to death their only son, whom they love, but to figuratively crucify their *own* flesh as well as the world (Gal. 5:24; 6:14). This is their just deserts. The just deserts of all is death. Abraham and Isaac were figuratively dead. Only then can God reveal His vivifying power and glory. This is the real function of death. It gives God an opportunity to reveal to His creatures their impotence apart from Him, and the transcendent power of His spirit.

#### DEATH AND JUSTIFICATION

Abram was *dead*, as far as the promise of posterity was concerned, yet he believed that God would act according to His word. Later, after the initial promise was fulfilled, and the son was given, he was told to put him to *death*. As he had already learned that God could raise the dead, he *not only believed*, but *acted* on this belief by preparing everything up to the fatal stroke. He not only believed, but, *because* of his faith, he *hearkened* to His voice. In both cases he recognized God as the Resurrection and the Life.

#### FAITH PERFECTED

The unfolding faith of Abram went through many phases before it was perfected by the offering of his only son, Isaac (James 2:22). Each of these had a special quality and has been characterized by giving it a name. We will copy these, and seek to improve on them if possible. The *obedience* of faith brought him to the promised land (Gen.12:4). The *humility* of faith gave Lot the first choice (Gen.13:8). By the *strength* of his faith he conquered the kings (Gen. 14:15). The *firmness* of faith enabled him to believe when all hope of an heir seemed futile (Gen.15:6). The *boldness* of faith led him to intercede for Sodom (Gen.18:23). In the *joyfulness* of faith he named the son of promise (Gen. 21:3). By the *loyalty* of faith he submitted to Sarah, and



expelled Hagar and Ishmael (Gen.21:14). In the *gratitude* of faith he planted a tamarisk (Gen.21:33). In its *perfection* he offered up his only son (Gen.22:2).

It is said that the Canaanites, among whom Abraham dwelt, made a practice of propitiating their deities by sacrificing their dearest possessions, even their children (2 Kings 3:27). But, in his case, it seemed to be directly contrary to all of Yahweh's previous promises, besides being an *only* son, the fruit and fulfillment of faith. Yet many tests had shown him that God could even bring back from death. He himself had been deadened before he generated Isaac. Abraham was quite prepared to actually slay his son, for he reckoned that, even so, God was able to rouse him from among the dead (Heb.11:19). Thus we are given a parabolic representation of the important fact that the chosen nation is the fruit of *faith*, and the resurrection power of God, but not of the *flesh*.

#### PROBE, NOT TEMPT

The AV reading, that "God did *tempt* Abraham" (Gen. 22:1), may have been allowable when it was first translated, but, like, "lead us not into *temptation*" (Matt.6:13), it throws a dark shadow on the divine character. Elohim was not inducing Abraham to act contrary to His will, but was probing him to *prove* to all concerned that he would obey Him, even when it was contrary to his own desires. His reaction to this test entitled him to his high place among those who are famed for their faith (Heb.11:17).

#### MOUNT MORIAH

Mount Moriah was the eminence on which the temple of Solomon was later built, where millions of sacrifices were offered, which prefigured the supreme sacrifice of God's Son. It *may* have included Golgotha, the place of a skull (Matt.27:33; Mark 15:22; Luke 23:33; John 19:17), which

is north of the highway which borders the temple area. Otherwise, it is not clear why it was necessary to travel the long way from Beer-sheba, perhaps a two days' journey northward, to where Jerusalem now is. Ordinarily an altar could be built in any location. Doubtless Abraham had one near his tent, and offered flocklings upon it, for Isaac knew of this (Gen.22:7). The distance is given as fifty-four miles. But, as it is measured by days, a time period, each of them may represent an eon, for the Lamb of God was sacrificed in the middle of the third of the five eons, that is, in the symmetrical center of the eonian times.

#### THE ASCENT OFFERING

The character of the offering is of prime importance here, for Abraham possessed God's righteousness, and had no need of a sin-, or a trespass-, or even a present-approach. Being justified by faith, there was no necessity for one of these. He had access into the divine presence, so required no approach gift. The only one he could offer was an *ascent* offering. It is remarkable, and most significant, that the ascent offering comes before us in Genesis only when Noah (who also was a just man) brings it after the deluge, and in this passage, when Abraham offers Isaac and the ram (Gen.8:20; 22:2,3,6,7,8,13). It *all ascended* to God as an act of pure *worship*, and may be brought only when there is no need for minor sacrifices, or when they have already been offered.

Today, such an ascent offering can be brought only by those believers who know that, in Christ, all the other sacrifices have been offered for them, and there is *nothing* to *hinder* them from worshiping God, not even their shortcomings and failures. These His divine alchemy transmutes into His own righteousness, for He uses them as a foil to reveal the opposite in Himself.

## WORSHIP

Abraham's faith assured him that, even though he should offer up Isaac as an ascent offering, his son *must* later be alive to fulfill Yahweh's promises concerning the seed, seeing that "In Isaac shall your seed be called." He was "reckoning that God is able to be rousing him from among the dead also; whence he recovers him in a parable . . ." (Heb. 11:18,19). This is evident from his words to the two lads who were left behind: "We shall worship and we shall return to you" (5). Usually, Abraham is represented as terribly distressed, his heart sorrowing in anticipation of the loss of his son, and shuddering at the thought of shedding little "Laughter's" blood. But that is not the reaction of faith. That is the fruit of unbelief. No, he seems to have given no sign of unbelieving trepidation, because he had the assurance that, whatever he did, Isaac must live to fulfill God's promise.

## ELOHIM SHALL SEE

They went together, Isaac carrying the load of wood, while his father had the fire and the knife. Isaac evidently realized that they were about to offer a sacrifice, so was perplexed as to the victim, for that prime essential seemed to have been forgotten. Very diffidently, he asks permission to speak. When his father assents, he points out that they have the wood and the fire for an ascent offering, but no flocking. His father's reply was such as no one without perfect confidence in the Subjector could have expressed: "*Elohim will see for Himself . . .*" (8). He knew that this must be so, but how it would be done he could not say, and he did not venture to express a conjecture. It was doubly fulfilled, once at the time, by a divinely provided ram, but not fully till the death and resurrection of the great Anti-type, God's beloved Son, our Saviour.

The usual reading, "God will provide himself a lamb" is

not warranted by the text. Isaac did not *see* any sacrifice. Abraham did not say that Elohim will *provide* one (Isaac), but that He is seeing, or will see, this apparent lack, and implies that they must leave that to Him. God saw the ram (and He saw the Lamb), but they could not.

It is hard to imagine how Abraham could help being perturbed while making the actual preparations; building the altar, arranging the wood, trussing LAUGH-causer, stretching out his hand, taking the knife, and—but he is not allowed to raise it, for a voice calls out his name repeatedly: “Abraham! Abraham!” Thus, at the last instant, the Subjector, having attained His object, reverses His previous command: “*Do not* stretch out your hand on the youth, and *do not* do anything to him . . .”

#### FEARING GOD

Even in this day of transcendent grace, we are exhorted to carry our salvation into effect with *fear* and *trembling* (Phil.2:12). So long as we are in our mortal flesh we cannot help having a holy awe in view of the fact that, apart from faith in Christ, and reliance on God's grace, we are not able to do a single thing or speak one word, with absolute confidence that it measures up to the divine ideal, and is perfectly acceptable to our Creator and Subjector. To do that which we ourselves would doubly dread to do, in fact would not dare to do, at the divine behest, must have a powerful motive. No *man* could have persuaded Abraham to sacrifice his son. Only the fear of Elohim could cause him to commit such a murderous deed as this.

#### GOD FORESEES

As Abraham had told Isaac, Elohim saw the need of the sacrificial victim, but it was not a flockling, as Isaac proposed. There were different grades of ascent offerings, which correspond to the faith of the offerer. The highest

was taken from the herd, the second from the flock, the third from the flyer. Elohim's opinion of Abraham's faith, and the value He put upon his offering is shown by the *ram* which He Himself had foreseen. This was the highest, for it closely foreshadowed the supreme sacrifice of His Own Son on Golgotha (Lev.1:2,10,14).

#### EVIL

This transaction has a close bearing on the so-called problem of evil. Was it good or evil for Elohim to charge Abraham to do this? Was it not an evil merely to truss up his son and then act as if he were about to murder him? But this was only a typical preview of that future scene in this very vicinity, in which Elohim's own Son was not merely trussed up, but cruelly crucified, not only menaced with a knife, but pierced with a lance head, and not simply threatened with death, but actually forsaken by His Father and left to die. This, the greatest evil ever committed, was due to the deliberate decision of Elohim, so that it could actually be rehearsed here long before it took place. Yet, out of this, the greatest of all evils, will come the greatest and grandest good.

Such a memorable place as the scene of Isaac's sacrifice deserved a name, so Abraham calls it *Ieue-irae* (Yahweh-is-See-er) which implies, not that He merely *observed* Abraham's offering of Isaac, but that He saw the ram which Abraham saw and sacrificed later, and He also "saw" the future Antitype, His only begotten Son, which was to be seen later in this mount. This led to the proverb "On the mount of Yahweh it shall be seen" (Gen.22:14). It can hardly be interpreted as Yahweh *sees*, or *is seen*, or *appears*. He was not Himself present, but sent a messenger. Even the following promise, perhaps the most memorable and magnificent that Abraham received, was relayed to him through a mediating messenger. In the great Anti-

type, Christ Jesus, He already saw the sufficient Sacrifice, fore-ordained before the eons, ample for all.

At Beer-sheba (WELL-SATISFY, or -oath) Abraham had sworn *by* Elohim (Gen.21:23,24). Now, however, that *Yah-weh* swears *to* Abraham, *by* whom can He swear? Men swear *by* a Greater, but there is no greater one than He, to swear *by*, so He swears *by* Himself (Gen.22:16; Heb. 6:13). No assurance can be more certain than that. And no list of Abrahamic blessings can be greater than that incorporated in this oath. Being based on faith, it includes all who believe, not only his physical seed on the earth, but also Abram's innumerable celestial star-seed as well.

#### THE STAR SEED

Abram was assured of a seed as numerous as the stars on two occasions. After the conquest of the kings and the blessing of Melchizedek, and after the refusal to take any of the goods of Sodom, when Abram feared that he would have no heir, then he is told of a numberless star seed (Gen.15:5). Then it was that he was justified *by faith*. Later, once again, after the severest test of his *faith*, in the offering of his son, the promise is renewed (Gen.22:17). It seems clear from this that the star seed is connected with his *faith*, and consists of that great and glorious company who *believe* God during the eons, as Abram had done, not merely those of His physical progeny, many of whom did not believe. As was most fitting, this promise was renewed to Isaac, when he was about to go down to Egypt (Gen.26:4).

#### THE SAND SEED

On this occasion Abraham is also assured of a sea shore seed (Gen.22:17,18). This is most appropriate, for it was not a question of the *faith* of Isaac, but of his *physical* life. No doubt he did believe, and may belong to the star seed. Yet it is as sand seed that Israel will rule over their

enemies in the kingdom. But it is principally as believers that they will *bless all the nations* (Gen.22:18) in the day of Yahweh. Later this promise is repeated to Jacob, when he feared the wrath of Esau, as he was returning to the land, as he recalls this promise (Gen.32:12).

#### CELESTIAL

The secret of a celestial seed (1 Cor.15:51) was not made known to Abraham. The soil of the land and the sand of the sea may suggest their presence on the earth. Abraham's name is brought in nearly twenty times when justification by faith is taught and enforced in Paul's preparatory epistles. This grand theme is illustrated in the fourth chapter of Romans by seven references to the patriarch (1,2,3,9, 12,13,16). To sum up, we are told that the *righteousness* which was *reckoned* to him will be *reckoned* to us also, who are *believing* on Him Who rouses Jesus, our Lord, from among the dead. But nothing is said of any further blessing, beyond this, among the celestials. It is only after the celestial calling is revealed by Paul, that we see the aptness of this illustration when referring to the saints in this secret administration.

In Galatians we may see the same truth, when in conflict with the flesh. Circumcision *signified* the *cutting off* of the flesh. They were trying to make it the *completion* of the flesh (3:6,7,9). Here, again, the blessing is confined to the *justification* of *believers* of the nations. This is the blessing of Abraham which comes to the nations by faith. The law, which came later, and the present celestial blessings do not subtract or add to the justification by faith that we have in common with Abraham (14,16,18,22,29).

#### THE GATEWAY OF ENEMIES

Israel according to the flesh, the soil and sand seed, did not always tenant the gateway of its enemies (Gen.22:17).

This picturesque phrase is based upon the fact that the elders, the rulers of a city, sat in the gateway. They held court there and ruled the city from its entrance. Literally, *faithful* Israel is to govern its foes, and thus be at peace. The reason they have not always done so is that this promise is limited to those who had inherited Abram's faith as well as his flesh. In the days of David and Solomon, who had this faith, this was the case. And it will be so in the future when Israel, as a nation, will accept its Messiah. Even today we can see the plight of the Jews in unbelief. Even though they are the sand seed, they are threatened by their enemies because they refuse to put their faith in the Messiah Yahweh has given them.

Beer-sheba (*Bar-shbo* WELL-oath) was the southernmost city of consequence in the land of Israel. Indeed, "from Dan to Beer-sheba" is the common phrase for the whole length of the land (1 Sam.3:20). It lies in the center of the Negeb, or south rim, on the regular road through central southern Palestine to Egypt. It remained the headquarters of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, until the latter went to Egypt. Now it seems to be once more within the boundaries of the nation of promise. Dan is also inside the northern boundary, so they may speak of having the land from Dan *around* to *Beer-sheba*, though much of that lying between, including ancient Jerusalem, is in the hands of their bitter enemies.

In conclusion, may we look beyond the picture presented by Abraham and Isaac, to the *Inaugurator and Perfecter* of faith Who, for the joy lying before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God (Heb.12:2). Isaac was only a type, a dim shadow of the One Whose faith led Him to descend from the highest heights of glory to the deepest depths of shame, and has called us to share the fruits of His faith with Him, by blessing us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials (Eph.1:3).

A. E. Knoch



## ATTESTED BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS is manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom.3:21,22), that is, it is revealed in the evangel (Rom.1:17) that tells us Christ died for our sins, was entombed and has been roused (1 Cor.15:3,4). It is in this Word of God concerning the faith of Jesus Christ to the death of the cross that God's righteousness is most clearly and fully made known. It is made known as a righteousness that refuses to overlook any wrong. It is a righteousness that requires deliverance from evil into good. It is all to the glory of God and the appreciation of His righteousness as the Justifier.

The evangel of God concerning His Son, which is being presented before us in Romans, reveals this to us. But God's righteousness as it is thus made known in the evangel is also *attested* by the law and the prophets and throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Rom.3:21).

These Scriptures do not provide the *manifestation* of God's righteousness which we have in the evangel, for Christ had not yet come and died for sinners. They do not *reveal* God's righteousness as it is revealed in the achievements of Christ's death, entombment and resurrection, but they are packed full with types and patterns, promises and prophecies, which *accord* with, and *foreshadow* this evangel. It is in this testimony of promised good in the holy Scriptures of old (*cf* Rom.1:2) that we find important preparations for the evangel, including the subject of the righteousness of God. Hence in a very basic and

edifying way “whatever was written before, was written for this teaching of ours, that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures we may have expectation” (Rom.15:4).

#### ATTESTED

The CONCORDANT VERSION uses the English word “attest” for two different Greek terms, but these are distinguished from each other by the use of boldface and lightface type. The Greek word, *martureō*,<sup>1</sup> is rendered entirely in boldface type (**attested**) as here in Romans 3:21, and the Greek word, *dokimon*,<sup>2</sup> appears in the CV with the first two letters in lightface type (**attested**) as in Romans 14:18. The latter term refers to that which meets the requirements of a test. Hence it is that which has been found *qualified*. But the word used in Romans 3:21, has the sense of “having been marked down in testimony to.”

The law and the prophets do not set forth the telling evidence of God’s righteousness that we find in the evangel. Only the obedience of Christ to the death of the cross and its results can serve as such a manifestation of divine righteousness. Yet the law and the prophets, do witness to God’s righteousness in circumstances and associations that are significant in leading us forward to the evangel. We who are believing can now look back and appreciate how these scriptures testify in detail after detail to what this righteousness must be.

#### GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

In this present article I wish to look at certain passages from the law and prophets that witness to the fact that God *is* righteous. Here we may find from their con-

1. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.300, under the heading, *testify*.

2. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.300, under the heading, *tested*.

texts certain features of that righteousness which parallel the righteousness of God as it is now being made known in the evangel. Indeed, in the Hebrew Scriptures God's righteousness itself is often presented as a quality of God that brings the good of deliverance out of an evil situation. How this end can be achieved in view of the reality of human sinfulness is left unclear until Christ comes into the world to save sinners. But the testimony of a firm and sure relationship between divine righteousness and deliverance from evil remains.

#### TESTIMONY OF PHARAOH AND MOSES

The first time Scripture directly speaks of God being righteous is, surprisingly, through the mouth of that Pharaoh in the days of Moses who was raised up by God as a vessel of indignation (Rom.9:14-23). It was by means of this Egyptian that God displayed His power for deliverance of His people, Israel (Rom.9:17). But also at one point, and very briefly, Pharaoh *testified* to God's righteousness (Exodus 9:27):

*Then Pharaoh . . . said to them: I have sinned this time. Yahweh is the righteous One, and I and my people are the wicked.*

Later, in Deuteronomy 32:3, 4, Moses witnessed in dramatic terms to the faithful righteousness of God. The people of Israel were poised to enter the promised land. But Moses was barred from that triumphant experience, and consequently, he was experiencing a real and deep sorrow; nevertheless he sang in exultant praise:

*Grant greatness to our Elohim!  
The Rock—flawless is His contrivance,  
For all His ways are (right) judgment.  
The El of faithfulness and without iniquity;  
Righteous and upright is He.*

The lives of Pharaoh and Moses were intertwined during a most critical period in the history of Egypt and Israel. They both spoke of God's righteousness under personally troubling circumstances resulting from their own unrighteous acts. They both desired rescue from the troubling circumstances that had been brought upon them and deliverance into peace and well-being. And neither of them experienced that deliverance.

But here the similarities stop. Pharaoh spoke the truth but did not match his actions to his words. God hardened his heart (Exodus 7:3; Rom. 17, 18), and Pharaoh remained a vessel of dishonor. However, Moses was a vessel of God's mercy, so that he was able to face his troubles with faith. That completion of deliverance for which he fervently longed, which had driven him forward through the turmoil in Egypt and the struggles of the wilderness journey for forty years, that salvation into the land, was denied to him. Yet he was blessed in attesting, in faith, to God's righteousness with a song of heartfelt laud for the flawlessness of His contrivances and ways, and for His faithfulness, uprightness and *righteousness*.

In this way, Moses did receive a salvation, a salvation from being without expectation, a salvation into reliance on the living God, a salvation of peace and inner happiness that comes with faith. God is flawless in all His ways. He is faithful to all that He has said. He is upright. And He is righteous.

It is not that the testimony of Moses made God righteous. Far from it. But what Moses said acknowledged *from the heart* that God is righteous. The words of Pharaoh also testified to God's righteousness, but not from that glorious freedom of heart that is given to the "sons of God" (*cf* Rom. 8:21). What Pharaoh sought was deliverance from the severe difficulties he was facing into the comforts of human prosperity. What Moses wanted was

also a rescue, but in faith centered upon God's Word Moses possessed assurance that the deliverance would come in God's own time. Moses faced his experience of great personal sorrow with expectation of that allotment God had promised to him and his seed, an allotment which would involve salvation as the achievement of the righteous God (*cf* Heb.11:27,39,40).

#### DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HUMAN SINFULNESS

Pharaoh was right in the words of his lips which spoke of his own wickedness along with Yahweh's righteousness. For, in truth, the human (including Moses who was unfaithful and wrong in his striking of the rock, *cf* Num.20:2-13) is corrupted with unrighteousness. God's righteousness is behind all His contrivances and ways. It is not separate from His hardening of human hearts any more than it is separate from His opening of human hearts to mercy and expectation and peace. God's righteousness is altogether directed to the good of deliverance from evil and enjoyment of salvation. Pharaoh spoke of this, and that is as far as it went. Moses spoke of it, and he believed it. It was not only in the leaving of Egypt and the crossing of the sea, but even as he faced death without entering the land, Moses was graced with a great measure of faith, "as seeing the Invisible" (Heb.11:27).

#### FLAWLESS CONTRIVANCES

What Moses said in his song needs to be repeated for our learning. God is flawless in His contrivances. This is the character of His righteousness. God's contrivance of hardening Pharaoh's heart must be toward eventual good even for Pharaoh himself, for that is the character of God's righteousness. The fact that Pharaoh was not saved and suffered the just effects of God's indignation cannot be the end of God's operations with respect to him. All of

God's contrivances have salvation ultimately in view. Had Pharaoh's heart been opened at that time, in God's mercy, to the truth of his own words concerning God and himself, we may be sure that Pharaoh's release of Israel would have meant blessing for him and his people. It will be this way for Egypt in that future day when Yahweh will send to them a Saviour, and He will descend and rescue them, and He will say, "Blessed be My people, Egypt" (Isa.19:20-25). As for Pharaoh himself, and the Egyptians of that ancient time, they will someday all bow in the name of Jesus and acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, *for the glory of God, the Father* (Phil.2:10,11). This will be uttered from the heart, for God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all (Rom.11:32).

This operation of God in blinding and hardening hearts in order mercifully to deliver them from this evil is related to the righteousness of God as it is manifested in the faith of Jesus Christ in His death for sinners. The right-ness of the future salvation of Egypt and of the future enjoyment of Moses of an allotment in the promised land, as well as the right-ness of God's contrivances related to them in the past bears a most critical relationship to that one great and righteous act of God (*cf* Rom.5:18) in giving His Son for sinners.

As present day vessels of God's transcendent grace, we can perceive this righteousness of God and exult in it, surely in greater measure than Moses and with fuller assurance, for we are believing the evangel of God concerning Jesus Christ our Lord.

#### THE PROPHETS

The "law" (the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy) attests to God's righteousness first through the mouth of an Egyptian who did not appear to have any faith at all in what his own lips had uttered. Similarly, in the "proph-

ets," one of the most stirring passages testifying to the fact that God is righteous is associated with a ruler among the nations. The words of Isaiah 45 are addressed to Cyrus of Persia, who likely upheld a dualistic view of deity—two gods, one of good and the other of evil. But God is One, and He is righteous in all His doings, with an end of indisputable goodness (Isa.45:6-8,21-25):

*I am Yahweh, and there is no other.  
Former of light and Creator of darkness,  
Maker of good and Creator of evil,  
I, Yahweh, make all these things.  
Drip down from above, O heavens,  
And let the skies distil righteousness;  
Let the earth open up, Let salvation bud,  
And let righteousness sprout together with it;  
I, Yahweh, I create it . . . .  
A righteous El and a Saviour,  
And there is none except Me.  
Turn toward Me and be saved, all the limits of the earth,  
For I am El, and there is no other.  
By Myself have I sworn;  
From My mouth has gone forth righteousness,  
A word that shall not turn back;  
For to Me shall bow every knee,  
And every tongue shall swear fealty;  
Only in Yahweh—one will say to Me—  
are righteousness and strength.  
Unto Him shall each one come,  
And all who were heated against Him shall be ashamed.  
In Yahweh shall they be justified,  
And shall all the seed of Israel boast.*

These words are addressed to Cyrus, but they were written for Israel in a time of great trouble. With respect to Cyrus and his nation they speak of a future salvation,

*in God's righteousness*, when they shall bow the knee and acclaim the Lordship of Jesus Christ, to the glory of the one God Who will then be known as Father even by them. With respect to Israel, these words speak of their future boast in Yahweh in Whom alone are righteousness and strength. They speak of that future kingdom upon the earth promised to the patriarchs and the prophets and envisioned in the psalms. Altogether these are words of truth which speak of God's righteousness in relation to salvation and justification. They are words of faith, centered in God's power for Israel's *salvation*, and they are words of faith, centered in God's *righteousness* in carrying out this salvation. Yet also, in accord with the promises given to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, the salvation spoken of here goes beyond salvation for Israel, to reach even to "all the limits of the earth" and the bowing of "every knee," which necessarily includes Cyrus and his people.

The prophecy here parallels the song of Moses in its expression of joyful faith in the righteousness of God in all His ways. As Moses associated God's righteousness with His faithfulness to His promises concerning the land and Israel and the nations, so also, the prophet Isaiah speaks of God's righteousness in association with God's faithfulness as Creator of all (*cp* 1 Peter 4:19).

But what is the basis of this faithful righteousness of God? God will not bring about any people's salvation without a righteous and real elimination of sin and wickedness along with a true justifying of life. There must be a righteous Saviour in order for God's righteousness in His work of salvation to become known and appreciated.

#### THE RIGHTEOUS SAVIOUR

The righteousness of God requires the elimination of all that is evil, of sin and death, of sorrow and loss, of selfishness and cruelty and sorrow. It calls for salvation from



all that is wrong, to the end that all is right. And since it is impossible for human beings to bring about such an end, or even to contribute to such an end by their own deeds, there must be One Who has a true relationship with humanity ("in Him is all created") yet stands apart from the corrupted race, Who can save them in righteousness. The prophet Zechariah was one among others who testified to the coming of Him Who is the Saviour, Who is righteous in His work of salvation. In Zechariah 9:9 we read of Israel's future King in the following terms:

*Behold, your King shall come to you!*

*Righteous and bringing salvation is He.*

*Humble and riding on a donkey,*

*And on a colt, the foal of a jenny.*

How strange these words must have seemed at the time they were spoken, and even today they must seem puzzling apart from the word of the cross which is the power and the wisdom of God. It is especially the word "humble" that seems out of place with the coming of the King Who is righteous and Who is bringing salvation. These words are quoted in association with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem with acclamation from the people just days before He was crucified (*cf* Matt.21:1-9). The righteousness and the bringing of salvation involve the humbling of the One Who will afterward reign in exaltation. As the evangel of God proclaims, Christ Jesus is the One Who humbles Himself, becoming obedient (in faithfulness) to the death of the cross. Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him and graces Him with the name that will be acclaimed by every tongue, for the glory of God the Father (Phil.2:8-11).

We can see now how all this fits together and how it is a dealing with sin that leads forward to justifying of sinners and revelation of God as the righteous Justifier. But what we see in faith is also marvelously supported by the

testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the righteousness of God.

### BEING SAVED

We also have troubles. This is only human (*cf* 1 Cor. 10:13). Let none of us suppose that we will escape the loads and even the burdens that come with the present times. If you are like me, you may find yourselves often reading over Paul's list of troubles in 2 Corinthians 11:23-38 just to get things into perspective. But Paul learned that our Lord's grace is sufficient for every need (2 Cor. 12:9). The apostle was given special afflictions along with the glorious revelations of grace and peace from God which he was given to share.

Most of our afflictions, however, are more easily traced to our own failures than to faithfulness in service to our Lord. We are often like Moses and act impulsively and in human stubbornness. But in every case, whether we are like Job and experience sorrows that seem unrelated to obvious deservings or whether we are like David and experience troubles easily traced to our human failings, we are always strengthened and encouraged by reliance on the faithful and righteous God. And we are blessed in this beyond Job and Moses and David and the prophets of old. For we have heard the evangel and are believing it.

*Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . . . For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all . . . . Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers (1 Tim. 1:15; 2:6; 4:9,10).*

D.H.H.

## BRINGING THE KING TO THE THRONE

(2 Samuel 19:41-20:26)

<sup>41</sup> + <sup>bd</sup>Now all the men of Israel kept coming to the king and <sup>l</sup>said to the king, For what reason have our kinsmen, the men of Judah, stolen you away and <sup>c</sup>brought <sup>`</sup>the king and <sup>`</sup>his household <sup>`</sup>across <sup>`</sup>the Jordan, and all of David's men with him? <sup>42</sup> + Then all the men of Judah <sup>l</sup>answered <sup>on</sup> the men of Israel, <sup>t</sup>Because the king is a near relative to us! + Why does this make <sup>y</sup> you <sup>hot</sup>angry <sup>on</sup>about <sup>`</sup>this <sup>`</sup>matter? Have we eaten, yea eaten <sup>-</sup> from the king's food? <sup>if</sup>Or did he carry a load for us? <sup>43</sup> + The men of Israel <sup>l</sup>answered <sup>`</sup>the men of Judah, + <sup>l</sup>saying, We <sup>y</sup>have ten <sup>hand</sup>shares in the king; + moreover we are <sup>7</sup>the firstborn~, rather <sup>f</sup>than you. + For what reason do you slight us? + <sup>b</sup>Was not our <sup>sp</sup>proposal first, to bring <sup>`</sup>our king back to us? + Yet the words of the men of Judah were more <sup>l</sup>obstinate <sup>f</sup>than the words of the men of Israel.

20 + A worthless man happened to be there; + his name was Sheba son of Bichri, a man of Jemini. + He <sup>l</sup>blew <sup>i</sup> the trumpet and <sup>lsa</sup>declared, There is no portion for us in David and no <sup>t</sup>allotment for us in the son of Jesse! Each man to his tents, O Israel! <sup>2</sup> + So every man of Israel moved <sup>lon</sup>away from following David to go after Sheba son of Bichri. + But the men of Judah, they clung <sup>t</sup>to their king from the Jordan + as far as Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> + When David <sup>l</sup>came to his <sup>in</sup>palace in Jerusalem, + the king <sup>l</sup>took <sup>`</sup>the ten women, <sup>7</sup>his <sup>o</sup>concubines, whom he had left to be in charge of the <sup>in</sup>palace, and he <sup>lg</sup>put them in a house under guard. + He <sup>lall</sup>provided for them, + but

he did not go <sup>-</sup>in to them; + they <sup>lb</sup>remained constricted until the day of their death<sup>-</sup>, in living widowhood.

<sup>4</sup> + The king <sup>l</sup>said to Amasa, <sup>c</sup>Call a convocation for me <sup>w</sup>with the men of Judah within three days, and stand ready here yourself. <sup>5</sup> + So Amasa <sup>l</sup>went to <sup>c</sup>call a convocation <sup>w</sup>with Judah; + but he <sup>l</sup>delayed longer <sup>f</sup>than the appointed time <sup>w</sup>that the king had <sup>fr</sup>set for him. <sup>6</sup> And David <sup>l</sup>said to Abishai, Now Sheba son of Bichri shall cause <sup>></sup> us more evil <sup>f</sup>than Absalom. <sup>7</sup> And now<sup>-s</sup>, take <sup>7</sup>with you<sup>cs</sup> <sup>w</sup>your lord's servants and pursue after him, lest he find for himself fortified<sup>l</sup> cities and rescue himself, away from our eyes. <sup>7</sup> + So Joab's men marched <sup>l</sup>forth after him <sup>+w</sup>with the Kerethite, + the Pelethite and all the masters of war. + They marched <sup>l</sup>forth from Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba son of Bichri.

<sup>8</sup> <sup>7</sup>+When<sup>0</sup> they were <sup>wi</sup>at the large <sup>w</sup>stone <sup>w</sup>that is in Gibeon, + then Amasa himself came up before them. + Now Joab was girded<sup>l</sup> with his coat over his clothing; and on it a girdle with the sword in its scabbard strapped<sup>l</sup> <sup>on</sup>to his waist. + Now <sup>7</sup>the sword<sup>-</sup> came forth, and it <sup>l</sup>fell down.

<sup>9</sup> + Joab <sup>l</sup>said to Amasa, Is all well with you, my brother? And Joab's right hand took <sup>l</sup>hold <sup>i</sup>of Amasa's beard as if to kiss <sup>></sup> him. <sup>10</sup> + So Amasa was not on guard <sup>i</sup>against the sword <sup>w</sup>that was in Joab's left hand + who <sup>l</sup>smote him <sup>i</sup>with it <sup>></sup>on the fifth rib, and his bowels <sup>7</sup>were <sup>l</sup>poured out<sup>-</sup> to<sup>d</sup> the earth. + He did not have to repeat it to him, + for he was dying. + While Joab and his brother Abishai pursued after Sheba son of Bichri, <sup>11</sup> + a man <sup>f</sup>of Joab's lads stood over him and <sup>l</sup>said, Anyone who delights in Joab and anyone who is for David, let him follow after Joab. <sup>12</sup> + Amasa was rolling himself in his blood in the middle of the highway. + When the man <sup>l</sup>saw that all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers stood still, + he <sup>c</sup>brought <sup>w</sup>Amasa <sup>l</sup>around, <sup>f</sup>off the highway into the field; and he <sup>l</sup>flung a cloak over him as <sup>w</sup> he <sup>see</sup>realized that anyone <sup>w</sup>coming up onto him + would stand still. <sup>13</sup> As <sup>w</sup>soon as

he was <sup>7</sup>removed away~ from the highway, all the men <sup>p</sup>marched by, following Joab to pursue after Sheba son of Bichri, <sup>14</sup> + who was passing <sup>i</sup>through all the tribes of Israel to<sup>d</sup> Abel <sup>+</sup>of Beth-maacah; and all the <sup>7</sup>Bichrites~ + <sup>+</sup>assembled and <sup>+</sup>came also after him.

<sup>15</sup> + Joab's men <sup>+</sup>came and <sup>+</sup>besieged <sup>on</sup> him in Abel of<sup>d</sup> Beth-maacah. + They <sup>+</sup>poured out earthwork <sup>+</sup>against the city, and it <sup>+</sup>stood <sup>+</sup>against the rampart. + All the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>w</sup>with Joab were wrecking the wall so as to cast it down, <sup>16</sup> +when a wise woman <sup>+</sup>called out from the <sup>7</sup>wall~, Hear! Hear! <sup>pr</sup>Please <sup>sa</sup>tell <sup>+</sup>Joab, Come near <sup>fr</sup>over <sup>bd</sup>here, and let me <sup>+</sup>speak to you. <sup>17</sup> +So he went <sup>+</sup>near to her, and the woman <sup>lsa</sup>asked, Are you Joab? + He <sup>lsa</sup>replied, I am. + She <sup>+</sup>said to him, Hear the words of your maidservant. + He <sup>lsa</sup>answered, I am hearing. <sup>18</sup> +Then she <sup>lsa</sup>continued, <sup>+</sup>saying~, They <sup>+</sup>spoke, yea spoke~ in former times, <sup>+</sup>saying~, Let them ask, yea ask <sup>+</sup>at Abel <sup>7</sup>and <sup>+</sup>at Dan whether that which the faithful of Israel had <sup>pl</sup>established ever came to end. Let them ask, yea ask <sup>+</sup>at Abel<sup>0</sup>, and thus they will come to end. <sup>19</sup> I represent the peaceable<sup>+</sup> and faithful<sup>+</sup> of Israel. But you are seeking to <sup>c</sup>bring death~ to a city <sup>+</sup>that is a mother in Israel. Why should you swallow up the allotment of Yahweh? <sup>20</sup> + Joab <sup>+</sup>answered, + <sup>+</sup>saying, Far be it, far be it <sup>+</sup>from me <sup>if</sup>that I should swallow up <sup>+</sup>or <sup>if</sup> <sup>c</sup>bring down to <sup>+</sup>ruin. <sup>21</sup> The matter is not quite so <sup>+</sup>because a man from the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba son of Bichri is his name, has lifted up his hand <sup>+</sup>against the king, <sup>+</sup>against David. Give <sup>+</sup>him up, him alone, and I shall <sup>go</sup>withdraw from <sup>on</sup> the city. + The woman <sup>lsa</sup>replied to Joab, Behold, his head shall be flung<sup>+</sup> to you <sup>+</sup>fr over the wall.

<sup>22</sup> +Then the woman <sup>lin</sup>went to all <sup>+</sup>her people <sup>7</sup>and <sup>+</sup>spoke to all the city<sup>0</sup> in her wisdom. +So they <sup>+</sup>cut off <sup>+</sup>the head of Sheba son of Bichri and <sup>+</sup>flung it down to Joab. He <sup>+</sup>then <sup>+</sup>blew <sup>+</sup>the trumpet, and they <sup>+</sup>scattered from <sup>on</sup> the city,

each man to his tents. <sup>+</sup>As for Joab, he returned to Jerusalem, to the king.

<sup>23</sup> + Joab was <sup>M</sup>over ~ Israel's entire 'military host; + Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethite and over the Pelethite. <sup>24</sup> + <sup>7</sup>Adoniram<sup>cs</sup> was over the tributary service; + Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the recorder<sup>l</sup>. <sup>25</sup> + Sheva was scribe<sup>l</sup>; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests. <sup>26</sup> + Ira the Jairite <sup>mr</sup>also <sup>b</sup>served > David as priest.

### REBELLION OF THE FLESH

Verses 41-43 of chapter 19 introduce the rebellion of Sheba with the petty bickering between the tribes that occasioned the uprising. When Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan at Gilgal, monuments of 12 stones were set up at Gilgal and in the Jordan, commemorating a passage through death, and a leaving of the old life behind. The death of the flesh is a crucial principle indispensable to coming under the rule of *the Beloved*.

The name *Bichri* carries the idea of *bearing early fruit*, or, *to give the birthright*. The arguments between Judah and the 10 tribes were centered on the birthright (v.43) and rights based upon physical relationship to the king. Thoughts of obedience, devotion, spiritual unity, or subjection to Yahweh were all forgotten. The controversy was over personal rights and wounded feelings. If the king was returning to the throne, why would the joy of his return not displace any and all feelings of being slighted? Why would they not rather prefer to accept injury with silent charity? (cf 1 Cor.6:7). Why would they not turn the other cheek?

The apostle Paul dealt with a similar situation among the Galatians. The controversy was whether or not a physical relationship to Christ could take precedence to a spiritual unity with Him. Paul said, "... the entire law is fulfilled in one word, in this: 'You shall love your associate as yourself.'

Now if you are biting and devouring one another, beware that you may not be consumed by one another" (vv.14-15 of context: Gal.5:11-17). 2 Samuel 20 shows graphically that Israel was on the verge of destroying itself with civil war. The Israelites left Gilgal, the place where reproach was rolled away by the cutting off of the flesh, but instead of going to Jerusalem, the possession of peace, they went each one to their own tents—to their own possessions.

#### THE VIOLATED CONCUBINES

2 Samuel 20:3 speaks of the concubines with whom Absalom had lain to give his stealing of the throne its stamp of finality. The verse closes with a phrase that might strike us as unusual: *living widowhood*. The meaning is clear. These women would live out their lives without ever bearing a child to the king. Their lives would fail to bear the joyous fruit that could come from living in subjection to the king, because they had surrendered to the authority of someone else. As with the twelve tribes, the issue can be reduced to the relationship sustained to the king. This phrase may also shed light on Paul's expression in 1 Timothy 5:6: "though living, is dead" (see 1 Tim.5:3-16).

These women found themselves to be very much like prisoners. Remembering the schemes of Sarah, the bartering of Leah and Rachel, and the tears of Hannah, we realize that in their culture a woman's fulfillment was largely found in the bearing of children. They may well have cursed the day that their beauty had brought them to the palace. If only they had been plainer, they may have married that neighborhood boy and had a happy life raising a family. Or if only they had resisted Absalom, even if it cost their life. It is the believer's submission to the rule of Christ, and his or her faithfulness to His rule, that invigorates them and prevents them from coming to the place of a fruitless existence.

## DAVID AND JOAB

Though David and Joab seem to have been interminably linked, that was not by David's design (2 Sam.3:39). After the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, Abner, Saul's commander, was the strong central figure around whom Saul's house stood. David had made a covenant with Abner in an effort to unite the country. Abner may have become David's commander in chief if Joab had not killed him (2 Sam.3). Later David offered the position of commander in chief to the man who could first breach the Jebusite stronghold in Jerusalem (1 Chron.11:6). This accompanied the moving of the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, and appears to have been a political ploy designed to garner the approval of the whole nation. It seems that David did not want the country to think that only those who had been with him as an outcast could reign with him. Yet it was Joab who breached the stronghold.

In the 19th chapter, in an effort to unify a country broken by his son's rebellion, David offered Amasa, Absalom's commander, the position of military leader in his cabinet (2 Sam.19:13,14). This was an outward statement that David was ready to pardon all who had followed Absalom in the rebellion. Joab foiled David's plan again by murdering Amasa. David, a man of blood (1 Chron.22:7,8; 28:3), and bloody Joab (1 Kings 2:5,6) remained together.

Israel struggled with unity and submission to the king, and David himself struggled with the rule of his officers, particularly Joab. There are parallels between the submission of Israel to David, the submission of Joab to David, and the submission of the flesh to the believer. The believer may try to crucify the flesh, but still he continually finds his service to the Lord performed by the flesh. The flesh repeatedly offers its energy in an effort to justify itself. Like Joab, the flesh keeps coming back. It is interesting that in chapters 15,16, and 17 where the theme is the



humility and complete subjection of David to God, Joab is not even mentioned. Many others are mentioned by name with extensive details and conversations. But Joab is not mentioned until David begins to act on his own plans for dealing with the crisis. As long as David was fully submissive to God, Joab was out of the picture.

## WISDOM AT ABEL OF BETH-MAACAH

Joab was bent on bringing down the rebellion, and bringing the whole nation under David's rule, even if it meant destroying an entire city or starting a civil war to do it. He laid siege to Abel, not stopping to follow the instruction in the law (Deut.20:10-20). These verses (2 Sam.20:15-22) call to mind the many times the words of Christ have been followed without wisdom or understanding. "If your right eye is snaring you, wrench it out and cast it from you—if your right hand is snaring you, strike it off and cast it from you" (Matt.5:29,30). It is not the eye that causes one to lust, and it is not the hand that causes one to steal. And the fact that Sheba had fled to Abel did not mean that the whole city was in rebellion against the king and should be destroyed. The crucifixion of the flesh, the "leading into captivity every apprehension into the obedience of Christ" (Col.3:5; Gal.6:14; 2 Cor.10:5), does not require a mutilation of the believer's body.

When Christ rules in our life, the flesh becomes a fugitive, a cunning fugitive, who sees our heart as a walled city of refuge. Wisdom must prevail, and the usurper within must be dealt with decisively. Find the rebellious self, hiding in the heart, and throw his head over the wall. What will be the loss if we give safe harbor to such a worthless man? Would we risk a whole city for the foolish momentary glory of spouting off our anger and frustration? Would we waste a life of potentially fruitful service to indulge self?

Solomon may have thought of the deliverance of Abel

when he wrote Ecclesiastes 9:13-18. He saw a wisdom that was great to him—a wisdom whereby a provident man could deliver a city from overwhelming odds. But no one remembered the wise man or hearkened to his words. Joseph was remembered in the prison, and delivered Egypt and its surrounding countries with the wisdom of God. Christ has made known the wisdom and power of God by humbly submitting Himself to God's will, and our deliverance is to be found in that wisdom also.

J. Phillip Scranton

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WILLIAM S. PENN, JR.

We have only recently heard of the death of our brother, Bill Penn, of Davis, California, on May 27, 2004. His early interest in the things of consequence which our apostle Paul recorded in his epistles seemed to deepen through the years. He was blessed with a cheerful and confident disposition, sustained by a strong faith and happy expectation. As for us who remain, we look forward to that day of vivification when we will all be together always with our Lord.

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AMBER (HEINTZELMAN) KILLEN

The widow of Robert B. Killen, whose concise, scriptural studies have sometimes appeared in this magazine, Amber will be especially remembered by those who attended Bible studies in their home as a thoughtful hostess and strong advocate for the evangel. She was put to repose on April 30, 2005, at the age of 88. In a private funeral service on May 4 her four children and their families followed a pattern of fellowship their parents had set in their home with scripture reading, prayer, comments and song.

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CHARLOTTE MCDIVITT

We are sorry to hear of the death of Charlotte McDivitt, of Windham, Ohio, on March 1, 2005. Her cheerful presence will be greatly missed at the meetings in northern Ohio conducted by her son, Ted, and by all of us who knew her. Our sympathy goes out to her husband, George ("Bud"), and her large and close-knit family. Phil Scranton spoke of her faith and the One Who was the center of her faith at her memorial service on March 5.

## PERFECTION

WHO shall describe the glories of the Ephesian letter? We are taken back before the entrance of evil and behold ourselves in His purposes in Christ. We are taken and seated in the very heavens in Christ. But, though the earth is taken from beneath our feet in this twofold sense, yet in Him we find a firmer footing than ever this earth can give.

But such abundant grace cannot be contained in Israel's narrow pale. They were nigh by virtue of the covenant blood. Such nearness was but distance compared with the nearness now secured by the blood of Christ. The means by which they drew near—the court, the altar, the laver, the holy place, the vail—all these are now seen to be but barriers to their free approach.

Now these are all removed. The defilement of the flesh might keep even an Israelite outside the camp in the days of old; but now the blood of Christ yields to no fleshly disability, and avails for all—for those afar off as well as those that were nigh. The nations have an equal share with Israel in this stupendous blessing.

The blood of Christ alone, unaided, without escort or association, without accessory or adjunct of any kind, brushing aside the embarrassment and blockade of fleshly rites, in the fresh and unsupported vigor and power of its solitary majesty—the blood of Christ alone is the champion of the sinner; that, single-handed, clears a passage to the very throne of God.

But is baptism brushed aside? Is it included in the abolished rites?

Among the unities of the fourth chapter are: "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism*" (Eph.4:5).

Though there be lords many, for us there is but one Lord.

In previous dispensations, as well as in a future day, varieties of faith obtain. Favor is shown to various classes according to their relationship to Israel. In the Pentecostal era the faith for Israel was far more glorious than that for the Samaritans, while the nations were but guests at Israel's board. Now they are no longer guests and sojourners, but fellow citizens of the saints, and members of God's family. Now there is one faith for all; not Israel first, not the nations first; but all are received on equal gracious terms.

#### ONE BAPTISM

As there is but one faith now, so also there is but one baptism.

We have seen how the ministry of our Lord, and, that of John were characterized by one baptism—that in water. John had borne record concerning the Master: "I, indeed, am baptizing you in water for repentance, yet He who is coming after me is stronger than I, Whose sandals I am not competent to bear. He will be baptizing you in holy spirit and fire" (Matt.3:11). So the Master, upon His ascension, bears witness to John: "John indeed baptizes in water, yet you shall be baptized in holy spirit after not many of these days" (Acts 1:5).

So that from Pentecost onward two baptisms obtained. Water baptism was accompanied by spirit baptism.

In the administration of the evangel of God among the nations by Paul these two continued, but water baptism takes a secondary place, while the baptism of the spirit is the portion of all.

Now that there is a return to *one* baptism the question remains: "Is it water, or, Is it spirit?"

The epistle itself gives answer: when believing also, you are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (Eph.1:13). This alone entitled them to the spiritual blessings which they had in the heavenly regions.

By one spirit they were all baptized into one body. Without that baptism there could never be the one body. If the one body does not exist, there is no body of Christ, no ecclesia, and our highest blessings as His members are annulled.

It is by this spirit that we all have access into God's presence, and are united one to another. This unity of the spirit is one of the characteristic truths of this secret economy. It is vital.

So then, the baptism of spirit remains.

#### NO CONFIDENCE IN FLESH

As there is but one baptism, that in water disappears. If we take Ephesians as the text book, then Philippians furnishes us with examples, and Colossians with review.

In Philippians, we see the apostle's own course in the things of flesh. Precious as they once appeared, he now counts them but fit for curs. As he sees those who call themselves the "Circumcision," staking all upon a mere mutilation of their flesh, he sounds the alarm: "Beware of the maimcision, for *we* are the circumcision who are offering divine service *in the spirit* of God, and are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh" (Phil.3:2,3). He weeps as he warns them once more of the enemies of the cross of Christ "who to the terrestrial are disposed" (Phil.3:18,19). It is hard to exclude baptism in water from these "earthly things." Once, like circumcision, it was necessary for divine blessing, but now both have been fulfilled in His cross.

In Colossians, baptism itself is taken up in conjunction with circumcision.

In the days when Yahweh taught His people how to draw

nigh to Him, what was the requisite for approach? The uncircumcised could not draw nigh at all. Circumcision was the prime factor in seeking His presence and blessing.

But a nearer approach required still more. The circumcised Israelite could not even reach the laver. A circumcised priest could not go beyond the laver without being first baptized in its water.

Circumcision and baptism, then, constituted the Israelite's fitness to approach a veiled God.

*And they are still necessary. They are essential.* No one is properly furnished for His presence and blessing unless first he is circumcised and baptized.

#### COMPLETE IN CHRIST

In this light we read: "... you are complete in Him . . . in Whom you were circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, in the *stripping off of the body of flesh* in the circumcision of Christ" (Col.2:10,11).

Here is circumcision indeed; though "not made by hands" though accomplished on the cross apart from us altogether, it is *the only real, the only true circumcision*. The sons of Jacob were *not* circumcised. *We are*. They only shadowed it. We have the substance.

Let no one say that circumcision is obsolete. It is a present, practical, powerful truth. It is, however, but part of the truth. It leaves Christ on the cross, lifeless.

So the apostle goes on to say: "Being entombed together with Him in baptism, in Whom you were roused together also through faith in the operation of God, Who rouses Him from among the dead" (Col.2:12).

Christ is risen! And we are risen in Him! Here is cleansing! Here is baptism!

By the power of His spirit we enter into the blessed potent truth that we have already been baptized. And such a baptism as the sons of Israel never knew. By Him we

have not only died, but have also been buried and raised from the grave—in *Him*. Not from “a watery grave by the strong arm of the baptizer” but by an Almighty arm, “through faith in the operation of God, Who rouses Him from among the dead.”

Just as we are not circumcised in flesh, but in spirit, so also with baptism. *His* baptism, just as His circumcision, we reckon as our own. He was buried; so were we. He arose; we too are risen.

As we think of this solemn glorious truth the warning still rings in our ears: “*Beware that no one shall be despoiling you . . . in accord with the elements of the world [the elementary religious observances] and not in accord with Christ!*” (Col.2:8).

Has our God set this danger signal here for naught? How many, many, of His precious ones have passed it by unheeded! How sad to be in the toils of men when God has made us free and complete in Him!

There *is* danger! God has not warned us against that which has no existence, for multitudes of God’s saints have gone blindly into this snare in spite of God’s warning. He has delivered the writer of these pages: He alone can deliver those who bear His divine and solemn appeal.

The exquisite joy and delicious satisfaction which is found by those who know themselves complete in Christ can only be found by heeding this divine “Beware!”

By the very nature of things, circumcision, while speaking of the stripping off of flesh, gave the flesh a standing it was never entitled to. Spiritual circumcision alone really fulfills its import.

Baptism was likewise embarrassed. While it spoke of spirit and gave the flesh no place, yet, being an ordinance on the flesh, it seemed to give the flesh acceptance in His sight.

But our baptism gives flesh no place. Our cleansing is by

spirit and finds a real and genuine acceptance by our God.

If I am complete in Him no fleshly rite can add to my completeness. If I do add it, then I deny that His work has fully met God's claims. I dishonor that work by subtracting from its potency; and spoil it by adding something of my own dead, putrefying flesh.

If I receive the wondrous truth then I am constrained to refuse these ordinances upon the flesh, both circumcision and baptism. I rest alone in Him in Whom I have no lack.

A. E. Knoch

Complete in Christ my Saviour,  
How precious is the thought!  
God finds in me the pleasure,  
For which He longed and sought.

Complete in Christ, my Saviour,  
On love alone I lean,  
In self I seek no solace,  
In Him alone I'm seen.

Complete in Christ my Saviour,  
I need not aught beside.  
God's holy word hath said it.  
In Him I may abide.

Complete in Christ, my Saviour,  
How can I hope for more?  
His grace has brought each blessing,  
His love has kept in store.

Complete in Christ my Saviour,  
'Tis sweet as it is true.  
No lack can God discover,  
In aught I am or do.

In Christ I've found salvation,  
And all that makes me meet,  
For God's own holy presence  
In Him I am complete.



## SALVATION FROM SIN, IN POSITION AND PRACTICE

### Question:

If it is *Christ Jesus* Who is the *Saviour* (1 Tim.1:15), how can it be that we are to *save ourselves* by something that we do, such as by attending to ourselves and to the teaching (1 Tim.4:16)?

Stranger still, how can it be so that "a woman" shall be *saved* "through the child bearing, if ever they should be remaining in faith and love and holiness with sanity" (1 Tim.2:12,15)?

If Christ is truly the Saviour, surely we cannot save ourselves, nor can a woman be saved by bearing children, even by ones who are faithful to God. I need to have this subject clearly explained to me.

### Answer:

THROUGH the death of the cross, Christ Jesus *alone* is the Saviour of sinners, from sin and all its effects. It is through Christ *alone* that we are saved from indignation and for life eonian (Rom.5:9,21).

That primary and most glorious "salvation" yet to come is not a reward for our obedience, much less is it a compensation for some fancied independent cooperation of our own, something in which we might indulge ourselves in at least a measure of self-congratulations.

Nevertheless, under God, and under Christ, as the agents of God's gracious operations, the practical need remains for us to "save ourselves" from withdrawing from the faith; and, in a similar vein, a woman, through child bearing and

its fruitful associations, may do well in saving herself from domineeringness, even as from loudness and indiscretion.

In 1 Timothy 4:1, the subject of this entire chapter which follows is set forth: "Now the spirit is saying explicitly, that in subsequent eras some will be *withdrawing from the faith* . . ." Paul then proceeds to expound upon the pattern which this apostasy will follow, along with representative examples of these teachings of demons, as found "in the hypocrisy of false expressions" which masquerade themselves as scriptural truth.

The apostle stresses the importance of "fostering with the words of faith and of the ideal teaching which you have fully followed" while at the same time refusing what, however they may be disguised, are actually nothing more than "profane and old womanish myths" (1 Tim.4:6,7).

By giving heed to reading, to entreaty, to teaching, neglecting not the gracious gift which is in us, while meditating on these things and involving ourselves in them, we thereby "attend to [ourselves] and to the teaching."

Paul then explains that by "persisting" in these needful and wise conventions, we will *save ourselves* as well as those "hearing" us, that is, those who heed our testimony ("in doing this you will save yourself as well as those hearing you"; 1 Tim.4:16). Clearly, it is that by persisting in these vital practices, we will save both ourselves together with those who will hear and heed our word, from *withdrawing from the faith*.

Under God and in His grace, we often "save ourselves" from many a fearful failing and baneful backsliding. This thought accords with the theme of Philippians 2:12,13, where Paul similarly declares, ". . . with fear and trembling, be carrying your own salvation into effect, for it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight" (Phil.2:12b,13).

Out of love, we "fear" to offend God, and, in spirit, by

faith, “tremble” in His glorious presence. It is only fitting, then, that we should approach our *practical salvation* as to life’s affairs in such a reverent and devout attitude.

This is so, “*for it is God Who is operating in [us].*” Literally, He is operating in us “the to be willing” as well as “the to be working”—which, in the nature of things, is essential to the *effecting* (the actual doing or out-working) of our practical salvation.

These phrases “the to be willing” and “the to be working” are the strict readings, as indicated in the Concordant Version by the superior dots (for the definite article, “the”) and the vertical strokes preceding “will” and “work” (for the act, or incomplete, verb form, indicative of ongoing action).

Both our willing and our working, wherever these are requisite to any actions of our own whereby we either *get* ourselves out or *keep* ourselves out of trouble and sin, are themselves the effects of God’s own operations in us.

This glorious work of God is “for the sake of His *delight*” (Phil.2:13b). Many of His operations find no place in His *heart*, though they are the work of His *hand* even so, according to His own wise counsels. Our faithfulness, then, is not merely *also* God’s work, but is *especially* God’s work, and it *delights* Him to accomplish it in us.

2 Timothy 2:20,21 is another passage which accords with this same theme: “Now in a great house there are not only gold and silver utensils, but wooden and earthenware also, and some indeed for honor, yet some for dishonor. If, then, anyone should ever be *purging himself* from these, he will be a utensil for honor, hallowed, and useful to the Owner, made ready for every good act.”

If one’s course hitherto has not been characterized by honorable acts but by dishonorable acts, one is, perforce, a utensil “for dishonor.” While within His “great house,” God, Who is operating all (Eph.1:11), certainly has a place

and purpose for such utensils, even so, it is not a place of honor but of dishonor. If one should ever be *purging himself* from the uncleanness of walk which necessitates his classification among the utensils of dishonor, only then will he be a utensil for honor, hallowed and useful to the Owner for faithful service.

How wonderful, then, to know in the case of any such genuine purging of sin that no flesh at all shall be boasting in God's sight (*cf* 1 Cor.1:29-31). This is because we are His achievement: "For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting. *For His achievement are we*, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them."

#### "LITTLE WOMEN"

Concerning 1 Timothy 2:15: "Now I am not permitting a woman to be teaching nor yet to be domineering over a man, but to be in quietness (for Adam was first molded, thereafter Eve, and Adam was not seduced, yet the woman, being deluded, has come to be in the transgression). Yet she shall be saved through the child bearing, if ever they should be remaining in faith and love and holiness with sanity."

As an initial point of reference, even as of connection, it is this gender-specific salvation, from the shame and dishonor associated with Eve's original sin, which is here in view. In its outworkings, this sin is centered in a spirit of insubjection, which is typically manifested in a domineering manner, even as in indiscretion and loudness.

From the time Eve was first deluded and came to be found in transgression, her shame and dishonor, by association, has fallen upon women as a whole. In addition to this, and more directly, in accord with the corruption inherent

in the old humanity, it must be acknowledged that just as surely as it is characteristic of men not to love their wives as their own bodies, it is characteristic of women not to be subject to their husbands (Eph.5:22-28).

In their rebellion, women lapse into loudness and indiscrete speech, even as into a domineering spirit over their husbands. This is so, even as men who in their egocentrism, lapse into a vacuity of love for their wives. While such mannerisms and practices are surely the way of the flesh, even so, where God grants special grace, these gender-specific declivities may be greatly attenuated even if not altogether eliminated.

The apostle Paul makes special mention of those "little women" (i.e., women of diminutive spiritual character; 2 Tim.3:6), among those of both sexes who have a form of devoutness yet deny its power, who are so readily led into captivity by unfaithful teachers. All pretenses and deceptions to the contrary, in their religious zeal, these women are actually being led, not by the spirit of God, but by "various lusts and gratifications; [such ones are] always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth" (2 Tim.3:7).

There is a great need for practical salvation here. And it is women who especially need to be saved from an unnatural, and unbecoming, domineering spirit, and to be endowed with a spirit of *quietness* with all *subjection* (1 Tim.2:11; cp 1 Peter 3:4,5). It is not that men do not have deficiencies in these areas too, but that women have special needs in this sphere, and this is what the apostle is addressing.

Evidently, the pronoun "she" in verse 15 ("Yet she shall be saved through the child bearing . . .") is not used strictly with a literal antecedent of "the [first] woman" herself, but is used in reference to the female of the species, that is, in a general way of "the woman" (i.e., "women") in contrast to "the man" (i.e., "men"). Through her experience

of bearing children ("through the child bearing," a figure of association here which points us primarily to child *rearing*), "*if ever* they [i.e., her children] should be remaining in faith and love and holiness with sanity."

While the woman should *not* be "teaching" nor yet domineering over the man, on the other hand, there is much that she *should* be doing with a view toward counsel, example, and encouragement in faith on behalf of the children, *acquainting* them with the Scriptures (*cp* 2 Tim.1:5; 3:15).

It is, in part, thus, through this especial, ennobling influence of their mother, that they may become children of genuine faith, unfeigned love, and actual holiness with spiritual sanity (in contrast to the immaturity, religious foolishness, and misguided zeal of so many of the young people of today who are naming the name of the Lord). Through being of service to others, namely to her own children, that they might find saving graces for themselves through God's appointed means, the woman herself will find much saving grace from her own weaknesses.

This counsel, of course, is ideal. No doubt, in this present wicked eon, there have been very few families who have ever enjoyed these blessings in abundance. Some may have cultivated a lively, and even commendable, form of devoutness, but in the great majority of cases it has lacked enlightenment, the presence and power of the truth (*cp* 2 Tim.3:5-7).

Conversely, even where more light is present, there may still be distractions and weaknesses that hinder a more faithful walk. But as we see the value of this course for ourselves which Paul presents, perhaps we will be graced in measure to "undo" some of our past failings and be strengthened for better service in times ahead. This is the path that our apostle would have us follow, for it is the course God has appointed for the family, for the woman and for her children, under the headship, and leadership, of the man.

J.R.C.

# UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 2005 BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-SIX

## EDITORIAL

WITH the publication of the Concordant Version of the Latter Prophets, now at the printers, the entirety of our translation of the "Old Testament" will be available in one form or another. The books of Ruth and Lamentations appeared in the January 1994 and July 1992 issues of *Unsearchable Riches*, respectively, and the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy as well as the Psalms and Daniel, which were published in installments from 1957 to 1994, are still available in the smaller size form used for our magazine. The remaining books are (or soon will be) printed in three portions in notebook size form: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs (1998); The Former Prophets (2004); and now The Latter Prophets (2005).

We are profoundly thankful to God that He has brought us to this milestone. Yet we are continually humbled by our shortcomings and the frustrations of our wishes in completing this project.

A "Concordant Version" of the Sacred Scriptures was envisioned nearly a century ago. A. E. Knoch undertook the task of translating the Greek Scriptures (usually called the "New Testament"). This was first published in 1926, with major revisions issued in 1931, 1944 and 1966. Vladimir Gelesnoff began the preparation of a Concordant Version of the Hebrew Scriptures, but was unable to make much progress before his early death in 1921. This task was taken up by Brother Knoch in the early 1930's and continued with the assistance of several helpers, of whom E. H. Clayton of England made major contributions. A tentative translation was completed, partly in typewritten form, yet other portions only in handwritten form, by the time of Brother Clayton's death in 1972. In the meantime,

Herman H. Rocke, had moved from Germany to California and commenced a thorough review of the translation, its consistency both in vocabulary and renderings of various grammatical forms, and its readability. Along with a number of helpers he also undertook a reexamination of the emendations of the Hebrew text indicated by his predecessors on the basis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the ancient translations in Greek (especially the Septuagint) and Syriac, and other sources, such as the Samaritan Pentateuch.

I gradually became acquainted with the translation project from 1972 becoming more closely involved in association with Brother Rocke from 1984 until his death in 1996. He worked mainly on the Pentateuch and Former Prophets, plus Ruth, Esther, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel, and I on the poetic books and Latter Prophets, each checking over the other's work, and comparing it all with the work done earlier under Brother Knoch's supervision. In the last few years I have tried to bring the whole together with more consistency, while looking again into a number of unsettled problems.

Many of these problems still remain unsettled, and a search for a greater measure of consistency should be undertaken even after we publish the whole together in one form. It is well to remember Brother Knoch's dictum that the Version always remain tentative, open to improvements both as to underlying textual concerns and the English renderings.

Without setting deadlines, but with renewed hope, we turn now to the effort of bringing all the published installments together in one form. I trust our readers will join us in prayer for wisdom and strength in this further effort.

I hope also, that many will find real help, as I continue to find, in a growing appreciation of these sacred writings by means of this Concordant translation.

D.H.H.



## ABRAHAM BUYS A TOMB

23 + Sarah's life <sup>1</sup>came to be 127 years; these were the years of Sarah's life. <sup>2</sup> + Sarah <sup>1</sup>died in Kiriath-arba <sup>7</sup>which is in the vale<sup>n</sup>. It is now Hebron in the land of Canaan. And Abraham <sup>1</sup>came to bewail <sup>7</sup>Sarah and to lament over her. <sup>3</sup> + Then Abraham <sup>1</sup>arose from beside his dead<sup>1</sup>.

+ He <sup>1</sup>spoke to the sons of Heth, <sup>7</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>: <sup>4</sup> Although I am an alien sojourner and settler <sup>wi</sup>among you, give <sup>7</sup> me a holding for a tomb <sup>wi</sup>among you, and let me entomb my dead<sup>1</sup> from before me. <sup>5</sup> + The sons of Heth <sup>1</sup>answered 'Abraham, <sup>7</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>: ~Suppose~ <sup>6</sup> you hear us, my lord. You are a prince of Elohim in our midst. Entomb <sup>7</sup> your dead<sup>1</sup> in the choicest of our tombs. None <sup>f</sup> of us shall prevent <sup>f</sup> you from entombing<sup>-</sup> your dead<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>in his tomb.

<sup>7</sup> + Then Abraham <sup>1</sup>arose and <sup>1</sup>bowed down to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth. <sup>8</sup> + <sup>7</sup>Abraham<sup>0</sup> <sup>1</sup>spoke <sup>7</sup>to them, <sup>7</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>: If there is consent <sup>1</sup>in your soul to let me entomb <sup>7</sup> my dead<sup>1</sup> from before me, so hear me and intercede for me <sup>1</sup>with Ephron son of Zohar <sup>s</sup>the Hittite<sup>n</sup>, <sup>9</sup> + that he <sup>1</sup>give <sup>7</sup> me <sup>7</sup> the cave of Machpelah which is his, which is <sup>1</sup>at the end of his field; <sup>1</sup>at the full current price let him give it to me <sup>7</sup>as a holding for a tomb in your midst.

<sup>10</sup> + Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite <sup>1</sup>answered 'Abraham <sup>1</sup>before the ears of the sons of Heth, <sup>7</sup> all those who had come<sup>1</sup> to the gateway of his city, <sup>7</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>: <sup>11</sup> No<sup>t</sup>, my lord, hear me! I give the field to you, and the cave <sup>w</sup>that is in it, I give it to you; <sup>7</sup>before the eyes of the sons of my people I give it to you. Entomb your dead<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> + Again Abraham 'bowed down before the people of the land <sup>13</sup> and 'spoke to Ephron 'before the ears of the people of the land, > saying-: <sup>y</sup> Suppose you would—hear me! I will give silver shekels for the field. Take them from me, and let me entomb 'my dead' there<sup>d</sup>. <sup>14</sup> + Ephron 'answered 'Abraham, > saying-: ~Suppose~ <sup>15</sup> you hear me, my lord; a piece of land at 400 shekels of silver, what is that between me and <sup>bt</sup> you? + Entomb 'your dead'.

<sup>16</sup> + Abraham 'hearkened to Ephron. + Then Abraham 'weighed out for Ephron 'the money <sup>w</sup>that he had <sup>sp</sup>named 'before the ears of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver at the rate current' >among the merchants'. <sup>17</sup> + Thus the field of Ephron <sup>w</sup> <sup>i</sup>at Machpelah <sup>w</sup>that is <sup>s</sup>adjoining<sup>n</sup> Mamre, the field and the cave <sup>w</sup>that is in it, and all the trees <sup>w</sup>that are in the field, <sup>w</sup> <sup>i</sup>within all its boundary round about, became 'confirmed <sup>18</sup> to Abraham 'as his acquisition >before the eyes of the sons of Heth, <sup>i</sup> all those who had come' to the gateway of his city.

<sup>19</sup> + After <sup>so</sup>this Abraham entombed 'his wife Sarah 'in the cave of the field of Machpelah that is adjoining Mamre. It is now Hebron in the land of Canaan. <sup>20</sup> + Thus the field and the cave <sup>w</sup> in it became confirmed to Abraham <sup>f</sup>by 'the sons of Heth 'as a holding for a tomb.

#### DEATH OF SARAH

SARAH, like Abraham, must have been rejuvenated when she bore Isaac, for she was beyond the normal age for child-bearing. So she lived on to the age of a hundred and twenty-seven years. It seems that Abraham no longer lived in Beersheba, but somewhat northeast of it at Arba (FOUR), sometimes called Kiriath (*town*) of Arba, or Arba-town. It is here identified with Hebron (JOINED), in the foothills that lead up along the road to Jerusalem. It was in the land of Canaan (SUBMITTER), given to the grandson of Noah (Gen. 9:25). The inhabitants were descended from Heth (Dis-

may) whose name seems to indicate that they were daring and defiant men, who would be difficult to deal with.

#### ABRAHAM'S ACQUISITION

Abraham calls himself a *sojourner* and a *settler*, not a "stranger," as the AV has it. The word sojourn comes from STIR, to move about. But he was not continually moving either, and seems to have remained in some locations for a long time. This would give him the right to ask for a tomb, for he could hardly carry a corpse with him. But he wanted a *permanent possession* for a tomb, so he asks for a *holding*. Land tenure in the Scriptures is of various kinds. The principal methods were *tenancy* and *holding*. Israel as a nation never acquired, or bought, or owned, or held, or possessed, the land, for it *belongs* to Yahweh Elohim, and they were only *tenants* at His pleasure, and were evicted when they did not serve Him, and will never be safe as long as they refuse their Messiah.

A tomb should not be a transient abode. It should last until the resurrection. Abraham did not get a temporary tenancy, but *acquired* (23:18) a *holding* (23:4,9) and weighed out four hundred shekels (250 ounces) of silver (v.15), which *confirmed* it (v.17) as his. It included the field of Ephron (SOIL-er), in which is the double cave which is adjoining Mamre (CHANGE or Bitterness) with all the trees in its boundary by acquisition, before the eyes of the sons of Heth and to all entering the gates of the city. Is there any other transaction of this kind in the Scriptures in which such extraordinary emphasis is laid on its permanence? What a contrast to the rest of the land, which had been promised to him, of which he did not own enough to place one of his feet? And several hundred years had to elapse before his seed could take over its tenancy.

A. E. Knoch

## A WIFE FOR ISAAC

24 Abraham was <sup>+</sup>now old; he was <sup>in</sup>advanced in days, and Yahweh' had blessed 'Abraham in all things. <sup>2</sup> + Abraham 'said to his servant, the eldest of his household, 'who was ruling <sup>i</sup>over all <sup>w</sup>that he <sup>'</sup>had: <sup>pl</sup>Put your hand <sup>pr</sup>please under my thigh. <sup>3</sup> + I shall <sup>c</sup>make you swear <sup>i</sup>by Yahweh Elohim of the heavens and Elohim of the earth <sup>w</sup>that you shall not take a wife for my son, <sup>7</sup>for Isaac<sup>0</sup>, from the daughters of the Canaanites <sup>i</sup>among whom I am dwelling. <sup>4</sup> <sup>M</sup>Rather<sup>~n</sup> you shall go to my land <sup>7</sup>whence I <sup>b</sup>came<sup>0</sup>, and to my kindred, and that you will take a wife for my son, for Isaac, <sup>7</sup>from there<sup>0</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> + The servant 'said to him: Perhaps the woman shall not be willing to <sup>go</sup>come following me to 'this 'land. Shall I bring back, yea bring back 'your son to the land from where you came forth? <sup>6</sup> + Abraham <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him: Be on your guard lest you 'bring 'my son back there<sup>d</sup>. <sup>7</sup> Yahweh Elohim of the heavens <sup>7</sup>and Elohim of the earth<sup>0</sup> Who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred <sup>7</sup>whence I <sup>b</sup>came<sup>0</sup>, and Who spoke to me and Who swore to me <sup>'</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>: <sup>7</sup>To you and<sup>0</sup> to your seed shall I give 'this 'land, He' shall send His messenger before you, and you will take a wife for my son, <sup>7</sup>for Isaac<sup>0</sup>, from there. <sup>8</sup> + But if the woman should not be willing to <sup>go</sup>come following you <sup>7</sup>to 'this 'land<sup>0</sup>, <sup>+</sup>then you will be absolved <sup>f</sup>of this my oath; but you shall not bring 'my son back there<sup>d</sup>. <sup>9</sup> + So the servant <sup>pl</sup>put 'his hand under the thigh of Abraham, his <sup>=</sup>lord, and 'swore to him <sup>on</sup>concerning 'this 'matter.

<sup>10</sup> + Then the servant <sup>l</sup>took ten camels from the camels of his <sup>=</sup>lord, and with gifts <sup>7</sup>from<sup>0</sup> all the goods of his <sup>=</sup>lord <sup>l</sup>under his hand, + he <sup>l</sup>set out and <sup>lgo</sup>left for Aram-naharaim, for the city of Nahor. <sup>11</sup> + There he <sup>c</sup>made the camels <sup>l</sup>kneel down <sup>f</sup>outside > the city > by the well of water > at eventide, > at the time when the women go out to draw forth<sup>l</sup> water. <sup>12</sup> And he <sup>l</sup>said: Yahweh Elohim of my lord Abraham, I pray, <sup>c</sup>let it happen before me today and <sup>d</sup>show benignity <sup>wi</sup>to my lord Abraham. <sup>13</sup> Behold me standing by <sup>on</sup>at the spring of water, and the daughters of the <sup>mt</sup>people of the city are going out to draw forth water. <sup>14</sup> + So let it come to pass that the maiden to whom I <sup>l</sup>say, <sup>pr</sup>Please <sup>c</sup>lower your jar + that I may drink, and she says <sup>7</sup>to me<sup>0</sup>, Drink, and I shall <sup>mr</sup>also <sup>c</sup>give your camels to drink <sup>7</sup>until if they <sup>all</sup>finish > drinking<sup>-0</sup>—let <sup>l</sup>her be the one You have <sup>c</sup>made ready beforehand for your servant, for Isaac. + <sup>i</sup>Thereby I shall know that You have <sup>d</sup>shown benignity <sup>wi</sup>to my lord <sup>7</sup>Abraham<sup>n</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> + This <sup>l</sup>came to pass ere he had <sup>all</sup>finished > speaking<sup>-7</sup> in his heart<sup>n</sup>; and behold, Rebecca was coming forth<sup>l</sup>, who had been born to Bethuel son of Milcah, wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, and her jar was on her <sup>bk</sup>shoulder. <sup>16</sup> + The maiden was of very good appearance, a virgin, + no<sup>t</sup> man had known her. + She went <sup>l</sup>down to the spring, + <sup>l</sup>filled her jar and came <sup>l</sup>up again. <sup>17</sup> + The servant <sup>l</sup>ran to meet her and <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>pr</sup>Please, <sup>c</sup>let me sip a little water from your jar. <sup>18</sup> + She <sup>lsa</sup>replied, Drink, my lord, and she <sup>l</sup>quickly + <sup>c</sup>let <sup>l</sup>down her jar upon her hand and <sup>c</sup>gave him to <sup>l</sup>drink. <sup>19</sup> + When she had <sup>all</sup>finished > <sup>c</sup>letting him drink, + she <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>mr</sup>Also for your camels I shall draw forth until if they <sup>all</sup>finish > drinking<sup>-</sup>. <sup>20</sup> And she <sup>l</sup>quickly + <sup>l</sup>emptied out her jar into the trough, + <sup>l</sup>ran <sup>fr</sup>again to the well to draw forth water, and <sup>l</sup>drew forth for all his camels.

<sup>21</sup> And the man was ~gazing wondrously~ > at her, silently<sup>l</sup> waiting to know if whether or not Yahweh had prospered

his way. <sup>22</sup> + Then it <sup>l</sup>came to pass, just as the camels had <sup>all</sup>finished <sup>></sup> drinking<sup>-</sup>, + that the man <sup>l</sup>took a golden nose pendant, a beka in <sup>its</sup> weight, and two bracelets, ten gold shekels in <sup>their</sup> weight, <sup>on</sup>for her wrists. <sup>23</sup> <sup>7</sup> + Then he <sup>l</sup>asked her<sup>0</sup> and <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>a</sup>Whose daughter are you? Tell <sup>></sup> me <sup>pr</sup>please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge for the night?

<sup>24</sup> + She <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him, I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah whom she bore to Nahor. <sup>25</sup> She <sup>+</sup>further <sup>l</sup>said to him, <sup>mr</sup>Besides we <sup>wi</sup>have enough crushed straw <sup>mr</sup>and provender as well as room to lodge for the night. <sup>26</sup> + Then the man <sup>l</sup>bowed his head and <sup>l</sup>worshipped <sup>></sup> Yahweh. <sup>27</sup> + He <sup>l</sup>said: Blessed<sup>l</sup> be Yahweh Elohim of my lord Abraham, Who has not forsaken His benignity and His faithfulness<sup>f</sup> with my lord. As for me, Yahweh has guided me in the way to the house of my lord's brothers.

<sup>28</sup> + The girl <sup>l</sup>ran and <sup>l</sup>told <sup>></sup> her mother's household <sup>as</sup>about these things. <sup>29</sup> + Now Rebecca <sup>></sup>had a brother, and his name was Laban. And Laban <sup>l</sup>ran to the man <sup>outside</sup><sup>d</sup> <sup>></sup>at the spring. <sup>30</sup> + This <sup>l</sup>came to pass as soon as <sup>s</sup>he<sup>n</sup> had seen<sup>-</sup> the nose pendent and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and as he had heard<sup>-</sup> the words of his sister Rebecca, <sup>></sup> saying<sup>-</sup>, Thus the man spoke to me.

+ So Laban <sup>l</sup>came to the man, and behold, he was still standing <sup>on</sup>by the camels <sup>on</sup>at the spring. <sup>31</sup> + He <sup>l</sup>said <sup>7</sup>to him<sup>c</sup>, Come in, blessed<sup>l</sup> one of Yahweh. Why should you stand <sup>i</sup> outside, + when I myself have cleared out the house and a <sup>ri</sup>place for the camels? <sup>32</sup> + Then the man <sup>l</sup>came to<sup>d</sup> the house; + one <sup>l</sup>unharnessed the camels and <sup>l</sup>gave crushed straw and provender to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. <sup>33</sup> + Yet when <sup>7</sup>bread<sup>0</sup> to eat was <sup>pl</sup>placed before him, + he <sup>l</sup>said, I shall not eat until <sup>if</sup> I have spoken my words. + He <sup>lsa</sup>replied, Speak.

<sup>34</sup> + Then he <sup>l</sup>said: I am Abraham's servant. <sup>35</sup> + Yahweh'

has blessed my lord exceedingly, and he has become great; + He has given him a flock of sheep and a herd of cattle, + silver and gold, + menservants and maidservants, + camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup> + Sarah, my lord's wife, bore one son for my lord after she had grown old; and he has given him everything <sup>w</sup> he has.

<sup>37</sup> + My lord made me swear, saying: You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I am dwelling. <sup>38</sup> Rather you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and you will take a wife for my son from there. <sup>39</sup> And I said to my lord: Perhaps the woman shall not come following me. <sup>40</sup> + He <sup>lsa</sup>replied to me: Yahweh Elohim, before Whom I walk, He Himself shall send His messenger along with you, and He will prosper your way, and you will take a wife for my son from my family, and from my father's house. <sup>41</sup> Then you shall be absolved of my oath of imprecation; when you come to my family, and if they should not give her to you, then you will be absolved of my oath of imprecation.

<sup>42</sup> + When I came today to the spring, + I said: Yahweh Elohim of my lord Abraham, I pray, if You are prospering my way on which I am now going, <sup>43</sup> behold me standing by <sup>on</sup>at the spring of water, where the daughters of the <sup>mt</sup>people of the city are going out to draw forth water. + So let it come to pass that the damsel who is coming forth to draw forth water, and to <sup>her</sup>whom I say, <sup>pr</sup>Please let me drink a little water from your jar, <sup>44</sup> and she says to me: Drink, not <sup>mr</sup>only you, + but I shall <sup>mr</sup>also draw forth water for your camels—let her be the woman whom Yahweh has made ready beforehand for my lord's son. <sup>7i</sup>Thereby I shall know that You have <sup>d</sup>shown benig-nity <sup>wi</sup>to my lord Abraham.

<sup>45</sup> Ere I had <sup>all</sup>finished speaking in my heart, + behold, Rebecca was coming forth, and her jar was on her <sup>bk</sup>shoul-

der. + She went <sup>l</sup>down to<sup>d</sup> the spring and <sup>l</sup>drew forth water. And I <sup>l</sup>said to her: <sup>pr</sup>Please <sup>c</sup>let me drink <sup>s</sup>a little water from your jar<sup>c</sup>. <sup>46</sup> + So she <sup>l</sup>quickly + <sup>c</sup>let <sup>l</sup>down her jar <sup>7</sup>upon her hand~ and <sup>l</sup>s<sup>a</sup>replied: Drink, and <sup>mr</sup>also your camels I shall <sup>c</sup>give to drink. + Then I <sup>l</sup>drank, and she <sup>c</sup>gave the camels to drink <sup>mr</sup>also.

<sup>47</sup> + I <sup>l</sup>asked <sup>l</sup>her and <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>a</sup>Whose daughter are you? + She <sup>l</sup>s<sup>a</sup>replied, The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore for him. + Then I <sup>l</sup>p<sup>l</sup>put the pendant on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. <sup>48</sup> And I <sup>l</sup>bowed my head and <sup>l</sup>worshipped <sup>7</sup>Yahweh and <sup>l</sup>blessed <sup>l</sup>Yahweh Elohim of my lord Abraham, Who has guided me in the reliable way, to take <sup>l</sup>the daughter of my lord's brother for his son. <sup>49</sup> And now, if =you really mean to <sup>d</sup>show<sup>l</sup> kindness and faithfulness <sup>l</sup>to my lord, tell <sup>7</sup>me, and if not, tell <sup>7</sup>me, +that I may turn around <sup>on</sup>to the right or <sup>on</sup>to the left.

<sup>50</sup> + Laban and Bethuel <sup>l</sup>answered and <sup>l</sup>said: This matter comes forth from Yahweh. We are <sup>l</sup>unable to speak bad or good to you. <sup>51</sup> <sup>bd</sup>Here is Rebecca before you. Take her and go, +that she may become the wife <sup>l</sup>of your lord's son just as Yahweh has spoken. <sup>52</sup> And it <sup>l</sup>came to pass, just as Abraham's servant heard <sup>l</sup>their words, +that he bowed in <sup>l</sup>worship toward the earth <sup>7</sup>before Yahweh. <sup>53</sup> + Then the servant <sup>c</sup>brought <sup>l</sup>forth articles of silver, + articles of gold, and garments, and <sup>l</sup>gave them to Rebecca; and he gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother.

<sup>54</sup> + Then they <sup>l</sup>ate and <sup>l</sup>drank, he and the men who were with him; and they <sup>l</sup>lodged there for the night. + When they <sup>l</sup>arose in the morning, + he <sup>l</sup>said: Dismiss me, <sup>7</sup>and let me go<sup>c</sup> to my lord. <sup>55</sup> + But her brother and her mother <sup>l</sup>said: Let the maiden <sup>sit</sup>abide <sup>l</sup>with us a few days or even ten. <sup>7</sup>And<sup>ncs</sup> afterward you may go. <sup>56</sup> + He <sup>l</sup>s<sup>a</sup>replied to them: Do not <sup>l</sup>delay <sup>l</sup>me, +since Yahweh<sup>7</sup> has prospered my way. Dismiss me, and let me go to my lord. <sup>57</sup> And they <sup>l</sup>said: We shall call <sup>7</sup>the maiden; + let us ask her <sup>l</sup>at her mouth.



<sup>58</sup> +So they 'called > Rebecca and 'said to her: Will you 'go with 'this 'man? And she <sup>isa</sup>replied, I will 'go. <sup>59</sup> +Then they 'dismissed 'their sister Rebecca +with 'her wetnurse', and 'Abraham's servant +with 'his men. <sup>60</sup> + They 'blessed 'their sister<sup>cs</sup> Rebecca and 'said to her: O you, our sister, may you <sup>b</sup>give rise to thousands of myriads, and may your seed take over 'the gate of those who are hating it. <sup>61</sup> +Then Rebecca and her maidens 'got up and 'rode on the camels and 'went after the man. +Thus the servant 'took 'Rebecca and 'went his way.

<sup>62</sup> +Now Isaac had come back from having set out<sup>-</sup> to the well Lahai-roi; +for he was dwelling in the Negev area. <sup>63</sup> + Isaac went 'forth to meditate in the field > before<sup>-</sup> the evening. +When he 'lifted up his eyes, + behold, + he 'saw camels coming. <sup>64</sup> +When Rebecca 'lifted up 'her eyes and 'saw 'Isaac, + she 'swooped down, off the camel, <sup>65</sup> and 'said to the servant: <sup>a</sup>Who is 'this 'man >there 'who is walking in the field to meet us? + The servant <sup>isa</sup>replied, He is my lord. +So she 'took 'her veil and 'covered herself. <sup>66</sup> And the servant 'related to Isaac 'all the things <sup>w</sup>that he had done. <sup>67</sup> Isaac +then 'brought her to<sup>d</sup> the tent of Sarah his mother. +Thus he 'took 'Rebecca, and she 'became his > wife, and he was loving her. +Now Isaac was 'comforted after the loss of his mother.

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#### EVIDENCES OF FAITH

ABRAHAM was, doubtless, acquainted with the curse of Canaan (Gen.9:25) and believed that that seed would be wiped off the land which God had now given to *him* and *his* seed. So he was most emphatically against any physical corruption through union with the Canaanites. At the same time he knew of the blessing of Shem, and desired to keep within the family to which he belonged. To this day the sand seed of Abraham is very proud of their physi-

cal heritage. As he himself, however, had been called *away* from his former home, and from his *relatives* there, he also insisted that Isaac remain in the land of promise. Hence it was that he sent his servant to his relatives, to select a wife for his son. All this is evidence of Abraham's faith in Yahweh Elohim.

As his mission was concerned with generation, his chief servant was sworn with his hand on Abraham's thigh, that section of the human body whence the seed comes, and where the child is borne. Ordinarily, Abraham would have gone back himself, with his son, but he believed only what God had said, and he had no divine call to return, especially as Isaac, also, had no instruction to go. As his seed was called in Isaac, there could be no doubt that Yahweh Elohim would provide a wife for him in the way of faith. It has been pointed out that, though all this concerned Rebecca more than anyone else, she knew nothing about it. So it is with all whom God calls. They are the subject of God's prevision long before He calls them and prepares them for their part in His plan (Gen.24:2).

#### CALLING

The servant evidently did not share Abraham's faith, so he interposed with an objection. What if the woman is unwilling? From the human side this is a very reasonable reflection. How could anyone demand that a maiden should leave her parents and family and acquaintances, to whom she is bound by many a tender tie, and desert them all for an unknown man, even if he is wealthy? If he wanted her, let him come and woo and win her! Humanly speaking, Rebecca's might be a very risky course of action, dependent on the capricious emotions of an impulsive maiden. But the Subjector controls even these, so that what seems unwise and hazardous is sane and safe in His all-embracing providence (Gen.24:8).

## SYRIA OF THE TWO STREAMS

Syria (*Aram* Most-HIGH) of the two streams, usually called Mesopotamia (Mid-streams), seems to be the height between the upper reaches of the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, although this expression applies equally well, and is loosely used of the lower plains in Babylonia also. *Aram-naharaim* (HEIGHT-streams) must be a region north-east of Palestine. I once received the impression from the name Mesopotamia that the servant went due east, over the desert. But, when I crossed it, from Damascus to Baghdad, we found only one place to get water, Rutba Wells. So it seems likely that the north-eastern route was generally taken, even to Babylon. Later this region is called *Padan* (RANSOMed) also (Gen.25:20).

## THE EUPHRATES

It may help the student of the Hebrew Scriptures to have a clear impression of the course of the Euphrates river, which is the principal one of the two streams. The other river, the Tigris, is probably the same as the Hiddekel (*Fleet-one*, Gen.2:14). This stream is *east* of Assyria. The Euphrates is *west* of it, so forms the north-eastern, angular boundary of the land promised to Abram. This stretches from the river of Egypt, which is small and in the south, to the great stream, the stream Euphrates (Gen.15:18). Thus Israel's holding will be bounded almost entirely by water, for the sea is in the west. By far its longest boundary is the Euphrates (FRUITful), a fit name, for the land along this stream is famous for its fruitfulness. It forms the greater part of the "Fertile Crescent."

## ARARAT

The route of the head servant, therefore, was mostly northward, avoiding the arid eastern desert, which leads

to the lower reaches of these rivers. A flowing stream must descend, and one as long as the Euphrates, from the mountains of Ararat, cannot descend very swiftly unless it ends far below sea level, like the Jordan (DESCENDER). So Eliezer *ascended* to reach Syria (Most-HIGH) Perhaps we should take this as an indication that the sand seed came from a source higher than the sea shore, to which it later descended, and may figure the mass of the physical seed of Abraham. As to the flesh they had a high start in the maid of Aram.

#### WOMEN AT THE WELL

Women at the well in the evening are one of the most striking scenes in the orient. We observed them at Ain Karim, a spring southwest of Jerusalem, and also at Siloam, to which came the women of the village across the wady of the Kidron, who climbed up the ridge and went down the stairs to the pool, as the approach in the wady was closed. They carried the water in earthen jars or five gallon tin cans, balanced on their heads. This compels them to walk very erect, for they could not balance the jars or bear their weight otherwise. This is an excellent exercise, for it gives them an upright carriage. They never seem to spill any water, except on purpose. I was staring at the women ascending the stone steps at Siloam, when, all of a sudden, one of them, above where I was standing, seemed to trip, and I thought her jar was going to fall. But she quickly balanced it again, and the water went just where she intended—in my face. The women enjoyed my plight even more than I did!

Eliezer, standing by such a well, hardly had the faith of Abraham, so he did not appeal to *his* God but to Yahweh Elohim, the Subjector of Abraham. He not only asked for a sign, but proposed one himself. No doubt he and his camels were very thirsty and needed the water to prolong

their life. So they represented, in a way, the need of Abraham, who required a wife for his son to promote his life-line. And the one who was eager to serve the servant with water would be likely to serve the son in propagating his progeny. As the whole affair was of God and according to His revelation hitherto, it was an immediate success.

The Masoretic text and the AV omit some phrases in this narrative, which are supplied by the Septuagint. In verse fourteen it adds "until they finish drinking." Camels can drink a lot of water, and, in a case like this, where a single spring must serve a city, it may have been scarce. So we get the impression that Rebecca (*Grand-confluence*) would supply the thirst of Abraham and Isaac *fully*. In the next verse, after "ere he had finished speaking," "in his heart" is added by the Septuagint. This gives it the touch of truth. It was not a mere outward sound, uttered with his lips, but the inmost desire of his heart, which only God could hear and answer. Rebecca certainly did not hear him, for she came forth even *before* he finished his prayer.

Here we have a good illustration of how things "happen." For a man of faith, nothing is a mere matter of chance. Indeed, so it is even with unbelievers, though they have no faculties to perceive it. In fact, even all their physical perceptions are very limited in scope. Some of the lower animals can see and hear and smell objects and sounds and odors imperceptible to a human eye or ear or nose. But God not only *perceives* all, but *controls* all. So it is that events conform to our prayers and wishes only so far as these are in harmony with God's grand and gracious specifications, which He made before the eons, and which will be correctly carried out to the minutest detail, when these are consummated.

#### THE CALLER

Some very spiritual teachers have taught that the ser-

vant was a type of the holy spirit in this "Church" period, seeking a bride, or wife, for Christ. But now that we differentiate between the bride and the body of Christ, it seems more fitting to confine the servant's antitype to the terrestrial calling. The call of the present ecclesia, or *body* of Christ, was a *secret* in Abraham's day, and also when Christ was on earth. The servant's mission prefigures the call of Israel, the *physical* line.

#### THE ENRICHMENT

In full accord with the promises to the physical seed, Abraham's servant presents Rebecca with the evidences of his master's wealth. These promissory presents are tokens of the terrestrial treasures which are the portion of Abraham's seed, which have already come to them in the past, before they enjoy the fullest measure of His wealth, after the marriage, in Christ's kingdom. They were given the land itself and its produce, and rose to great riches in the days of Solomon. In eastern lands, it is customary for a woman to display her wealth by means of rich ornaments and coins worn as part of her headdress. These were not given to enhance her beauty, which was quite unnecessary, and, indeed, has the opposite effect on a female of "exceedingly good appearance," like Rebecca.

#### DIVINE LEADING

As servants of Christ, we can learn much, even from Eliezer. He did not put his own feelings first at the happy outcome of his mission so far, and *thank* Yahweh for it, but *worshipped* Him, and said: "*Blessed be Yahweh.*" Only then he mentions himself and his mission, saying, "*Yahweh has guided me to the house of my lord's brothers*" (Gen.24: 26,27). Being an old and experienced traveller, no doubt he knew very well how to find his way about. But to travel all that distance, and meet the object of his search immedi-

ately in such an auspicious manner, could hardly be hoped for by a mortal. The divine leading was very evident.

#### LABAN

As the story of Dinah, Jacob's daughter, shows, the brothers of a maid were responsible for her in those days (Gen.34). In this case, especially, we would expect her father, Bethuel, to take the principal part. Her father, indeed, joins Laban when the question of her departure comes up (24:50). But, at first, Laban (WHITE) ran out to meet the servant of Abraham (v.30), and, first of all, he saw the pendant, and the bracelets on his sister's hands. This first glimpse of Laban shows his avaricious character, for it implied that there was more to come in which he might share. But, later on, the son of his sister, Jacob, who doubtless inherited this trait from Rebecca, was more than a match for him, relieving him of not only two daughters and their maids, but flocks and herds as well.

#### THE INHERITANCE

It is instructive to see how much greater was the heritage of the spiritual than the physical seed. Isaac was given a flock and a herd and silver and gold and servants and maids and camels and asses (24:35,36). Even after Abraham married Keturah, and had six more sons, we read, "Abraham had given everything he had, to his son Isaac." (Gen.25:5). Those who belonged to the physical seed only were sent away during his lifetime, with gifts. They were sent to the land of the East, where Isaac was not allowed to go. But Jacob, the fleshly heel, did go, and was not counted as spiritual seed until he returned and had his name changed to Israel (Upright-with-SUBJECTOR). At the same time, these easterners, like Jacob, probably prospered in their earthly inheritance, but Israel's seed went into the bondage of Egypt, to be trained for their greater spiritual heritage.

## DELAYING TACTICS

After the faithful servant had explained his mission and given due credit to Abraham's Subjector for its success up to this point, he first leaves the decision to Rebecca's father, Bethuel, and Laban, her brother, who decide in his favor, even before asking the maid whether she was willing (v.56). This was not only in line with the customs of the time and land, but in accord with the spiritual lesson that the woman should be subject to the man, and the flesh to the spirit. But then the flesh interferes and tries to delay matters (v.55). Alas! This is too often the case. But Elohim can control even the flesh. In this case He has settled this for her when she was born and given the name Rebecca ('Great-Confluence'). For in her, as in all humans, He had implanted the desire for a union, and this is not inclined to delay.

## THE BLESSING OF REBECCA

Rebecca's brothers were not spiritual. Laban's character comes out very clearly later in his dealings with Jacob. So they have no blessing like Abraham's seed, although they have an intimation of it, as is shown by their words to their sister: "May you give rise to thousands of myriads, and may your seed take over the gate of those who are hating it" (Gen.24:60). But the last clause is not at all in line with the star seed. Neither are the attendants of Rebecca, her wet-nurse and her maids.

## REBECCA'S WETNURSE

Deborah, Rebecca's wetnurse, is worthy of special notice (v.59). It seems to have been a custom in those days that the wetnurse remain with a well-to-do maiden for life. The spiritual lesson lies in the fact that, not only did Rebecca receive life from her mother, but she had a different and



later source of life from another woman. This may give a hint of the two seeds, for the soil seed, the physical life, comes first, and the spiritual later. In line with this is the fact that Deborah was a very close and dear friend of the family, so that, after Jacob was changed to Israel, when she died, she was buried with special honors under an oak in Bethel, and it was named Allon-bacuth, Oak-of-Lamentations (Gen.35:8).

#### ISAAC

From this point onwards Abraham fades from the scene. Isaac is found by himself, having fared forth to worship in the field. Moreover, he is at a well called Lehi-rai (TO-LIVE-mirror). His mother had died. He is by himself, and is worshipping in the wilderness, in which, however, he has a hidden source of refreshment. Is this not a marvelous miniature of this solitary link in the spiritual star seed? Are not we also in a wilderness, away from all earthly exuberance, alone in our worship of our Subjector, with His Word at hand, in which we may not only see a clear reflection of ourselves, but enjoy the refreshment of living, life-giving water? And have we not a loving expectation of meeting One Whom, having not seen, nevertheless we love with our whole heart?

#### THE MEETING

Isaac, having worshiped with bowed head, may have unburdened his heart concerning the great crisis in his life, with sweet submission in regard to the wife whom Yahweh Elohim would provide for him. He lifts his eyes, and lo! Camels are coming! We do not read of any such spiritual attitude or meditation or worship on the part of Rebecca, who is to supply the earthly seed. She is high upon a camel's back, and tossed to and fro with the restless undulation of the beast of burden's broken gait. Is not this in quaver-

ing contrast to Isaac's silent saunter? Is it not another animated picture of the terrestrial seed? The unbeliever is like the surging sea, for quiet it cannot be (Isa.57:20). And a ship of the desert is even more disturbing than one that is waited over the waves.

#### ISAAC MARRIES

We can easily imagine what a mother's boy Isaac must have been, and how she must have poured out her love upon him, the single son of her extreme old age. And, no doubt, Isaac reciprocated her affection, and he keenly felt the loss of his mother when she was taken away by death. Her tent was now empty. Therefore Rebecca was doubly welcome, not only for her own sake, but as filling the vacant place left in Isaac's heart by the loss of his mother. And her tent was ready for her. So it is when one responds to the call of God. We do not enter a strange, unfurnished habitation. All was prepared beforehand. So it was also with the terrestrial seed. The land was not empty and uncultivated when Israel entered it, but ready for their reception. And so it will be in the future. The star seed is even better prepared than this, so that they receive resurrection bodies.

A. E. Knoch

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#### REPOSING IN THE LORD

**Earl Myron Brown** was put to repose on May 25, 2005, one week before the completion of his ninety-fourth year. He had lived in Largo, Florida, for many years, where he conducted Scripture studies as long as he was able. Along with his son-in-law, Marvin Rice, he prepared several booklets on scriptural themes, mostly centered in Paul's epistles.

We have recently heard of the death of **Elva Jodar** of Edmonds, Washington. She was a lady of unusual energy along with an enthusiastic appreciation for the message of God's work of salvation for all mankind. Yet we are all mortal, and again we pray that God will hasten the day of deliverance into immortality and incorruption which He has promised. It will come.

## HONOR

(2 Samuel 21:1-14)

21 + There <sup>lb</sup>was a famine in the days of David year after year for three years. +So David <sup>l</sup>sought <sup>`</sup>the face of Yahweh, and Yahweh <sup>lsa</sup>replied, <sup>›</sup>On Saul and <sup>›</sup>on his house is <sup>`</sup>bloodguilt <sup>on</sup>because <sup>w</sup> he <sup>c</sup>put <sup>`</sup>the Gibeonites to death. 2 + The king <sup>l</sup>called the Gibeonites together and <sup>lsa</sup>spoke to them. +As for the Gibeonites, they were not <sup>f</sup>of the sons of Israel, but rather <sup>f</sup>of the rest of the Amorite, and the sons of Israel had sworn an oath to them; +but Saul had <sup>l</sup>sought to smite them in his zeal<sup>-</sup> for the sons of Israel and Judah. 3 + David <sup>lsa</sup>asked <sup>›</sup> the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? + In what way shall I make expiation +that would <sup>m</sup>lead you to bless <sup>`</sup>the allotment of Yahweh? 4 + The Gibeonites <sup>lsa</sup>answered <sup>›</sup> him, For us there is no claim of silver and gold <sup>wi</sup>against Saul +or <sup>wi</sup> his <sup>in</sup>estate; and it is not up to us to <sup>c</sup>put a man in Israel to death. And David <sup>lsa</sup>responded, Whatever you say<sup>l</sup>, I shall do for you. 5 + They <sup>lsa</sup>replied to the king, The man who <sup>all</sup>destroyed us, + who <sup>7</sup>betrayed<sup>~</sup> <sup>›</sup> us that we should be prohibited from standing<sup>-</sup> by in all the territory of Israel— 6 let seven men <sup>f</sup>of his sons be <sup>g</sup>handed over to us, and we will gibbet them <sup>›</sup>before Yahweh <sup>at</sup> 7Gibeon<sup>~</sup> <sup>~i</sup>on the mountain<sup>~</sup> of Yahweh. And the king <sup>l</sup>said, I<sup>l</sup> shall <sup>g</sup>hand them over.

7 +Yet the king <sup>l</sup>spared <sup>on</sup> Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul <sup>on</sup>because of the oath of Yahweh <sup>w</sup>that was between them, between David and <sup>bt</sup> Jonathan son of Saul. 8 +So the king <sup>l</sup>took <sup>`</sup>Armoni and <sup>`</sup>Mephibosheth, <sup>`</sup>the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah whom she had borne for Saul, +together <sup>`</sup>with the five sons of Saul's

daughter <sup>7</sup>Merab<sup>s</sup> whom she had borne for Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite; <sup>9</sup> and he <sup>1</sup>gave them into the hand of the Gibeonites. + They <sup>1</sup>gibbeted them <sup>1</sup>on the mountain before Yahweh. The seven of them <sup>1</sup>fell altogether; + they<sup>7</sup> were <sup>c</sup>put to death in the first <sup>i</sup> days of the harvest, at the start of the barley harvest. <sup>10</sup> + Aiah's daughter Rizpah <sup>1</sup>took <sup>`</sup>sackcloth and <sup>1</sup>stretched it out for herself <sup>`</sup>on the rock from the start of the harvest until water poured forth on them from the heavens. + She did not <sup>g</sup>allow the flyers of the heavens to rest on them by day, <sup>+</sup>nor <sup>`</sup>the animals of the field by night.

<sup>11</sup> + Now <sup>`</sup>David was <sup>1</sup>told <sup>w</sup>what Saul's concubine Rizpah daughter of Aiah had done. <sup>12</sup> + So David <sup>1</sup>went and <sup>1</sup>took <sup>`</sup>the bones of Saul and <sup>`</sup>the bones of his son Jonathan from <sup>`</sup>the <sup>ps</sup>commanders of Jabesh-gilead who had stolen <sup>`</sup>them from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hung them <sup>1</sup>on the day the Philistines smote <sup>`</sup>Saul <sup>1</sup>on Mount Gilboa. <sup>13</sup> + He <sup>c</sup>brought <sup>1</sup>up <sup>`</sup>the bones of Saul and <sup>`</sup>the bones of his son Jonathan from there; and they <sup>1</sup>gathered <sup>`</sup>the bones of those who had been gibbeted<sup>1</sup>. <sup>14</sup> + They <sup>1</sup>entombed <sup>`</sup>the bones of Saul and of his son Jonathan <sup>7</sup>and of those gibbeted<sup>10</sup> in the land of Benjamin, <sup>1</sup>at Zela, in the tomb of his father Kish. + Thus they <sup>1</sup>did all <sup>w</sup>that the king had enjoined on them. + Afterward Elohim granted the <sup>1</sup>entreaty for the land.

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#### THE CONTEXT

IS THIS CHAPTER in its chronological place? Late in David's reign seems excessively late for retribution upon Saul's sin. The text is probably given here so that its teaching may be connected with the surrounding context.

From the list of officers in David's cabinet given in 2 Samuel 8:16-18 to the similar list in 20:23-26, the book is primarily concerned with David's sins and the divine retribution

on his house. Even Amasa was a relative of David, and his death was part of the curse Nathan announced to David (2 Sam.12:10). In chapter 21 the theme of God's retribution continues, but in relation to Saul and to the nation at large, for sins which brought plagues on the land.

The final four chapters of 2 Samuel form a symmetrical arrangement:

Israel plagued for Saul's sin (21:1-14)

Heroics of warriors—giants (21:15-22)

Psalm (22:1-51)

Psalm (23:1-7)

Heroics of warriors—outnumbered (23:8-39)

Israel plagued for David's sin (24:1-25)

With this arrangement we can see that the events connected with Saul's sin are placed here in parallel to the events connected with David's sin. Both sins represented failures to give proper recognition and honor to Yahweh.

#### JOSHUA AND THE HIVITES OF GIBEON

Joshua 9:3-10:15 relates the historical events behind the scene in 2 Samuel 21. This group of people were Hivites (Joshua 9:7), who are identified here in 2 Samuel 21:2 as "of the rest of the Amorite." They lived in Gibeon and neighboring cities (*cf* Josh.9:17), but tricked the Israelites into making a covenant of peace with them, claiming to have come from a far country. When the truth was found out, the sons of Israel could not smite them, "for the princes of the congregation had sworn an oath with them *by Yahweh Elohim of Israel*" (Josh.9:18). As a result, the Gibeonites lived with Israel in peace, but as servants. "On that day Joshua made them wood choppers and water bailers for the congregation and for the altar of Yahweh until this day, to serve at the place He would choose" (Josh.9:27).

Israel had failed to consult Yahweh before making a

covenant in His Name. Still Yahweh required that they honor it. Because of their fear of Yahweh, these Hivites had secured a place of service to Him.

#### DAVID AND THE GIBEONITES

Saul's attempt to annihilate the Gibeonites was not motivated by his zeal for Yahweh, but rather by his zeal for the children of Israel (2 Sam.21:2). This may suggest a national or racial prejudice. While the guilt was focused on Saul's house, it involved the whole nation, and the famine was tragic for the Gibeonites as well. The famine was retribution for failing to honor the covenant with the Hivites that had been made in Yahweh's Name. And it was also for failure to honor Yahweh and the land in which He dwelt by polluting it with innocent blood.

David asked the Gibeonites, "In what way shall I make expiation that would lead you to bless the allotment of Yahweh?" (v.3). The *allotment of Yahweh* refers to *Israel*. What a question! What would the Jews answer if the Germans asked them, "How shall we make amends for the holocaust of World War II, so that you can ask God to bless us? How would some of the tribes of American Indians that were nearly exterminated answer such a question?"

The Gibeonites' response to David shows their knowledge of the law's requirements and it shows an earnest reverence for Yahweh. The release from the plague could not be purchased with money: "Nor shall you take a sheltering ransom for the soul of the murderer, who stands condemned to die; for he shall be put to death, yea death . . . for it is the blood that pollutes the land. As for the land, no shelter may be made for the blood which was shed on it save by the blood of him who shed it" (Num.35:31,33).

Hence, seven men of the house of Saul were to be gibbeted before Yahweh.

In Numbers 25:1-5, the hanging up before the Lord

of those who were executed was an extension of the capital punishment meant to allay the hot anger of Yahweh. The hanging of the executed was a public proclamation of their cursed condition (Deut.21:22,23). As the Deuteronomy passage tells, normally the hanged were to be taken down at the end of the day, that their presence not be a pollution of the land in which Yahweh was dwelling. Seven is a number symbolic of divine completion, and is used a number of times with reference to vengeance (see Gen. 4:15,24; Psalms 79:12).

The word *expiation* in 2 Samuel 21:3 is often translated *propitiatory shelter* in the CV. It has reference to shelter from God's indignation. In this case there was a setting right of the relationship of the Gibeonites and Israel. The guidance of the law was followed, but there was an issue of human justice involved as well. God would break the drought which had brought the famine, but entreaty for the land was not fully granted until after the entombment of Saul's family (v.14). The burial of the gibbeted bodies was necessary for the land to be clean. It is also interesting that the *propitiatory shelter* or *mercy seat* of the tabernacle was absent from the scene, having been taken to Jerusalem. Later, at that place in Jerusalem, another plague would be stopped (*cf* 2 Sam.24:16) in a show of God's mercy that would place His Name in an area ever to be associated with the true Propitiatory Shelter.

Saul was responsible for a slaughter of the priests (1 Sam.22), but we read of no divine retribution for that crime. Still the foreigners, who, in virtue of an oath in Yahweh's Name, chopped wood and carried water for the tabernacle, were avenged. The priesthood had fallen, and the home of these natives to the land was the chief place of worship in Israel. Though the coffer of the covenant was at Jerusalem in a tabernacle that David had erected for it there, the altar and the tabernacle of Moses, which

had traversed the wilderness, were at Gibeon (1 Chron.15: 25-29; 16:1,37-40; 21:29; 1 Kings 3:2-4). This explains how they would "gibbet them before Yahweh at Gibeon on the mountain of Yahweh" (2 Sam.21:6).

#### THE MOUNTAIN OF YAHWEH

The Masoretic text has "Gibeah of Saul, the chosen one of Yahweh" where the CV has "Gibeon on the mountain of Yahweh." The emendation is based on the Septuagint translation which has "Gibeon" instead of "Gibeah," and the fact that the Hebrew words for *chosen of Yahweh* look very much like the Hebrew words for "on the mountain of Yahweh." This emendation also is more in accord with the context of 2 Samuel 21 and other passages of Scripture than a reference to Saul as "the chosen of Yahweh." The Hivites exhibited a humility that rejects the idea they would sarcastically refer to Saul as "the chosen of Yahweh" in the context of his crimes. Rather they would refer to the mount where the altar and tabernacle were located as "the mountain of Yahweh."

Saul failed to honor the oath made in Yahweh's Name, and Yahweh's presence in the land. David honored his oath to Jonathan in Yahweh's Name (*cf* 1 Sam.20:12-16) by sparing Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, and he honored Yahweh by making proper burial of the dead of Saul's family to cleanse the land. The Gibeonites honored the law in their request for a legal justice. And Rizpah honored king Saul and her family's name.

It is interesting that the Gibeonites, as a subservient people, did not have the authority to inflict capital punishment (2 Sam.21:4). This is the same situation in which Israel found itself in the days of Christ (John 18:31-32; 19: 6-7,16). In both cases deliverance came by someone other than the Jews executing Jews in their land.



## RIZPAH

The story of Rizpah grips our attention with curious wonder. In a time of terrible loss and mourning for her family, and a time of death and famine in her country, she stood alone in the midst of abject shame, patiently and tenaciously maintaining a semblance of honor for her family name. Armed with nothing more than the love of a mother, she turned the head of the king, and caused him to give proper and honorable burial rights, not only to seven cursed men, but also to the whole family. This in turn, caused Elohim to grant entreaty for the land (v.14).

For a body to be left to the fowls and beasts instead of receiving burial was a terrible shame (*cf* 1 Sam.17:44; Jer.16:4). This shame was expressed in its full extent with reference to wicked Jezebel: "This is the word of Yahweh that He spoke by means of his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel the dogs shall devour the flesh of Jezebel. And the carcass of Jezebel will come to be like manure on the surface of the field in the portion of Jezreel that they may not say, This is Jezebel" (2 Kings 9:36,37). The thought of manure on the ground makes the final mental image of the individual repulsive. This kind of expression was common in that culture (*cf* Job 20:7; Psa. 83:10; Jer.8:2; 9:22; Zeph.1:17). Also, the closing thought with Jezebel was that memory of her would perish. There would be no grave marker or monument, or even a shameful heap of stones, as in Absalom's case, to bring her existence back to memory. Thus Rizpah's work was as much for honor as it was for love.

## THE TIME OF THIS EVENT

The first verse of 2 Samuel 21 lays special emphasis on the fact that the famine occurred during David's reign. Later special emphasis is made of the time of the execution

of Saul's sons. Why did this plague not occur during Saul's reign, and why is "the start of the barley harvest" repeated (v.9)? This would be the time of Passover, and especially the offering of firstfruits, which commenced the barley harvest. Andrew Jukes has noted that the time of this event was the time of firstfruits when Christ arose (2 Sam.21:9).<sup>1</sup> Thus the seven sons of *Sheol* (same as *Saul*), or the fullness of the reign of death fell on the day of Christ's resurrection. Death's reign began with Adam, and was strengthened by the law of Moses, but the full measure of death's reign was surpassed when God raised His *Beloved* (same as *David*) Son, Who will eventually abolish death (Rom. 5:14-17; 1 Cor.15:26).

#### A SIGN FROM YAHWEH

Why were the bodies of Saul's seven sons left hanging in shame? It has been noted that the giving up of the men was done with respect to requirements of the law, but the law also required the hanged to be taken down at the end of the day (Deut.21:22,23). These bodies were left until rain fell on them, showing an end to the drought, which had caused the famine. They waited for a sign from Yahweh that the famine was lifted. The former rains fell after the harvest at the end of the long, dry summer. They restored moisture to the ground and softened it for planting. The latter rains were the heavier rains of the *winter* or, *rainy season*, which supplied the moisture for the maturing of the grains and fruits. Though we are not told specifically when the rain fell, there is no indication that it came early during the normally dry summer months. The rain appears to have come after the time of wheat harvest. It would have been highly unusual if it had come before or during the harvest (*cf* 1 Sam.12:16-18). Rizpah's vigil may well have

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1. A. Jukes, RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, p.36.

lasted six months. That is the approximate time between firstfruits, in the first month, and the seventh month when the wheat harvest and final ingathering was completed. The seventh month held the day of propitiatory shelters, followed five days later by the festival of tabernacles.

This sacrifice of seven men was kept from desecration, or kept holy by Rizpah. Rizpah means *glowing coal* and is so translated in Isaiah 6:6, speaking of a live coal from the altar. Rizpah's devotion shows that the fire of this judgment on Saul's house was sustained until the latter harvest was complete and the blessings of God rained down. The sacrifice of Christ, which defeated the power of death, will be effective and honored until His work of heading up all is completed, and until death is abolished.

#### TWO MEPHIBOSHETHS

Special attention is drawn to the name *Mephibosheth*. Like the goats on the day of atonement, and the doves for the leper's cleansing (Leviticus chapters 14 and 16), one Mephibosheth died, and one Mephibosheth lived. The doubles represent Christ. One represents Him in His death, and one represents Him in resurrection. *Mephibosheth* means *dispeller of shame*, and *Armoni* is said to mean *elevated*. Christ was lifted up in shame, like the serpent on Moses' pole, to deliver us from sin and death and to roll away our reproach. And it is by His lifting up in resurrection that He completes deliverance. Christ is the true Dispeller of shame. He was shamed and humiliated in being made sin for us, but from the time of His death forward, He received honor. He received the burial of a king in a new unsoiled tomb. From there He rose to be seated at the right hand of God. And the love of the Father honors His obedient Son, making His work effective until sin and death are no more.

J. Phillip Scranton

## TRINITARIANISM AND HERESY

### **Question:**

I have been personally apprised by a theologian friend that "the Concordant Publishing Concern is a non-Christian cult which, besides being universalists, are also sponsors of the Arian heresy." What is your answer to this serious charge? As the Athanasian Creed [381 A.D.] declares, "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance . . . . So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God . . . . [and, the catholic faith further affirms that] they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."

### **Answer:**

WHILE we, indeed, are not Trinitarians, neither do we identify ourselves with any other movement or figure in church history, whether Arius or anyone else. Yet if our views should indeed be similar in some particular respect to those of any certain historical personage, we cannot see how this speaks either for our views or against them.

If any certain group of believers is heretical according to the standards of some other believer or group of believers,

this is a matter of little significance in itself. Any appeals whatsoever to man—not to mention, of all things, appeals to the majority of men (albeit of “Christian” men)—expose their own poverty and shame.

For what it is worth, however, the Concordant teaching concerning Christ, evidently, is at least similar to that of the Libyan theologian Arius (c. 256-336) in certain basic respects. Yet only a little is known concerning his views, and that mostly through the writings of his adversaries. Hardly any Arian apologetics have been preserved.<sup>1</sup>

I would suggest to you that it is not a matter of much importance that a traditional theologian should see fit to denominate us a “non-Christian cult” while claiming besides that we are “heretics.” Many such theologians claim that the ecclesia is confined to those who embrace the doctrine of the Trinity. Since, according to these theologians, non-Trinitarians are excluded from the ecclesia, they therefore use the word “cult” simply as a default term for all worshipers of God who, by their standards, are not in Christ.

Obviously, we are indeed heretics in relation to orthodoxy; but it is just as true that the orthodox are heretics in relation to ourselves. Neither of these facts in themselves, however, are very significant. This is because what is important is not how any certain commonly-approved versus commonly-disapproved believers may view one another, but how the teachings of each respective group truly accord with the Scriptures themselves.

Believers, or “Christians,” are those who are believing the evangel that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3,4). Even this simple testimony may be interpreted in

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1. Louis Berkhof, *THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1937).

more than one sense; but it would simply be incorrect to say that those who may indeed interpret this declaration of the evangel somewhat differently than ourselves therefore do not *believe* the evangel—that they do not accept and are not convinced by its testimony.

The many and varied issues concerning the being and nature of God, however, are far more detailed and complex than this brief and simple declaration of the evangel. Yet if men are prone to misunderstand the evangel, how much more so are they apt to misunderstand the Scripture's testimony on such august themes as the nature of God or the sense in which the title "God" may properly be ascribed to Christ.

Even if one should be mistaken in his understanding *about* God, this does not mean that he is an unbeliever as to the testimony of His *evangel*. One may well be called of God and convinced as to the testimony of "Christ crucified," while at the same time being persuaded of a wide variety of profane prattlings, not yet having been granted the especial blessing of a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *realization* of God (*cf* Eph.1:16).

The English "cult" is from the Latin *cultus*, which speaks of care, cultivation, or worship. By extension, it has come to be used of devoted, generally obsessive, attachment to a person or principle, especially if that person or principle is presented (or received) as an *authority*. In practice, however—quite apart from any lexical significance—"cult" has simply become a term of stigmatization and derision, even as a term of convenience by which one may justify oneself for dismissing the beliefs of any and all who have been branded thus.

The Concordant Publishing Concern consistently repudiates all human authority, including its own. While, obviously, like any ministry, our ministry had a founder and still today has teachers, few indeed, even among our-

selves, have been guilty of paying excessive heed to them or to their teachings. Our problem is rather the opposite. Because we, in fact, do not practice any sort of authoritarianism, some, even among our friends, do not carefully consider our findings, while still others reject them out of hand. Nevertheless, we seek to maintain fellowship with all such ones.

Unless a believer should be given over to some type of uncleanness of the flesh, we wish to maintain fellowship with him. If he is, indeed, invoking the name of the Lord and seems to be doing so out of a clean heart, we seek to pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace together with him (*cf* 2 Tim.2:22).

If it seems to us that he is persuaded of false teachings even on fundamental issues, we do not conclude that he is therefore no part of the *ecclesia*. Accordingly, we would be disappointed in anyone among us who saw fit to characterize him as lost, unsaved, or the like, and especially so of anyone who saw fit to go so far as to stigmatize him as "cultic," simply because he did not concur in our conclusions from Scripture.

Truth does not need the help of human authority. We should be more interested in *being* correct than in *calling* ourselves "the correct ones" (i.e., "the orthodox") while making sure that we are received and esteemed by men as such. "Let no one be boasting in man . . ." (1 Cor.3:21), then, remains good advice.

In an era of apostasy, surely we are unwise to suppose that the prevailing, "orthodox" teachings are almost certainly correct. The majority may be and sometimes are correct in any certain point. (There are certainly innumerable false and foolish minority views.) But to suggest—at least when it comes to "the fundamentals"—that all who are intelligent, educated, honest, sincere, and consecrated by the spirit of God, are those who are of the

majority position, is as conceited and unrealistic as it is false and fallacious.

This is all to say that—whoever is correct on the points at issue in the Trinitarian controversy—in any case, those who acknowledge those holding the view opposite to their own as nonetheless their brethren in Christ are correct in this. Whatever their opinions on the Trinity, those who believe that Christ died for their sins and rose again on the third day, who say from the heart that Jesus is Lord while deeming Him the sole Mediator between God and mankind, are not unbelievers, but believers.

#### “THERE IS ONE GOD, THE FATHER”

The Scriptural expressions for “God” do not signify either supremacy or unoriginatedness of being. And, these terms may be used either in a relative sense or in an absolute sense—even when used in a literal sense and in a faithful sense. “God” is a title; it speaks of Subjectorhood or Placership; it says nothing about either supremacy or unoriginatedness of being.

We judge that in an absolute sense, “there is no other God except *One*” (1 Cor.8:4). This is because we believe that “the Head of Christ is *God*” (1 Cor.11:3), and also because we believe that our God and Father is “the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph.1:17). We believe, then, that the Supreme God (*cf* Deut.32:8; Lam.3:38) is the One Whom the apostle Paul terms “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.1:3), Whom Christ Himself terms “the only *true* God” (John 17:3).

While we believe “even if so be that there are many being termed ‘GODS,’ whether in heaven or on earth, even as [there is a sense in which] there are many gods and many lords, nevertheless for us there is *one* God, *the Father*, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, *and* one Lord, Jesus Christ,



through Whom all is, and we through Him. But not in all is there this knowledge" (1 Cor.8:5-7a).

#### INHERING IN THE FORM OF GOD

We believe, inasmuch as Christ is "the Image of the invisible God" (2 Cor.4:4), and the Emblem of His assumption (Heb.1:3), that, representatively speaking, Christ *is* God (i.e., even the Supreme God), for He unfolds Him to us (John 1:18).

Accordingly, we believe that, "in [Christ] is all created (Col.1:16), even as that, as the Word of God, "all came into being through it" (i.e., through Him, Who is figured here as "the Word"; John 1:1).

The reason why we render the phrases in question in John 1:1,2 as we do ("The word was toward God, and God was the word. This was in the beginning toward God. All came into being through it [or, through "the same"] . . ."), is because our translation closely reflects what the Greek says: "THE SAYING was toward the God AND God WAS THE SAYING this WAS IN ORIGINAL TOWARD THE God ALL THROUGH SAME BECAME . . ."

We believe that Christ, rather than being the Supreme God, is instead (idiomatically expressed), "God's creative Original" (Rev.3:14), which is to say (literally), "THE ORIGINAL OF-THE CREATION OF-THE God." Since God is the One out of Whom *all* is (1 Cor.8:6 Rom.11:36), it follows that Christ Himself came to be, out of God.

Hebrews 3:2 accords with this truth in declaring that "the Apostle and Chief Priest of our avowal, Jesus, [is He] Who is faithful to Him Who makes Him." It should be noted that the AV rendering here, "appointed," is gratuitous; the Greek signifies "do," or "make"; the AV rendering itself for this word, 356 times, is "do," and 114 times, "make." The context does not confine itself to any office which Christ holds (to which His appointment could be

made) or even address itself to such a concept, even though such a thought may be included as well. A straightforward reading of the text simply says that Jesus is faithful to Him Who *makes* Him; and, in any case, this is the only objective way to translate the passage.

On the other hand, we freely say of Christ, "my Lord and my God" (John 20:28), for so He is, though not in a supreme sense but in a sovereign sense. Christ, "is *Sovereign*," (Col.1:18); that is, He has the highest place of delegated authority, under God—*His* God (Heb.1:9) and Head.

It is, then, as to the Sovereign under the Supreme that we understand the Father saying to the Son, "Thy throne, O God . . ." (Heb.1:8). Similarly, the apostle Paul speaks of the advent of Christ, as "the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour" (Titus 2:13). Thus, and literally so, we too are anticipating the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Just as we believe that *God* is our Saviour and *Lord*, we also believe that *Christ* is our Saviour and *God*. Obviously, however, we do not speak in the identical sense when we say these respective things.

Further, we believe that Christ, "being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God" (Phil.2:6). We would only point out that equality is not identity, and that equality, rather than constituting a proof of identity, instead constitutes a proof of its preclusion.

Likewise, we believe that in Christ "the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily" (Col.2:9). The form we render "Deity," more strictly is GODNESS.

The rendering "*Godhead*," as in the AV, cannot be supported, for the Greek form neither expresses nor entails any thought of either headship or corporateness. Though it is awkward to express in English, the idea seems to be that, in Christ, the entire complement (i.e., the entire array) of "the GODNESS [of God] is *dwelling bodily*." The claims,

then, affirmed by Trinitarians concerning Christ (namely, supreme Godhood and unoriginatedness of being), are by no means proved by these passages.

#### VARIED USAGES OF "HOLY SPIRIT"

"The *holy spirit* of God" (Eph.4:30), is just that, the *consecrated, imperceptible power of God*—that especially devoted divine power by means of which God effects His most august workings and achieves His most glorious accomplishments. The expression "the holy spirit," is sometimes used as a *figure* of close association for God Himself, His holy spirit *representing* the One Whose it is. While this expression is often used literally as well, in order to speak of God's holy, imperceptible power itself, in some cases it appears instead as a figure of *personification* according to which "personal" qualities are assigned unto it, even as the Scriptures sometimes assign figurative "personhood" to other things, such as Sin, Death, Righteousness, and Grace. In no case are any of these things literal persons, but rather they, in a figure, are spoken of *as if* they were persons.

#### PARTICULARS OF TRINITARIANISM

The notion of the Trinity is that God, Who is one Being, exists eternally in three "persons." "Persons" is not intended to be understood literally for the idea of a plurality of actual, discrete beings, but as a representative expression for the technical term "hypostases," by which is intended the (three) essential modes in which God continually subsists. Each "person" or "hypostasis" is viewed as a *sine qua non* (i.e., essential element; Latin: "without which not") of Deity, each one being uncreated and of the same essence or nature.

Each hypostatic mode (i.e., essential way in which God exists) is marked by a certain "personal" quality, being

denominated, respectively, "the Father, "the Son," and "the Holy Spirit."

It follows from this, however, since each of these three hypostases are modes *of* God, that they cannot, either individually or collectively, literally *be* God.

It is vain for anyone holding this view to claim that either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit are *literally* or *actually* God, for their own position asserts that these are modes *of* God, which precludes their being God. Solidity, liquidity, and gaseousness are ways (or modes) in which matter exists; they are not matter itself.

One who holds this tri-part, hypostatic modes (i.e., Trinitarian) position, cannot legitimately claim that Jesus is literally God; instead, he must acknowledge that Jesus is literally *not* God, but instead some type of inscrutable mode, apart from which God cannot exist. Trinitarians are contradicting their own position when they affirm that "Jesus is God," insisting that they mean this neither figuratively or relatively, but literally and absolutely. Pious claims that (1) Christ *is* God, and (2) that Christ is a hypostasis *of* God, are not enigmatic mystery, they are rather plain contradiction.

Say what they will, the Trinitarians' actual position entails it being true that (1) Christ is *not* God; that (2) Christ is *not* a Being; that (3) Christ, albeit a divine essentiality, is not an actual Person at all, but only a *mode* or "personalized" *way* in which God "subsists."

Let us neither be afraid of man nor of his dreadful dogmas. Instead of contending for the doctrine of "the holy Trinity" and denouncing, or even denying a place in Christ to those who must beg to differ, let us simply be rejoicing in the Lord, being invigorated in Him and in the might of His strength. May our only creed be, "I believe God," while relying on the living God for enlightenment and assurance of understanding.

J.R.C.

## THROUGH JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH

WITH THE WORDS "Yet now" in Romans 3:21, Paul leads us to revelations that stand in contrast to the grave facts concerning the unrighteousness of humanity and the righteous judgment of God presented in Romans 1:18-3:20. Picking up the theme of Romans 1:14-17, he now focuses on the evangel as it manifests the righteousness of God.

### ROMANS 3:22

This evangel of God appears before us in Romans 3:22 with rich and profound expressions. It is worded in 1 Corinthians 15:3 in plain words: *Christ died for our sins*. It is expanded in Romans 5:8,9 as a message of God's love commended to us in Christ's death for sinners, who are justified in His blood and will be saved from indignation through Him. But now at the very commencement of this momentous discourse on the evangel the apostle presents the message in terms of God's righteousness manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ. This, as we shall soon see, is the basis of the sinner's justification (Rom.3:24) and the display of God's own righteousness as the Justifier (Rom.3:25,26).

Even as we discern God's love in His giving up of His Son for us while we are still sinners, so we perceive His righteousness in this same operation of God carried out through the faithfulness of His beloved Son.

The evangel speaks of the *death* of Christ. In Romans 3:22 this is expressed by the words "the *faith* of Jesus Christ." In this message concerning the humbling of God's Son, Jesus

Christ our Lord, there is a revelation of God's righteousness not manifested earlier in the pages of Scripture, though attested by types and foreshadows. The importance of this is impressed upon us by a comparison of Romans 3:22 with Romans 1:17 where the apostle introduced these remarkable revelations to us, only to interrupt them by the long dissertation of Romans 1:18-3:20. He now resumes these thoughts with clearly parallel expressions:

In [the evangel] *God's righteousness is being revealed, out of faith . . . .*

[Apart from law] *a righteousness of God is manifest . . . through Jesus Christ's faith . . . .*

Romans 3:22 not only stands in parallel to 1:17, but also, as an essential part of the entire passage of Romans 3:21-28, it stands in contrast to Romans 3:19,20. Where Paul had spoken of the *righteous verdict of God*, he now speaks of the *righteousness of God*. Where he had spoken of the entire world *becoming subject* to the just verdict of God, he now speaks of the righteousness of God *becoming manifest*. Where he had spoken of no justification *through works of law*, he now speaks of God's righteousness as a work of justification *through the faith of Jesus Christ*.

#### YET A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

God's righteousness is emphasized here by repetition: *a righteousness of God is manifest, . . . yet a righteousness of God . . . .*

This righteousness does not overlook the fact that all are under sin (Rom.3:9). Law makes it undeniable that human beings are sinners. "For through law is the recognition of sin" (Rom.3:20). But Romans 3:21,22 faces that reality concerning human sin with the message of the evangel of God in which God's righteousness is revealed as a work of justification. The words of law make the human

failure to keep the law an obvious and open revelation (*cf* Rom.1:18), but the words of the evangel direct attention to God's righteousness in dealing with human sin, in putting an end to sin and righteously bringing about the justification of the sinner. This is accomplished and made manifest through the faithful obedience of Jesus Christ to the death of the cross.

This is to say that in giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all, Christ Jesus carried out the purpose for which He came into the world: to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15; 2:5,6). This is to say, that by means of His dying for sinners, Christ Jesus established justification and deliverance (Rom.3:24) in such a way that the perfection and glory of God's own righteousness is brought to light.

Romans 3:21,22, however, does not immediately draw attention to the sinners' justification. The subject of righteousness *from* God is not yet directly in view. That will come before us starting in verse 24. But we must not rush ahead to that which concerns ourselves before we come to appreciate the foundation of our justification. God's righteousness is what lies behind justification as its source, which means that our justification in the blood of Christ is righteous with that perfect righteousness which altogether reflects the character of the righteous God.

This is revealed in the evangel, which, in the present context might be described as the evangel of justification by the righteous God.

#### SALVATION

This evangel is called "the evangel of our salvation" in Ephesians 1:13. We have noted the testimony of the law and the prophets concerning God's righteousness that, it not only calls for judgment, but it leads to salvation. By works of law, no flesh can be brought to a standing of righteousness in God's sight. But the righteousness of God

as made manifest in the evangel leads to such a salvation! It demands such a salvation! It may seem incongruous to us, but the evangel is a message that intimately joins God's work of the salvation of sinners with God's righteousness. It is Christ's death for sinners which is the channel through which sinners are brought to justification, and through which God's righteousness as that quality of God which effects justification can be put on display.

#### WHOSE FAITH?

Once we understand that the apostle refers to God's own righteousness being made manifest, we can readily see that this cannot be made known by means of *our* faith. Our believing is flawed, even that of the most mature of believers. Justification is not gained by what we do, as Romans 3:20 has made clear. The evangel Paul is bringing declares that human works of law for justification are replaced, not by human works of faith, but by that great work of faith undertaken and completed by Jesus Christ. Human faith is important; it is the means by which we receive that which Christ has gained for us. But our faith is not brought into the picture here until later in verse 22 after the message concerning Christ Jesus has been set before us.

God's perfect righteousness in gaining our salvation can be seen only as it is manifested in the faith of Jesus Christ in His steadfast reliance on God's word and His faith-obedience to the death of the cross. The evangel concerns Jesus Christ and what He did for sinners. It is in this message that God's righteousness is revealed.

Hence Paul connects *faith* with *Jesus Christ* in the grammatical construction known as the "genitive case." This often corresponds to the English "possessive case," telling us what the subject *has*. Jesus Christ Himself has faith, and His faith is defined for us in His giving of Himself to the death of the cross for such sinners as we are.



This was the subject of an article by Brother A. E. Knoch in the November 1938 issue of *Unsearchable Riches*. What follows is excerpted and slightly adapted from that study:

### JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH

"Faith is generally supposed to be restricted to the saints, and quite out of the question in connection with Christ, notwithstanding the fact that He is hailed as the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith (Heb.12:2). I do not remember ever reading of Jesus Christ's faith until I began to read my Greek text. Then it impressed me very much in my studies of the third of Romans. Nevertheless I was rather diffident in regard to it and said little until I was forced to translate this phrase in the version. Then the question arose, am I mistaken as to the force of the genitive here? It does not seem possible that it denotes the faith of others in Him, as usually rendered, but perhaps it denotes the faith, or body of belief, which is derived from Him, not His own believing.

"But it is not a translator's duty to interpret, yet he ought to preserve distinctions, especially in connection with such an important matter as faith, so there was no way but to bring over the genitive into the English, leaving the student to decide this by means of consistent renderings . . .

"The third of Romans, especially the paragraph from verses 21 to 28, is of the highest importance to the understanding of justification . . . Either [the faith in view in Romans 3:22 refers to Jesus Christ's] faith, that is, it belongs to Him (which is the usual sense of the genitive), or it comes from Him, though this would ordinarily demand more definite expression, by means of a connective, as *from* or *out of* . . .

"The confusion which exists among translators should convince us that some false notion is back of it, and should open our minds to the fact that our Lord, as a Man, had

confidence in God (Matt. 27:43), hence is the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith, by far the greatest Example of faith in the annals of mankind. And His faith is the basis of justification just as our faith is the channel through which it is received and enjoyed.”<sup>1</sup>

#### FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

The context of Romans shows that the faith being spoken of is focused on what God has said. “For what is the scripture saying? Now ‘Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness’” (Rom.4:3; based on Gen.15:6). When God said, “A father of many nations have I appointed you,” Abraham “faced” this word and believed it “of the God Who is vivifying the dead and calling what is not as if it were” (Rom.4:17). This promise of God was not doubted in unbelief, but Abraham “was invigorated by faith, giving glory to God, being fully assured also, that, what He has promised, He is able to do also” (Rom.4:20,21).

But this assurance of Abraham was eroded by circumstances. Consequently, as the years passed without any realization of the promised fatherhood, Abraham’s faith that “God is able to do what He has promised” was altered to something like this: “God will do what He has promised when I help Him out.” Hence he hearkened to Sarai’s voice and fathered a son through Hagar (Gen.16:1-4).

Even with Abraham, who is set forth as the great human example of faith, there were times when faith faltered. Where God’s word is believed despite the evidence of what

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1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.29, pages 375-382; see also the articles, “The Faith of Jesus Christ,” *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.61, pages 12-26; “The Faith of Christ Jesus,” *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.82, pages 45-48; and “Through the Faith of Christ,” *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.87, pages 226-234. For a contemporary study of this theme from a theological perspective see *THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST*, by Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002).

is seen to the contrary, the believing may still become weakened as the visible evidence against God's promise becomes stronger and stronger. Because the English language distinguishes between "faith" and "faithfulness" we might say that Abraham had strong faith but was not fully faithful to what he believed. But this is making a distinction where there really is no distinction. If Abraham was not fully faithful, his faith was not perfect. To believe what God has said is to be faithful to what God has said, and the experiences of life, day in and day out, inevitably expose the weaknesses of human faith by means of human unfaithfulness.

Hence, in the language of Scripture, both Hebrew and Greek, the word "faith" implies both believing and remaining faithful to what is believed. For human beings both faith and faithfulness are imperfect, or rather, for human beings faith/faithfulness (a single concept) *is* imperfect. But for Jesus Christ faith/faithfulness is without flaw, without weakness of any sort.

With Jesus Christ faith is faithfulness, and it is so without the slightest defect. But does His faithfulness truly involve faith? That is, does the fact that He endured the cross and gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for all, dying for the salvation of sinners, involve an act of believing without literally seeing, as our act of believing must be? As the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith, Jesus, as He endured the cross and despised its shame, was believing that the joy lying before Him would come (Heb.12:2), and He was doing so without seeing. He suffered great agonies, but, in faith, He declared in prayer before His Father, "Not as I will, but as Thou!" (Matt.26:39).

#### WHAT DID HE BELIEVE?

What did Jesus Christ believe? As with Abraham, and as with us as well, His faith was centered in what God has

said. He faced the declarations of God concerning Himself and was invigorated by faith, giving glory to God. He lived "on every declaration of God" (Luke 4:4; *cp* Matt.4:4). In doing this, He needed to abide faithfully even upon those words which spoke of His sufferings and death, for that was God's purposed pathway to His exaltation (*cf* Phil.2:9,10).

The necessity of His humbling and suffering and shame, culminating in the loss of fellowship with and spiritual empowerment by His God and Father for three fearful hours on the cross (*cf* Matt.27:45,46), and then His death and entombment, had all been revealed from Genesis and throughout the sacred writings entrusted to Israel. The glories would come *after* such sufferings (1 Peter 1:11) and could not be separated from them.

The hurting of the heel of the promised Seed (Gen. 3:15), the making of clothing for Adam and Eve from the skin of a slain animal (Gen.3:21), God's heeding of Abel's approach present from the firstlings of the flock (Gen.4:4), and all the slaying of living creatures as offerings, described in the law given at Sinai, spoke to Him of what the God of all righteousness had purposed for Him.

The words of David also spoke of what our Lord faced in His humiliation: "My El! My El! Why have You forsaken me?" This psalm also voiced God's *answer* in terms of the praise and glorification of Him (Psa.22:1,21c-31). Again the words of the prophets spoke of what was set before Him: "... so ruined was His appearance more than any man ... smitten of Elohim and humbled" (Isa.52:14; 53:4).

Jesus Himself testified to this before He was crucified: "Thenceforth begins Jesus to show His disciples that He *must* be coming away into Jerusalem and to be suffering much from the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and to be killed, and the third day to be roused" (Matt. 16:21). Afterwards He spoke to those with Him on the road to Emmaus, "and beginning from Moses and from all

the prophets, He interprets to them, in all the scriptures, that which concerns Himself" (Luke 24:27). His faith was centered in, and He was faithful to all that God had said concerning Him.

### JESUS CHRIST

As we have noted many times already in this study of Romans, the evangel of God concerns His Son, *Jesus Christ*, our Lord (Rom.1:1-4). It is here at the beginning of Romans 3:22 that this is first made specific (it was anticipated by the words "out of faith" in Romans 1:17). The evangel of God concerns Jesus Christ as the One Who believed that God had a glorious and joyous outcome in view in not sparing His Son, but giving Him up for us all.

The Name *Jesus* refers to Him as the Saviour, Who is and was and shall be, "Yahweh-Saviour." But now it goes beyond its significance in relation to the nation of Israel and reaches to His revelation as the One Who gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Tim.2:6). The evangel concerns God's Son, Who is Jesus, Who makes evident the saving character of divine righteousness.

Furthermore, the Son of God as He is now presented by means of His faith is entitled "Christ," or the *Anointed-One*. He is given authority and power by God for the work of salvation spoken of in the evangel. The power of God for the salvation of sinners and for the revelation of God's righteousness in the salvation of sinners is centered in God's Son as the Saviour Who is anointed of God. The evangel concerns God's Son, Who shed His blood, for sinners, as the Anointed Saviour.

### THE VALUE OF JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH

It is not simply the fact that God makes Himself known through His Son, Jesus Christ, that is so astounding. But the fact that this manifestation comes by means of Christ's

faithfulness in dying for sinners, and by this means only, is what takes our breath away. We tremble in view of this tremendous act of faith of our Lord. It must not be degraded into a mere matter of martyrdom. It was that which was necessary for the display of the righteousness of God as the Justifier of sinners. This most critical work which is for the justification of sinners has been done. This is the power of the evangel for our salvation every day in our lives, in our hearts and our walk, in assurance and expectation and reliance on the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind. Our joy and peace rest upon His faith which was faithfully heeded and kept.

The value of the faith of Jesus Christ lies deeply in the way in which it brings God's righteousness to light. It is a work of faith that covers the entire ground of human sin and enmity, that which is apparent and that which is hidden from view. No sin and no sinner can be left outside the realm of the divine righteousness being revealed in the evangel.

The faith of Jesus Christ calls for nothing less.

D.H.H.

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#### LEILA WATTS

June 19, 2005 marked the end of an extended period of physical suffering for our sister, Leila Coleman Watts, but also the close of a life blessed with an ever growing appreciation of God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus. She was 80 years old. A talented musician and artist, an enthusiastic teacher and writer, Leila was given a keen interest in God's Word from her youth. Most noteworthy of all, for us, is the fact that she came to know that she had nothing to boast in before God. We join her husband, Harry, and all her family in mourning her death, but not as others sorrow who have no expectation. For the Lord Himself will be descending with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and we will all be snatched away together to meet Him in the air, and thus always be together with Him.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 2005  
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-SIX

EDITORIAL

THE WORD of God is *God's* word. It is what *He* has to say. The time and circumstances under which the various portions were written must be kept in view, but His Word is always beneficial to the believer.

We should seek to know what God has said as accurately as possible so that its profit may increase. The Concordant Version is a human effort to translate the ancient manuscripts of Hebrew (and, for a small portion, Aramaic) and Greek into our own language. It endeavors to reflect the original expressions accurately. This itself is difficult, but it is made easier by the "concordant method" of translation which examines the scriptural terms in their contexts and establishes English standards for each term before translating.

We have also given considerable effort to uncover the most likely original wordings of passages where there is evidence of errors developed through the years of copying the text by hand. This involves a certain amount of subjectivity, especially as contextual considerations are also taken into account, and the results should be treated as tentative. Yet we do not feel we should shirk the effort to establish a more reliable textual basis for our translation while still observing the "concordant" guidelines of consistency.

THE CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE LATTER PROPHETS is now in print. The first editions of the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel and the "Minor Prophets" have been available for many years, but these have been re-examined and revised for this new printing. The book of Jeremiah had been published only in facsimile sheets of typewritten pages, so that its inclusion here is a first edition in typeset print. In accord with the theme of this editorial, the following familiar pas-

sage from Jeremiah (15:16), as we now render it, may offer further insight into its values by its fresh terminology and expression, even though the basic thought does not differ essentially from other English translations:

**Your words were found, and I have been devouring them;**

**+Thus Your word 'becomes to me ' the elation  
and ' the rejoicing of my heart.**

The verb "devour" represents the Hebrew word for "eat," so that we could have used the more common term as in the AV. In this case, however, we chose to use a variant English term that may bring out the emotion of the context. Either "eat" or "devour" is available for our Version, for neither term is used for any other Hebrew word. But we use "devour" where the context suggests an intensity of the action, in this case, an intensity of need for and appreciation of God's Word.

The CV also expresses the continuing process of the action by using an "-ing" form of the verb. We use "I have been devouring" rather than "I have devoured." This reflects the form of the Hebrew verb, which is sometimes called the "incomplete" (more commonly, the "imperfect"). Jeremiah speaks of a continuing activity (of the past) which was not yet completed. The verb "become" is also in this "incomplete" form as indicated by the vertical line before the word. In this case, we felt that "is becoming" would be awkward English, and that "becomes" conveys the thought just as well.

The Hebrew word which we translate "elation" is rendered "joy" in the AV. Again the thought is not too much different, but the less common term, "elation," may be more striking and reflective of Jeremiah's exuberance. The CV uses "elation" for every occurrence of this Hebrew term, while the AV uses "gladness" and "mirth" besides "joy." Also the CV does not use "elation" for any other Hebrew



term, while the AV uses “joy” for several other Hebrew terms that are unrelated in form.

As for the word rendered “rejoicing,” which is used here by both the CV and AV, the CV does use the variant “amusement” for this Hebrew term in Proverbs 15:21. In turn, the word “amusement” is not used for any other Hebrew word in the CV. However, the AV renders this Hebrew word by several English words besides “rejoicing,” including the words “mirth” and “gladness” which were used for the former Hebrew word, as well as “joyfulness” and “pleasure.”

These two Hebrew words used here by Jeremiah are often used together in order to emphasize the sense of delight. (They both are used in Jeremiah 7:34, 16:9 and 25:10, in association with wedding festivities.) They are similar in meaning, but any special nuances of meaning in each term can only be discovered by consistency in translation.

I have been especially enjoying Jeremiah 15:16 as it pictures our Lord in His years in the likeness of humanity. It was Jeremiah’s privilege to be a type of Christ, as many other personages in the Scriptures have been. Thus Jesus said to the Adversary, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, “Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration going out through the mouth of God” (Matt.4:4). There in the wilderness and in physical weakness, our Lord was certainly *devouring* God’s Word.

Could we say that the Lord was also *finding* His Father’s words filled with *elation* and *rejoicing* for His needs during this great probing by the Adversary? Indeed we can. The declarations of God were His sustenance for delight and satisfaction. Furthermore, both Deuteronomy and Matthew express an imperative thought by a future tense in this passage. The Hebrew verb in Deuteronomy 8:3 is an “incomplete” form, and the Greek translates accordingly: *shall be living*. This use of a future tense as a command

appears often in Scripture. Even some of the ten "commandments" are expressed as though they were prophecies of the future, such as: "You shall not come to have other elohim in preference to Me . . . ." Here God's words have a double meaning. In the immediate and relative sense they are instructions of the law, but in the final and absolute sense they are promises of what will be so. Not only was Jesus' life centered in the declarations of God, but every human being will come into that joy eventually.

To center on such rich words was giving Jesus great strength for endurance in this experience of evil. Indeed God's Word was elation and rejoicing to Him.

Our readers may well know something of this experience, though surely under lesser evils than those which Jesus faced. God's Word is filled with examples of and testimony to the fact that God brings good out of evil (see Brother Knoch's comments on justification in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*, starting on page 215). Such men as Jeremiah and Job and Paul suffered much evil which God works together for good, through Jesus Christ.

Indeed, the Scriptures are greatly nutritious for us daily. It is our hope that by its freshness of translation as well as its features of consistency, The CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE LATTER PROPHETS will aid in conveying added values to our fellow believers' lives. "For whatever was written before, was written for this teaching of ours, that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures we may have expectation" (Rom.14:4). We all live in a wicked eon which is packed full with distractions from things of consequence. We need His Word.

"All scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act" (2 Tim.3:16,17).

D.H.H.

## THE SONS OF ABRAHAM

**25** + Abraham <sup>l</sup>again + <sup>l</sup>took a wife; + her name was Keturah. <sup>2</sup> + She <sup>b</sup>bore <sup>h</sup>him <sup>h</sup>Zimran, + <sup>h</sup>Jokshan, + <sup>h</sup>Medan, + <sup>h</sup>Midian, + <sup>h</sup>Ishbak and <sup>h</sup>Shuach. <sup>3</sup> + Jokshan begot <sup>h</sup>Sheba and <sup>h</sup>Dedan. + The sons of Dedan became the Ashurim and the Letushim and the Leummim. <sup>4</sup> + The sons of Midian were Ephah, + Ephher, + Hanoch, + Abida, and Eldaah. All these were Keturah's sons. <sup>5</sup> + Abraham had <sup>l</sup>given <sup>e</sup>everything <sup>w</sup>he <sup>h</sup>had to <sup>7</sup>his son<sup>nc</sup> Isaac. <sup>6</sup> + But to the sons of the concubines <sup>w</sup>that Abraham <sup>h</sup>had, Abraham gave gifts and <sup>i</sup>while he was <sup>fr</sup>still alive <sup>l</sup>sent them <sup>on</sup>away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.

<sup>7</sup> And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life <sup>w</sup>that he had lived, 175 years. <sup>8</sup> + Abraham <sup>l</sup>breathed his last and <sup>l</sup>died in a good and greyhaired age, old and satisfied <sup>7</sup>with days<sup>ncs</sup>, and was <sup>l</sup>gathered to his <sup>=</sup>people. <sup>9</sup> + His sons Isaac and Ishmael <sup>l</sup>entombed <sup>h</sup>him <sup>h</sup>in the cave of Machpelah, <sup>w</sup>adjoining Mamre, <sup>h</sup>in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, <sup>10</sup> the field <sup>w</sup>that Abraham had bought from <sup>h</sup>the sons of Heth. There<sup>d</sup> Abraham was entombed, and also his wife Sarah. <sup>11</sup> And it <sup>l</sup>came to pass after the death of Abraham +that Elohim <sup>l</sup>blessed <sup>h</sup>Isaac his son. + Isaac was dwelling <sup>wi</sup>by the well Lahai-roi.

<sup>12</sup> + These are the genealogical records of Abraham's son Ishmael whom Sarah's <sup>E</sup>Egyptian maidservant Hagar bore to Abraham. <sup>13</sup> + These are the names of Ishmael's sons, <sup>i</sup> their names <sup>h</sup>in accord with their genealogical records: Ishmael's firstborn, Nebaioth; +then Kedar, + Adbeel and Mibsam, <sup>14</sup> + Mishma, + Dumah and Massa, <sup>15</sup> Hadad, + Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. <sup>16</sup> These'

are the **sons of Ishmael, and these are their names 'by their hamlets and 'by their nomadic domiciles: twelve princes according to their clans.** <sup>17</sup> **And these are the years of Ishmael's life, 137 years; 'then he 'breathed his last and 'died and was 'gathered to his =people.** <sup>18</sup> + **They 'tabernacled from Havilah as far as Shur, which is adjoining Egypt, 'as you come to<sup>d</sup> Assyria. He fell in <sup>on</sup>against the face of all his brothers.**

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#### KETURAH'S SONS

Abraham's sons by Keturah, added to Ishmael and Isaac, makes eight sons in all for Abraham. But these were not included in the promise, which was confined to Isaac. The line of Jacob, with his twelve sons, were given names which were prophetic of the future, whereas the names of the sons of Keturah seem to have been given later in life, as descriptive of the character or accomplishment. They are better called appellations. Jacob, the Heel, had both kinds of names. He exposed his character even at birth, when he took hold of Esau's heel. But he was given a star-seed name at Peniel, when it was changed to Israel.

#### KETURAH'S GRANDSONS

The firstborn of Keturah, Zimran, does not seem to have carried on the line, for no sons of his are on record here. The second son, however, Jokshan, had three. Sheba was his firstborn, then Dedan, and this line is continued through him. Keturah's great-grandsons were probably forefathers of Arabian tribes.

Midian, the fourth son of Keturah, had five sons, whose names are important enough to have a place in divine revelation. The firstborn was Ephah, the second Epher, the third Hanoah, almost the same as the son of Cain (Gen.

4:17) and the father of Methuselah (Gen.5:18). The fourth was named Abida, and the fifth and last, Eldaah. These, we are told, are *sons* of *Keturah* (25:4). Sonship has a much higher meaning in the Orient, than with us. This is exemplified in what follows. Abraham gave gifts to these sons of a concubine, and sent them away, so that, at his death, Isaac was his sole heir, not only of his possessions, but especially of the much more precious promises of the land and the kingdom. The others went eastward, where some of them developed Arab tribes, so that, in large measure, the Arabs claim descent from Abraham, although he so clearly disowned them. This has caused constant strife between the two, as it does to this day.

#### ABRAHAM'S DEATH

And these are the days of the years of the lives of Abraham— so reads the literal Hebrew (Gen.25:7). In his case, at least, the plurality of this idiom may suggest a great deal. His life was nearly all bright, with hardly any darkness, and he enjoyed two lives, so to speak, one of a hundred years until his bodily powers decayed. Then they were rejuvenated, given a new life for seventy-five years more. This was more than twice as long as most men live today, so he was satisfied.

#### VITALIZING POWER OF JUSTIFICATION

This is a physical, literal illustration of the vitalizing, invigorating power of justification. It brings peace and contentment, and, in his case, earthly blessings and great wealth. We who are justified today should enjoy all this, but in a higher, spiritual sphere. Yet the contentment of *faith* furnishes a powerful rejuvenator, so that, even today, it vitalized the frames of the infirm, so they can even glory in them, as in the case of Paul and of Timothy (2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Tim.5:23).

## ANNALS OF ISHMAEL

As far as the physical seed is concerned, Ishmael is the firstborn. Compared with Isaac, he had a numerous progeny, for he begat twelve princes, each of which became a clan, whereas Isaac, had only two, Esau and Jacob, and neither of them were in the line of faith until Jacob became Israel. Moreover, neither Isaac nor Jacob settled any part of the land at that time, whereas the clans of Ishmael seem to have occupied quite a little of the sandy stretches in what was later called Arabia, not far from the shores of what was later called the gulf of Suez, or the Red sea, and the Arabian gulf—the southern rim of the Arabian desert. But they seem to have lost their identity in the course of time. Along with the descendants of Keturah, the inhabitants of this region claim Abraham as their forefather.

## ISHMAEL

We are told very little of Ishmael's history, as he was not in the line of promise. Indeed, besides the length of his life, 137 years, all that is related is concerned with his *death*. As it stands, the territory taken over by him and his sons is rather indefinite. The fact that they *tabernacled* seems to show that they were nomads. "Havilah unto Shur," according to the latest maps seems to indicate the whole western coast line of what we call Arabia, opposite Egypt, with Shur in the north and Havilah in the south. But it seems to have gone as far to the east as Assyria. Before his birth Ishmael was described as an onager, or wild donkey, his hand against all and all to be against him (Gen.16:12). Ever since, Israel, representing the promised seed, has been subject to inroads from these desert marauders, who portray the enmity of the flesh and its fight against the spirit.

A. E. Knoch

## ISAAC, THE SON OF PROMISE

(Genesis 25:19-34)

<sup>19</sup> + These are the **genealogical** records of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham begot 'Isaac. <sup>20</sup> And Isaac <sup>lb</sup>was forty years old <sup>i</sup>when he took <sup>'as</sup> his wife 'Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian <sup>f</sup>of Padan-Syria, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

<sup>21</sup> + Isaac <sup>i</sup>entreated <sup>'</sup>Yahweh <sup>'on</sup> behalf of his wife; for she was barren. And Yahweh granted <sup>'</sup>his <sup>i</sup>entreaty, and his wife Rebecca became <sup>i</sup>pregnant. <sup>22</sup> +When the sons <sup>i</sup>jostled each other <sup>i</sup>within her, + she <sup>i</sup>said: If so, why has this happened to me? +So she <sup>i</sup>went to inquire <sup>'of</sup> Yahweh.

<sup>23</sup> And Yahweh <sup>i</sup>said to her:

Two nations are in your belly,

+ Two folkstems shall part from your internal organs.

+But one folkstem shall be more resolute <sup>f</sup>than the other folkstem,

And the senior shall serve the junior.

<sup>24</sup> +When her days were <sup>i</sup>fulfilled to give birth, + behold, there were twins in her belly. <sup>25</sup> + The first came <sup>i</sup>forth ruddy, all of him like a hairy mantle; +so they <sup>i</sup>called his name Esau. <sup>26</sup> And afterward his brother came forth, and his hand was holding <sup>i</sup>Esau's heel; +so <sup>M</sup>they<sup>n</sup> <sup>i</sup>called his name Jacob. +Now Isaac was sixty years old <sup>i</sup>when <sup>7</sup>Rebecca<sup>0</sup> bore<sup>-</sup> them.

<sup>27</sup> +As the lads <sup>i</sup>grew up, + Esau <sup>i</sup>became a man knowing how to hunt, a man of the open field; +yet Jacob was an unsullied man, dwelling in tents. <sup>28</sup> And Isaac <sup>i</sup>loved 'Esau, for it meant game in his mouth. +Yet Rebecca was loving 'Jacob. <sup>29</sup> Once +when Jacob had a stew <sup>i</sup>simmering,

+ Esau 'came from the field, and he was faint with hunger.  
<sup>30</sup> + Esau 'said to Jacob: Let me glut *pr* now from the red,  
 'this 'red stew, for I am faint.—Therefore one called his  
 name Edom also.

<sup>31</sup> + Jacob <sup>isa</sup>replied <sup>7</sup>to Esau<sup>0</sup>: Do sell › me, as of today,  
 'your birthright. <sup>32</sup> And Esau 'said: Behold, I am going  
 to die anyhow. + › What good then is a birthright to me?  
<sup>33</sup> + Jacob <sup>isa</sup>replied <sup>7</sup>to him<sup>0</sup>: Do swear to me, as of today!  
 +So he 'swore to him. +Thus <sup>7</sup>Esau<sup>0</sup> 'sold 'his birthright to  
 Jacob.<sup>34</sup> +Then Jacob gave › Esau bread and lentil stew;  
 + he 'ate and 'drank, + 'got up and 'went away. +Thus did  
 Esau 'despise 'the birthright.

YAHWEH is the Elohim, or Subjector, of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob (Ex.3:15). These three form the three-fold background by which the star-seed may learn about their special Deity, Who Will-be-ing-was. His dealings with this trinity of humans is the clue to their own special position among mankind (Matt. 22:32; Mark 12:26; Acts 3:13; 7:32). But they provide us, also, with lessons in those lower realms of truth which we have in common with them, such as *justification by faith*, by Abraham (Rom.4:1-3; Gal.3:6), and *promise*, by Isaac (Rom.9:7,10; Gal.4:28), and *choice* by Jacob (Rom.9:13).

#### THE PROMISED SEED

Above all else, Isaac was the *promised seed*, and we should consider this as typical of him, rather than his personal traits or shortcomings. Secondly, his *name*, denotes LAUGH-causer, and, as a consequence, we should not expect him to be *tested*, as Abram was, or *tried*, as Jacob was by his brother and father-in-law. Three identical Abrams could not teach us more than one. Three different characters



have three different lessons to teach. If we seek to find a perfect character among the physical seed of Adam, that would be a serious mistake, for God needs only One such Man, Who came later. All the others must be imperfect, until the perfect Son transfigures them into His likeness.

As Isaac was the first of the promised seed, and in him all the rest of the seed is called, we must go back before his birth to understand his history. As soon as Abram reached the center of the land, Yahweh appeared to him and said, "To your *seed* I shall give this land" (Gen.12:7). Here, first of all, only Isaac was in view. Later, after Lot had parted from Abram, the promise was repeated, but included Abram himself (13:15) and all his physical progeny, for it was compared with the *soil* of the land, in order to show how multitudinous it would be. Later, after Abram had refused to be rewarded for the rescue of the Sodomites from the confederate kings, he complained, "You have given no seed to me." Yet Abram already had a substitute, Damascus Eliezer (15:3).

#### ISAAC, THE STAR SEED

This time the seed is not as the *soil*, which probably figures Abram's physical offspring in the land, but a much higher and more glorious one (Gen.15:5). Even this also would be beyond computation. The stars figure the *spiritual* seed, who would *believe*, like Abram. The term, *thus* seems to indicate more than mere number, and suggests a higher degree of *likeness*. But when the promise was confirmed by a *covenant*, then the boundaries of the land defined it as from the stream of Egypt to the Euphrates (Gen.15:18).

When Ishmael was about to be born, Hagar was also told that his seed would not be numbered for multitude (16:10). Thus Abraham became the forefather of a throng of *nations* which are not reckoned with the star seed.

## SIMILARITIES WITH ABRAM

Outwardly, Isaac's history is remarkably similar to that of Abram's, for he was blessed for his father's sake. He is respected by Abimelech. His wife was barren. He exposed her to danger. He had two antagonistic sons. He had family trials. He had trouble with his wells and those Abraham had dug. All this, especially the last item, should help us to see that his function is to be *like* his father spiritually, even as the Son is like the Father. He does not originate, for Abram dug the wells, but he does act as an intermediary, *through* whom the water may be enjoyed. He is a figure of the Father's Son.

## NOT ALL ISRAEL ARE ISRAEL

The vital lesson for us, and for fleshly Israel, is elaborated for us by the apostle Paul in his Roman (9:7-10) and Galatians (4:28) epistles, when he declared clearly and emphatically that *not all those out of Israel, these are Israel*. Abraham had other offspring besides Isaac. More than a decade before his birth, Ishmael was born. And even Abram could plead, "O that Ishmael should live before You!" (Gen.17:18). So is Israel today. And many true believers have the same feeling that he had. This will be fulfilled in the future when all Israel shall be saved (Rom.11:26). Ishmael, although divinely named Hearing-is-Subjector, must not be a child of *faith*, or of *promise*, like Isaac, but of the *flesh*, of the *slave* woman, Hagar. So are the other seed of Abraham who fail to have his *faith*.

## SEED NOT CHILDREN

Abraham had further offspring besides Ishmael, after the death of Sarah, by Keturah (Incense). His name and the fact that Abraham's life was, figuratively, a resurrection life, for he had to be vivified in order to generate Isaac

(Rom.4:19), has in it a faint suggestion of Abraham's spiritual seed *among the nations*. Even the numbers are suggestive. In all he had eight, but there were six by Keturah. But by no means do we wish to intimate that these six were the seed of *promise*, for they were no more promised, as Isaac was, than the believers among the nations today. Her name could be a physical intimation of a secret spiritual reality. These sons were *sent away* with a present, and had no more right to the promised land than we have. In fact, we do not look forward to *any* physical blessing on the *earth* at all.

#### ISAAC'S SEED

As with Abram, Isaac's seed was long delayed. He was forty years old when he married Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian. Again, as with Abraham, his wife was barren. They did not do as Abram and Sarai had done, by bringing foreign flesh into the succession, but entreated Yahweh, so that their sons were very evidently an answer to prayer, and a further development of God's plan to reveal His future ways by means of His dealings with the patriarchs.

#### THE DIVINE CHOICE

The great lesson taught by the twins is so solemn and weighty and hard to believe, that we again refer our readers to Paul's inspired explanation, given us in Romans 9:10-26: Not as yet being born, nor putting into practice anything good or bad, *that the purpose of God may be remaining as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling*, it was declared to her that "The greater shall be slaving for the inferior," according as it is written, "*Jacob I love, yet Esau I hate*" (cf Mal.1:2,3). In this account concerning Esau and Jacob we have this transcendent truth exemplified and enacted by living men, through their actions as

well as their words, so that we must denounce it as unjust and atrocious, if it were the work of a human, or even the device of a devil. That is why so few are able to believe it.

#### DIVINE MERCY

In order to help us believe it, the apostle adds testimony from Moses and Hosea and Isaiah, and introduces Pharaoh and the potter, all in order to prove the simple proposition that the Subjector does, not only as He wills, but what *appears* to us to be unjust, in order to turn transient harm into permanent blessing. When Moses asked Yahweh to show him His glory, He announced the divine declaration: "I will be gracious to whom I am being gracious and will show compassion to whom I am showing compassion." (Ex.33:19; Rom.9:15). This is not culled from a human creed, but the Subjector's own statement, not of faith, but of *fact*. Paul deduces from this that the fate of a human does not depend on willingness or work, but altogether on God's mercy (Rom.9:16).

#### HARDENING

It is not difficult to discern God's mercy in the case of Isaac, but it takes a measure of faith to acclaim His treatment of Ishmael. So another case is brought in to strengthen the divine standpoint. Pharaoh is told why he was raised up to such a pitch of power, but few seem able to swallow it. "For this selfsame thing I rouse you up, so that I should be displaying in you *My power*, and so that *My Name* should be published in the entire earth" (Rom.9:17 *cf* Ex.9:16). God's glory *must be* displayed, for that is the greatest blessing that can come to mankind. Is it not the highest wisdom and mercy to harm one man, or cause a nation to suffer for a brief period, if that helps all humanity for the eons and beyond? Ashamed am I that I ever lent an ear to any "explanations," which suggest that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, so that I contradicted the Supreme!

## THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

In Romans 9:19-21 Paul clinches his contention by going back to the beginning and basing his argument on the formation of humanity (Gen.2:7). Like a potter, Yahweh Elohim took soil from the ground, and formed it into a human. But mortals seek somehow to push Him out of His place and form themselves, forgetting that they are soil, and that they can no more form themselves than the clay used by a potter can shape itself on the wheel. The potter whirls the wheel and shapes the clay as suits *himself*, to suit his purpose. But no mortal potter, no matter how skillful he may be, can compete with the great Creator, Who made both him and his wheel, and Who has designs in His heart which include the universe. He has forms to fashion far finer, and more splendid than mortals ever dreamed.

## GENEALOGICAL ANNALS

The Annals of Isaac<sup>1</sup>, like those of Abraham, are an excellent example of a reversal, beginning with his *birth* (25:19) and ending with his *death* (35:27-29). Then comes his family, Rebecca and his sons (25:20-28), balanced by Leah and Rachel and Jacob's sons (35:16-26). Then come *Esau and Jacob's Birthright* (25:29-34) and *Blessing* (27:1-35:15). Then two Appearances, at Gerar (26:1-5) and Beersheba (26:23-33). Wife trouble comes to Isaac (26:6-11), and Esau's wives bring bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebecca (26:34,35). In the center, at the turning point, we have the Canaanite Abimelech, with themes of separation (26:12-25) and covenant (26:26-33).

As a result of their joint entreaties, Rebecca conceived, and the long conflict between the two seeds began even before any of them were born (Gen.25:22). This is quite

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1. See the "Skeleton Index" in the CONCORDANT VERSION OF GENESIS, p.33.

different from Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, who were born about thirteen years apart, and by different mothers, Esau and Jacob were born almost simultaneously, with Esau barely the firstborn, and from the same mother. Nevertheless, they were more unlike each other and incompatible than Abram's sons. What illustration could be more forceful than this to show the great truth that God's *choice* is the determining factor in life, and not the will of the *flesh*? Before he knew what he was doing, Jacob earned his name by grabbing his brother's heel. And all his life, before he met the Elohim at Peniel (FACING-SUBJECTOR) and his name was changed from Jacob (HEEL) to Israel (Upright-with-SUBJECTOR), he unwittingly employed crooked means to get what belonged to him! Esau did not do that.

#### JACOB'S EXAMPLE

As we, who are chosen, are prone to do as Jacob did, and waste our lives in an effort to obtain what is already ours in Christ, his example should be of great value, to show us what we should *not* do. Let us not blame Jacob for doing as he did, but thank him for his example, lest we do likewise. Moreover, in contrast to Esau, who was "profane," in that he gave up his birthright for a single feed (Heb.12:16), Jacob prized it above all, and even descended to shabby trickery to get it. In the depths of his heart he was true to the Subjector, and valued His gifts, even if, with his twisted brain and reprehensible hands, he sought to steal them.

#### ESAU'S NAME

As Esau was born ruddy, all of him as a fur robe of hair, there is a tendency among scholars to derive his name Esau (*Oshu* Doer) from his appearance. The Arabic suggests an unknown stem, *Oshe*, hairy, or rough. Bagster's Analytical Hebrew Lexicon, which seems to be standard

among English students, follows this, making it *Hairy*. But why must his name be taken from his appearance? Jacob was not named to accord with his looks, but rather with his *deeds*. Why should not Esau be called a *Doer*, and his flesh described because he was in the line of the flesh? Jacob's appearance is never described, except as he differed from Esau, for he is in the line of the spirit.

#### EDOM

Esau and Jacob grew up together, but they differed radically in their dispositions. Indeed, they were somewhat like Cain and Abel, for Esau also wished to slay Jacob. But Esau was not a farmer, like Cain, but an intelligent hunter. He was like Nimrod, who was a master hunter. He it was who commenced the first kingdom. So Esau, also, started a new nation, to which was given the name Edom (**LIKE**, Red), because he glutted himself with red stew, supplied by Jacob. Esau's enmity against Jacob has been continued ever since, but his land is called Idumea, in later revelation (Mark 3:8). This strife was revived when an Edomite, Herod the Great, massacred the babes of Bethlehem (Matt.2:16), and another, Herod Antipas, beheaded John the Baptist (Matt.14:10), and mocked the great King, the Son of Humanity, in the line of Israel (Luke 23:11).

#### PARTIALITY OF PARENTS

It is only as we keep God's ultimate *intention* (*not will*) in mind that we can understand the perverse partiality of the parents of the twins. Otherwise we would [il]logically expect Isaac to love Jacob, for the superior, the firstborn, Esau, was to serve the inferior, Jacob. In this he was justified, not from the physical aspect, but the spiritual. His love for Esau was based upon his fleshly appetite, the taste of his tongue. At the last, however, he recognizes his own blindness, and the hand of Yahweh in correcting his mis-

take (Gen.27:24-33). So it was with Rebecca. Although she recognized the divine prophecy, and gave Jacob his proper place, yet she was really to blame when Jacob deceived his father (27:6). So it is always, *both good and ill, will work His will*, or, rather, His intention.

### THE BIRTHRIGHT

The patriarchs did not live on flocks alone, for they had bread, and now we read of lentils (Gen.25:32). It is somewhat surprising, however, to find Jacob stewing a stew. Esau was a good hunter, who supplied Isaac with venison, but this provision was uncertain. On this memorable occasion Esau had tried hard, so he was faint; in fact he spoke as if he was about to starve. This was quite improbable, and only shows how little he cared for his birthright, when he bargained it away for a single meal.

A. E. Knoch

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### THE LATTER PROPHETS

Endeavoring to bring forth more of the vital facts of the Scriptures in a setting of harmony and consistency, we are presenting this Concordant Version of the Latter Prophets as a further installment of our translation of the Old Testament.

In accord with their length, these books are generally divided into two groups, the "Major Prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) and the "Minor Prophets" (or "The Twelve," the books of Hosea through Malachi). But all of them, like the Former Prophets (Joshua through Kings), are concerned with God's operations with respect to the nation of Israel. The distinctive feature of these books is their revelation of Yahweh's ample provision for His erring people. They may fail, but He remains true. Indeed, their unfaithfulness is necessary to make known His faithfulness.

THE LATTER PROPHETS is now in stock and ready for shipment; publication details are as follows: 8½" x 11" format, 469 pages; perfect bound, ultraviolet-coated heavy cover; \$18.00 per copy. Shipping and handling: add 10% (\$2.00 minimum); California residents please add sales tax; foreign orders payable in U.S. funds.



## THE LAMP OF ISRAEL

(2 Samuel 21:15-22)

<sup>15</sup> + There <sup>b</sup>was <sup>fr</sup>again a battle <sup>ʔ</sup>between the Philistines and <sup>ʔ</sup>Israel, and David and his servants with him went <sup>ʔ</sup>down and <sup>ʔ</sup>fought <sup>ʔ</sup>the Philistines; <sup>+</sup>yet David grew <sup>ʔ</sup>faint. <sup>16</sup> + Ishbi-benob who was <sup>ʔ</sup>among the votaries of the Rapha (<sup>+</sup> the weight of his <sup>7</sup>lancehead~ was three hundred bronze shekels, and he was girded<sup>ʔ</sup> with a new <sup>7</sup>mace<sup>0</sup>), <sup>+</sup> he <sup>lsa</sup>intended to smite <sup>ʔ</sup>David. <sup>17</sup> + But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his <sup>ʔ</sup>help; <sup>+</sup> he <sup>ʔ</sup>smote <sup>ʔ</sup>the Philistine and <sup>c</sup>put him to <sup>ʔ</sup>death.

Then David's men swore an oath to him, <sup>ʔ</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, You shall not march forth <sup>ʔ</sup>with us into battle any <sup>fr</sup>more <sup>+</sup>that you may not quench <sup>ʔ</sup>the lamp of Israel.

<sup>18</sup> + It <sup>b</sup>occurred afterward <sup>+</sup>that there <sup>b</sup>was <sup>fr</sup>again <sup>ʔ</sup>fighting with the Philistines <sup>ʔ</sup>at Gob. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite smote <sup>ʔ</sup>Saph who was <sup>ʔ</sup>among the votaries of the Rapha.

<sup>19</sup> + When there <sup>b</sup>was <sup>fr</sup>again <sup>ʔ</sup>fighting with the Philistines <sup>ʔ</sup>at Gob, <sup>+</sup> Elhanan son of Jair the Bethlehemite <sup>ʔ</sup>smote <sup>ʔ</sup>Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, <sup>+</sup> <sup>his</sup>whose spear had a shaft like the heddle-rod of weavers<sup>ʔ</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> + There <sup>b</sup>was <sup>fr</sup>again fighting <sup>ʔ</sup>at Gath. <sup>+</sup> A gigantic man <sup>b</sup>came <sup>+</sup>with six fingers on his hands and six <sup>+</sup> toes on his feet, twenty-four in number; <sup>+</sup> he' <sup>mr</sup>too was a votary <sup>ʔ</sup>of the Rapha. <sup>21</sup> + When he <sup>ʔ</sup>challenged <sup>ʔ</sup>Israel, <sup>+</sup> Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimeah, <sup>ʔ</sup>smote him. <sup>22</sup> <sup>ʔ</sup>Those four were votaries <sup>ʔ</sup>of the Rapha in Gath; <sup>+</sup> they <sup>ʔ</sup>fell <sup>ʔ</sup>by the hand of David and <sup>ʔ</sup>by the hand of his servants.

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## DAVID AND THE OTHER GIANT

THE CLOSING VERSES of chapter 21 list a number of David's mighty men who had earned the highest of honors and prestige in David's armed service. All the enemies listed here are giants. The listing in chapter 23 relates heroics performed against overwhelming numbers of foes. This same kind of division may be made in the spiritual problems that believers face. Sometimes a single, huge, demoralizing problem confronts us. Other times we are inundated with innumerable difficulties or details. In either case, the Beloved has power to deliver.

David had come to fame and leadership by defeating Goliath, a tremendous, giant warrior. But at this time David was not fresh and rested from the sheep's pasture. He had been fighting the Philistines for some time, and he grew faint from exhaustion. In his moment of weakness, his life was threatened by another giant warrior, Ishbi-benob. Abishai came to his rescue, killing the giant. This raises a question. If David became leader by killing a giant, should Abishai, or one of the other giant-slayers, ascend to David's position of leadership?

It is heart-warming to see the devotion of these veteran warriors to their leader. They considered David's life to be of far greater value than their own. From that time forward David was not to go into battle. God's purpose was not for David to continually provide miraculous, single-handed military deliverance. The defeat of Goliath verified the divine approval of David, but God does not need a half moment's notice to raise up a giant-killer. David was intended to lead the people closer to God, write the Psalms, revise and reorganize worship in Israel, and to be instrumental in the designation of the place where God's name would be established. He also was chosen as an important link in the genealogical line leading to Jesus Christ.

Throughout his life David served as a remarkable type of Christ in many respects.

This event as described in 2 Samuel 21:15-17 has a significant parallel in the life of Christ. Our Lord performed many miracles for the purpose of proving that He was sent from God and that the people should accept and follow Him (John 5:36-40). Yet, instead of understanding this purpose for His works, many saw the miracles as an end in themselves (John 6:26-34). They were looking for a hero who would bring deliverance in every situation, but they did not see themselves or their nation moving on to a greater and higher relationship to God. But what need is there of a Great Physician to heal repeatedly the infirmities of those to whom God has promised immortality? If ever we are to know Christ, we must see in Him for more than the power to transcend normal human abilities. His miracles catch our distracted eye that He might lead us on to far greater things.

#### LEST THE LAMP BE QUENCHED

"Then David's men swore an oath to him, saying, You shall not march forth with us into battle any more that you may not quench the lamp of Israel" (2 Sam.21:17; see also 18:1-4). In the books of Samuel, the word *lamp* first occurs in 1 Samuel 3:3, a time when Samuel was still quite young. "In those days the word of Yahweh had become rare; there was no vision being unfolded . . . Eli . . . was not able to see. The lamp of Elohim was not yet quenched" (3:1-3). The priesthood was about to be set aside, but God would give guidance to Israel through the prophet Samuel. Saul was never called Israel's lamp and the spiritual aspect of his leadership was clearly lacking.

David was the one after God's heart who was chosen to guide the nation in the direction they should go to please God and fulfill his purpose for them. Yet David himself

needed guidance as well. In the Psalm of 2 Samuel 22 David said, "Indeed You Yourself shall light up my lamp, O Yahweh; My Elohim, He shall brighten my darkness" (v.29).

"In it [the word] was life, and the life was the light of men . . . It was the true light—which is enlightening every man—coming into the world" (John 1:4,9). Paul said, "All be doing without murmurings and reasonings, that you may become blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse among whom you are appearing as luminaries in the world, having on the word of life" (Phil.2:14,15).

One candle can be lit from another, and the light of one candle can be multiplied a million times without diminishing the light of the first candle. So also, the spirit of Christ can be endlessly multiplied in those who believe (Rom.8:9-11). May God continue to enlighten the eyes of our heart, that we may walk as children of the light, bearing the light of the life that we have been given in Christ Jesus (Eph.1:18; 5:8,9).

J. Phillip Scranton

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#### FRED NIEMEYER

Born in the Netherlands, maturing into manhood during World War II, emigrating to Canada to begin a new life with his growing family, and struggling in recent months with cancer, Brother Fred Niemeyer was greatly blessed through his life with a faith in God as a God of purpose and love in Christ Jesus. Along with his wife, Helen, and family, Fred rejoiced in God's goal for all mankind, and he found peace in the evangel of peace which led him to cry out, "Abba, Father!"

He was one of the founders and supporters of the Kitchener, Ontario fellowship. At each gathering, Fred could be counted on to stand up, always dressed in his suit, and quietly make an impromptu commentary on the current subject, filling in with extended, memorized verses of Scripture.

Fred was given repose early on the morning of October 18, awaiting his resurrection change when Christ comes to receive us all to Himself.

## JUSTIFICATION

GOD, THE SUBJECTOR, plays the principal part in the tragedy of the eons. What He does and says is immeasurably more important than the minor roles of His creatures. Justification cannot be fully grasped apart from an understanding of this divine side of events throughout the eons. We should not only consider justification externally, that is, as things *appear* to be to *us*, but rather intrinsically, that is, as they really *are*. God is love. If we believe this, then we cannot think of Him as unjust. But if we do not know Him, and judge Him by some of His acts during His unfinished operations, we may misjudge Him, as if He were unjust. God is inherently just, but this may not be fully revealed to many of His creatures until they see the outcome of His eonian operations. Eventually, all will applaud even the worst of His apparent injustices.

In the first formal statement of our justification (Rom. 3:21-26), the point is repeatedly pressed that *God* is just, for apart from His righteousness, no one else could possibly be just. In this passage we read: "a righteousness of *God* is manifest . . . a righteousness of *God* . . . a display of *His* righteousness . . . the display of *His* righteousness . . . for *Him* to be just and a Justifier . . ." First of all, then, we must be assured that the Subjector Himself is just, especially when He justifies those who are far from righteous in themselves, as we are.

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to the acknowledgment of God's absolute justice is the presence of evil in His universe. Indeed, if it will never be removed, or will not

accomplish any good, then we would not even attempt to prove Him just, and our justification would be a worthless waste of effort. Moreover, if evil will persist forever, and the great bulk of mankind will suffer eternally in a fiery hell for sins that they were unable to avoid because of their deadly inheritance, and if it is not a part of God's plan to reveal Himself, then this effort to justify the ways of God to men would never have been attempted. The "God" of Christendom is a ferocious fiend, and no one, not even He Himself could ever justify His atrocious malevolence. So we will consider Him only as He is revealed in His Word.

#### FATHERS

Not all the discipline inflicted by earthly fathers is beneficial. It may even do harm. This is due to their own insubjection to God and ignorance of His Word. But suppose that every father were in possession of infinite wisdom, and had the power to control all circumstances, so that he could compel every occurrence to contribute to the final effect. Could he not then easily design his disciplinary inflictions so as to produce the good he has in view? So it is with our spiritual Father, the great Subjector of all.

#### DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME

Only a subjector may do evil that good may come, for he alone has complete control. Nevertheless, the ALL-SUBJECTOR has given us many examples of it in those whom He has put in the place of TO-SUBJECTORS. A father, for instance, may discipline his children severely, if necessary, that they may be taught to obey him. One of the great scourges of the present day, "juvenile delinquency," is largely due to the lack of needed discipline. This, in itself, is not enjoyable, but evil. It is a deterrent, which hinders far worse evil. Much present good in the world is the fruit of past evil. Discipline, indeed, for the present is not *seeming* to

be a thing of joy, but of sorrow, yet, subsequently, it is rendering the peaceable fruit of *righteousness* (Heb.12:11). We cannot grasp the good in evil unless we look beyond it to its final effects.

### EVIL

Is God right, or just, when He creates evil (Isa.45:7)? Our answer should be based on a knowledge of its effects. If we accept the traditional destiny of the majority of humanity as a burning hell and damnation for all eternity, we will hardly be able to excuse His terrible injustice. But if we believe the Scriptures concerning the justification of all (as well as their subjection and reconciliation), then we will shout an enthusiastic *Yes! A thousand times, Yes!* Thank God for evil! This is basic. If He is not just, even in this one particular, it is folly to believe that He is not only just, but a Justifier of others also (Rom.3:26). Those who hold to these false traditions do not, and, indeed, cannot comprehend or enjoy either God's justification or their own.

Only the Subjector can justify. He has given us illustrations, by means of various TO-SUBJECTORS, which may help a little to understand how it can be done. A father may cause his child to suffer, as a corrective for misdeeds, and so prevent future crime. A little discipline in childhood may harvest great blessing in maturity. A father is *justified* in doing such evil because he has the future of his children in view. Recently a young person went to law to become free of parental discipline. But the judge refused to permit it, because it was beneficial.

### SUBJECTORS MUST DO EVIL

The evil done by God is done as the Subjector, during the eons. Consequently the TO-SUBJECTORS under Him are also obliged to do evil. Humanity, in its place as subjectors of the animals, does much evil. Rulers employ

police and soldiers to compel subjection. Those who have the spirit of the Subjector, Christ and His apostles, even Paul, the most gracious of the apostles, had to do evil. All this evil arises from the fact that they are subjectors, like God, and that this evil is essential to the subjection of all at the consummation.

To comprehend God's eonian operations, let us wing our way, in spirit, into the consummation, and *look back* upon His activities from that clear height. Then the outcome will vindicate all of His evil eonian operations, for *all* mankind will not only be *justified*, but *satisfied* and *loving* children of their Father. This most gracious and glorious goal could not have been attained by any other means than by recourse to their opposites, temporary injustice and estrangement and hate. Our own *unrighteousness* will enable us, not only to perceive, but to *appreciate* His righteousness. This will lead us to *admire* and *adore* Him, and to willingly *serve* and *worship* Him. He has been fully justified in making men sordid sinners that He may transform them into appreciative subjects.

#### ADAM

Adam presents a double example of *failure* to do evil, both as a *subjector* of the lower creatures and as the *father* of his family. He failed to judge the serpent, so that Yahweh Elohim had to do it for him. As a result, we read of multiplied evil, for the serpent and Adam and Eve and all their descendants (Gen.3:15-19). Again, Adam, as father, failed to discipline his firstborn son, after he had killed his brother Abel.

Consequently, Yahweh Elohim stepped in and *cursed* the ground, so that it refused to give its vigor to him, and sentenced him to be a rover and a wanderer, in fear of death. When Cain refused to serve his sentence, Adam did nothing about it, and let him build a city in defiance



of Yahweh Elohim. As these lesser evils were not inflicted, this led to the much greater calamity of the deluge. When necessary evil is evaded it breeds worse evil.

#### HUMAN GOVERNMENT

As the failure to properly discipline Cain led to further evil and the flood, the new eon introduced after the deluge began with the provision that the crime of Cain must be properly adjudicated. "Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human his blood shall be shed; for in the image of Elohim He has made humanity" (Gen.9:6). Can we imagine what sort of a world this would be if all the murderers, like Cain and his descendant Lamech, could brazenly challenge anyone who would call them to account? The superior authorities, to whom we must be subject, are a divine institution which God has empowered to deal out judgment. They must do evil, and cause suffering. There is a sword for lawbreakers, visiting evil on those committing evil (Rom.13:1-5). A government which refuses to inflict evil would be unjust.

#### PAUL AS AN EVIL DOER

Paul, the apostle, was shown more grace than anyone else, and also excelled all in the display of grace. Nevertheless he did not consider it gracious or even kind to overlook the sins of the saints. Did anyone else demand so often that sinners be disciplined by means of evil? As this is sufficient for a treatise by itself, we will only quote briefly, so that all may be thoroughly convinced that the modern tendency of indulging unscriptural conduct in the ecclesia is not rooted in love or grace, but in laxity and unfaithfulness. Ordinarily, "Love is not working *evil* to an *associate*" (Rom.13:10). Nevertheless Paul often did evil and charged others to do evil to the disobedient, for this is the only course that will benefit them.

Not only Paul and Timothy, as apostles, were empowered to act as TO-SUBJECTORS, and enforce discipline in the ecclesia as a whole, but they appointed elders in the various ecclesias to act as such locally. The saints are to be told that they must be subject to the political authorities, for they are God's servants (Rom.13:1-5). Titus was told to remind them of this (Titus 3:1). Surely the elders in the ecclesia should receive as much subjection. But even Timothy had to be told not to upbraid an elder (1 Tim.5:1), and not to assent to accusations against them, which the saints accepted without sufficient evidence (1 Tim.5:19). But in these, the last days, men are calumniators, stubborn to parents, adversaries, uncontrollable, so it is not likely that there will be much subjection to elders now, or that the evil which they are obliged to do will be appreciated. But they will be justified in that day.

Paul writes to the Corinthians not to commingle with immoral members, but to expel them (1 Cor.5:13). This might cause them considerable distress. He actually gave up Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan to teach them not to calumniate (1 Tim.1:20). This seems terrible to us, as most of us have an entirely false idea of the part Satan plays in God's plan. All the evil he does will be beneficial in its final effect, under the guidance of God. Paul is especially severe against anyone who brings the Galatian heresy into the ecclesia, calling down an anathema upon him (Gal.1:9), and insists that he bear his judgment (5:10). He predicts that he would not spare those who have sinned (2 Cor.13:2).

#### MEMBERS OF ECCLESIAS

Not only the elders in an ecclesia are compelled to hurt those who need discipline at times, but the members themselves are called upon, on occasion, to note those who are making dissensions and snares beside the teaching which they learned, and *avoid* them (Rom.16:17). Alas! In these

last days many may *follow* them and avoid the few who obey this scripture! That only compounds the evil, but does not remove it.

In view of their future part in God's plan, of judging the world, the saints should take these obligations seriously. But how few realize that they are not simply to bask in elysian delights in heaven, but to have a part in disciplining and blessing the rest of God's creation?

### EFFECTS

In some cases Paul also records the effect of the evil. In 2 Corinthians 7:7 he writes that he rejoiced that he had made them sorry, for it led to repentance and unregretted salvation. In the case of Mark, whom Paul refused to take along, after he had deserted him (Acts 15:38), Paul later wrote that "he is useful to me for service" (2 Tim.4:11). Mark evidently did not resent Paul's action permanently, but was helped by it (Col.4:10). At the dais of Christ, it will become clear that all divine discipline was beneficial, even if it was painful at the time.

### JUDGING THE WORLD

Some of the Corinthians sought to escape evil by applying to the secular courts. This is in itself a great evil. An earthly court is entirely incompetent to judge believers. Anyone who would sue a saint is already guilty of a major offense against God if not against the government. Every case of this kind should be adjudicated by a wise man who is a brother in the Lord. One who brings such an action before a worldly tribunal is already condemned in God's sight, even if he gets a favorable verdict from the unbelieving judge. Yet such a sordid case was made the occasion for revealing the marvelous truth that *the saints shall judge the world* (1 Cor.6:1-9).

## SAINTS JUDGE

We know that God is about to be judging the habitation in righteousness by the Man Whom He specifies, that is, Christ Jesus (Acts 17:31; 2 Tim.4:1) All unbelievers must stand before the great white throne. But how can so many billions of human beings be individually judged, one after the other? Would there be any end to this trying ordeal? In a human courtroom today such a judgment, with a single judge, would be impossible. But, if the *saints*, the members of Christ, are *delegated* to carry out this judgment, as TO-SUBJECTORS of the great TO-SUBJECTOR, it is perfectly feasible under the changed conditions of that day, for they will be glorified, with faculties and powers unutterably better suited to this task than those they now possess. Then they will be able to do evil that will have a harvest of endless good.

## SATANIC DISCIPLINE

But we must not forget that *God Himself* sent Paul a messenger of *Satan* to buffet him! What had he done? More good than any other mere man. But he was in danger of being "lifted up." Who wouldn't be, in his position, after receiving the highest revelations? His reward, so far, seems to have been composed of infirmities, outrages, necessities, persecutions, and distresses. Are not these evil? But Paul was in danger of ruining his whole ministry by *lifting himself over* that which is proper to anyone who owes all to God's grace. This term is used only once again, when speaking of the man of lawlessness, who will *lift himself over* everyone termed a god, and will be seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God (2 Thess.2:3,4). We are all in danger of this sin, especially those who have also received these revelations through Paul. So we should be thankful for any evil which

the adversary may send us, which keeps us from inordinate self-esteem.

### JUDGING MESSENGERS

Perhaps the greatest task which lies before the saints in their future glorification will consist in judging *the world*, especially *messengers*. Can there be any doubt that this will involve the infliction of evil? No one would question that humans who die without being justified still need the experience of evil in some degree in order to prepare them to be subject to the TO-SUBJECTORS, and especially to the Supreme Subjector at the consummation. This may be our greatest glory, to have a part in the work of Christ in subjecting the universe to the Subjector, so that He may become All in all. To subject His human enemies, what an honor that would be! But to see Satan crushed under our feet (Rom. 16:20), and all his heavenly hosts subjected to God through us, in Christ, will be the highest honor accorded to any mere creatures.

If Paul needed such satanic discipline, surely it is also required by all others who revel in the great revelations which he has shared with us. Having the utterly false idea that all discipline is punishment for wrong doing, and that God sends it only to those who have misbehaved, many are prone to look at all trials as a token of God's displeasure and indicative of a departure from the right.

As a matter of fact, in this case the splinter in the flesh was given him because he had received transcendent revelations as a token of his superior comprehension of God's glory gained by being raptured into the paradise and the third heaven. We usually think of paradise and heaven as associated with unadulterated bliss, but in his case it led to an incurable ailment and temporary torment by Satan.

### SAINTS CRUSHING SATAN

Our evil, in which all believers will have a part, and

which they will doubtless deem very good, will be their final encounter with the Adversary. In Romans (16:20) we are told that “the God of *Peace* will be crushing Satan under your feet swiftly.” This is really a great good and a rare privilege, for it will remove from circulation the greatest instigator of evil in the universe. Few of us have a proper idea of how much he misleads even the saints. The AV reads “shortly” instead of *swiftly*. In that case, he has been crushed long ago. Yet we know that he will be imprisoned for a thousand years (Rev.20:2) and then cast into the lake of fire until the end of the eons. So it will not occur *shortly*, unless this refers to his imprisonment before the millennium. Even then it may be only a comparatively short time from the present, but not from Paul’s day.

#### JOB AND SATAN

In Job’s case the Subjector has actually shown us a preview of the course of evil, especially in connection with the evil-beneficial ministry of Satan, who appears on the scene as a son of the Subjector, so he also must be a subjector. And, as a matter of fact, he is used, in the book of Job, not merely to test Job with evil, but to prepare him for good. In fact, his efforts resulted in doubling the blessedness of Job, materially, and revealing God to him spiritually. The question arises, shall Satan be punished for all the evil he inflicted on Job, or should he be rewarded for the doubly blessed consummation (Job 42:10)? This applies, not only to the evil he did to Job, and to Paul and others, but to all his machinations. As it was God who instigated all this evil, He was the “responsible” principal; Satan was only the agent.

#### SIN JUSTIFIED

Looked at from the human side, sin is utterly evil and harmful and ruinous, and can lead to nothing but destruc-

tion and death. But, from the divine viewpoint, it is also the indispensable backdrop for the display of the Subjector's intrinsic essence, which is *love*. Apart from sin, He would remain the Unknown Enigma, without a single trait which could cause His creatures to cling to Him, throughout the infinite future which follows the eons. The real question is, not whether God was justified in introducing evil, but, would He have been Love had He withheld from His creatures that which was essential to the revelation of His affection? Eventually all will join, not only in *justifying* the Subjector for this seemingly sinful course, but will praise and *glorify* Him for its outcome.

Let us not get the false idea that God, the Subjector, was unjust until the cross of Christ. He is always just. But before the cross His justice was but dimly discerned, as we see in the book of Job. Now it is definitely demonstrated by the suffering, death and resurrection of His Beloved.

The sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, although the sorest sin that man ever committed, has virtue in it to counteract and transmute all sin into a source of highest blessing to man and greatest glory to God. All eonian sin is necessary as a somber background for post-eonian blessing, through the value of His mediatorial offering.

In Christ's cross God displays His righteousness, so that He is Himself just as well as the Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus (Rom.3:26). We must not restrict our thoughts to the fact that He is *our* Justifier, through Christ. Before He could be that He must be *manifestly* just *Himself*. We must acknowledge that, to the limited understanding of a human, apart from His revelation, God may appear to be a ferocious fiend. In fact, almost all uninspired religions show Him as such by means of their idols and their ceremonial rites. Even Christendom presents Him as an eternal tormentor in regard to the unbeliever. But the cross has proven, by the suffering of His Son, that

He is far more than just or right, even *gracious* and *loving*.

There can be no consummation, with God All in all, until all are righteous. This is the object of the eons. Seen in this light, no insubjection is trivial, but is a vital element in God's purpose. This may be seen when we look at the millennium. There Christ and His subordinates must be obeyed, or there is swift judgment. If grace was not reigning now, it would be so today.

#### RECONCILIATION AND SUBJECTIONSHIP

We have seen that justification is far more than either forbearance or shelter. Yet even this great grace is not the ultimate by any means, but only forms the firm foundation on which to base a much higher, more intimate and affectionate relationship. The judge who acquits a prisoner makes it *possible* for him to be on friendly terms with the one whom he justifies, but is by no means obliged to invite him to his home or to adopt him into his family. But, with God, justification must eventually lead to the nearest and dearest associations. It prepares for reconciliation, friendship, and sonship, in which we, as TO-SUBJECTORS, are actively engaged, in and with Christ, in bringing the rest of creation into harmony with His heart.

Even reconciliation is not the ultimate goal for the elect of God, whom He calls. It is, indeed, as far as we go at the present time, during our humiliation in these mortal bodies. But, in resurrection, in our celestial, spiritual bodies, we will realize more fully the force of the words, "whom He justifies, these He *glorifies* also" (Rom.8:30). This might be called a "guaranteed" result of justification, for there is no chance of failure. But this strong expression, having been abused by human impotence, has lost its sense of certainty. But God puts His seal upon it by speaking of it as a fact. He does not put it in the future when it will be realized but in the indefinite, He *glorifies* us, for this was



assured when *He* selected us in the past, and it will be procured when *we* enjoy it in the future.

A. E. Knoch

(*excerpted*)

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## CLINTON TENNISWOOD

Our Brother, Clint Tenniswood, who died in late August at the age of 91, was a Michigan farmer who had a deep respect for God's Word. He gladly embraced the revelations of God's grace in the evangel committed to Paul and the truth of God's delight to reconcile all through the blood of Christ's cross. Often Clint and his late wife, Marion, opened their home for fellowship with others. Those who attended will not soon forget the warmth and sincerity of their hospitality. The happiness of such fellowship strengthens the happiness of expectation which consoles us in losses such as this.

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## GOD'S LOVE

God's love is perfect and is the intrinsic reason, inherent to His essential nature, behind all His doings. While the world shakes its fist at God because of all the evils attending this wicked eon, yet the apostle Paul declares: "Be rejoicing in the Lord *always!* Again, I will declare, be rejoicing!" (Phil.4:4). How is it that our apostle can speak thus, and would have us do the same?

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, Paul lists some of the miseries that came upon him. Yet, even so, in the midst of all of his incredible suffering we can hear him lifting his voice to God in rejoicing. But why? Why rejoice in jails, blows, floggings, stoning, famine and thirst, dangers on every side, cold and nakedness, and all the rest?

It is because Paul had become acquainted with God's love. Love seeks the ultimate, highest well being of its object. Paul knew that he was beloved of God. And, knowing this, he was aware that "God is working *all together for the good*" (Rom.8:28).

T. K. Nungesser

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## UNSEARCHABLE RICHES VOLUME 95

Volume 95 (2004) of *Unsearchable Riches* magazine is now in stock and ready for shipment (casebound, green cloth, gold stamping, 288 pages; \$23.00; please add 10% s&h; CA residents add sales tax).

## “JUSTIFIED BY WORKS”

Where James declares that, “. . . by works a man is being justified . . .” (James 2:24), he is dealing simply with individual acts; thus he draws our attention to the fact that when a man does what is right, it may be said of him that, *in that respect*, he is a “righteous” man (*cf* Luke 18:14; James 2:25,26; *cp* Joshua 2:4-15; Heb.11:31).

We ourselves are thus “justified [i.e., *pronounced righteous*] by works” daily, with respect to our upright acts and our obedient service unto God. This is so whenever we do what is right, to the degree that this is actually the case. In the appraisal of our actions in and of themselves, however, we ourselves are also pronounced *unrighteous* on a daily basis, whether by ourselves, our associates, or especially by God. That is, relevant to God’s revealed will concerning our walk, By our righteous deeds shall we be *justified*, and by our unrighteous deeds shall we be *convicted* (*cp* Matt.12:36,37).

This ordinary or everyday sense, however, is the only sense in which James ever speaks of “justification.” It is altogether foreign and contradictory to the teaching of James that any such benefit should accrue to the irreverent; indeed, to sinners, to ones who are “*not working*” (Rom.4:5). And that such an incalculably valuable gift as that of God Himself justifying sinners should be dispensed at all, not to mention be dispensed “apart from law” (Rom.3:21) and even “gratuitously in His grace” (Rom.3:24), was simply inconceivable to those such as James who were “seeking to establish their own righteousness” (Rom. 10:3; *cf* Matt.5:20).

It is not that what James has to say about “salvation” (practical salvation) or about the relationship between faith and works is wrong or is even in opposition to Paul’s evangel, but that his words deal with an entirely different type of justification and with a different aspect of salvation from that of Paul’s foundational message to the sinner.

Conversely, however, James’ evangel is by no means in accord with Paul’s, and indeed is quite the antithesis of it. James’ entire concept of righteousness is the same as that of Moses: “that a man who *does*, the same shall be living in it” (Rom.10:5; Lev.18:5; James 1:12; 2:10). Yet Paul’s view is simply this: “If righteousness is through law, then Christ died gratuitously” (Gal.2:21). “For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness *by faith*” (Gal.5:5).

Consequently, insofar as our security in Christ is concerned, even if we were to be persisting in sin, grace would increase accordingly (*cp* Rom.6:1). Indeed, it would increase not only commensurately, but superexcessively, for, in this matter, even “where sin increases, grace superexceeds,” and reigns “for life eonian” (Rom.5:20,21). Yet this is not at all the case under the Circumcision evangel.

J.R.C.

## THE EVANGEL AND HUMANITY

FROM THE BEGINNING of Romans the apostle Paul has been leading us, as believers, into a growing appreciation of the evangel of God. We have tried to follow him carefully as he has proceeded from thought to thought, building on what he has already said. It has become increasingly clear that the evangel is wholly and lastingly to the glory of God.

The evangel of God is His good message concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom.1:1-5). Paul was longing with driving eagerness to share it with others (1:6-15). This was because the evangel is the power of God for salvation, and in this message the righteousness of God is being revealed in connection with faith (1:16,17).

### THE DARK BACKGROUND

At this point, in Romans 1:18, the apostle brings in the subject of human irreverence and unrighteousness, and of God's indignation upon this corruption in His just judgment of sinful humanity. For us, this is bad news. But in understanding that Paul is still developing his thoughts regarding the evangel, we come to see this bad news concerning the whole of the human race as subservient to God's good news concerning Jesus Christ. What is said about God in Romans 1:18-3:20 must be submitted to what the evangel of God says about God. God's indignation and work of judgment are relative matters which lead to our appreciation of the absolute matters of God's love and work of righteousness revealed in the evangel.

The evangel dominates.

This means that what is said about humanity in this long section must also be understood in relation to the good news of God's powerful work of salvation. The experience of sin and its consequences cannot thwart God's purpose for good and, in the final analysis, will only serve to accentuate the glory spoken of in the evangel. God's righteousness and all the sins of all humanity are in view in both places, but only in the evangel are these brought together in the realm of salvation.

The very length and detailed review of the human situation in Romans 1:18-3:20 testifies to the importance the details in this section hold in our grasp of the evangel. They will greatly help us understand the grace and glory of God's "well-message."

#### ROMANS 3:21,22

We have returned now to the evangel itself. The direct presentation of the evangel which began in Romans 1:16,17 is resumed, but with this difference: The contrastive facts brought out in Romans 1:18-3:20 are fresh in our minds. We see the evangel now as it stands out brightly against the dark background of human sinfulness and divine indignation and judgment.

Hence we read the remarkable words of Romans 3:21,22:

*Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God.*

#### TEXTUAL CONCERNS

The earliest, extant Greek manuscripts lack the words "and on all" in verse 22, thus reading: "... yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all who are

believing." (A few other early witnesses have "on" instead of "for," but still confine the thought to believers.) Although the AV has both prepositional phrases as in the CV, most modern translations follow the early evidence and have only one, usually accepting the preposition "for" (often rendered "unto" or "to") instead of "on."

On the other hand, many later Greek manuscripts have the fuller reading, and an editor of Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century) who probably lived in the seventh century added the words "and on all" to that important witness. This editor claimed to work from an "ancient" and carefully prepared edition of the Scriptures compiled in the third century, and his notations in Codex Sinaiticus were given special attention in the compilation of the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT.

But our use of the longer reading is also based on contextual considerations. What Paul says before Romans 3:22, and afterwards as well, connects ideally and effectively with these two phrases, taking the first ("for all") in reference to all humanity, and the second ("on all who are believing") in reference to a special portion of the whole. I have tried to indicate some of these connections in this present article.

This, however, invites another point of criticism. Many scholars claim that, if genuine, the two prepositions, "for" [or "to"] and "on," would have been understood by the Greek reader in Paul's day in relation to the same object, "all who are believing." It would be the same as if Paul had written "for and on all who are believing." Such a sense has frequently been understood by commentators using the AV.

Yet here again Paul's use of the word "all" in verses 9 and 12 of this chapter of Romans, as well as other inclusive expressions, such as "not one," and "no flesh at all," provide clear connections with the first "all" of verse 22. The parallel passage of Romans 5:18 where Paul wrote the words "for all mankind" also provides evidence of what

is in his mind. Elsewhere in his letters he speaks of the believers as a special portion of all humanity (*cf* Gal.6:10; 1 Tim.4:10). He is indeed concerned with believers, but he goes to great length throughout this context of Romans to remind us who believe that we are not the only ones God is concerned about. Hence I take Paul as saying, in effect, "for all [humanity], and on all [those human beings] who are believing."

#### APART FROM LAW

In presenting the evangel here, Paul first sets the scene; it is "apart from law." It is apart from the situation presented in Romans 1:18-3:20 where God's righteous judgments centered upon what the human does. It is apart from that which led to the just verdict of Romans 3:20 concerning the entire human race. Human works do not play a part in the evangel (except in a negative way as the dark background of the evangel).

It is essential that we grasp this point. There is no room for our works, not any works of any of us, except to stand back and listen to what God has done.

Once we realize that Paul is speaking here with all seriousness concerning the human situation and what God has done about it, we can truly make progress in appreciation of the evangel and the revelation of God's righteousness in it.

#### GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND CHRIST'S FAITH

With the human and his deeds thus set aside for the moment, the evangel itself is seen once again in relation to God, what He is and what He does; this is primary. The evangel manifests God's righteousness, which was the very point Paul had made when he stopped for the long discussion of 1:18-3:20. This manifestation of divine righteousness in a work of salvation centers upon God sparing not

His own Son, Who faithfully endured the cross and died for our sins. Now we see God's righteousness clearly as it is revealed in the evangel in contrast to His indignation as revealed in His righteous works of judgment. We are seeing God's righteousness in a new and fuller way when we see it in the operations of God spoken of in the evangel.

*The good that God accomplishes is as righteous as God is righteous, and it is as solid and secure as the faith of Jesus Christ.*

### THIRD PLACE

With this emphasis on God and the gift of His Son plainly in view Paul now turns to the subject of the evangel in relation to the sinner. We take third place in this presentation of the evangel.

But exactly who occupies this "third place"?

Most certainly the righteousness of God made manifest through Jesus Christ's faith has the believer in view. But it is the believer as part of the "all" who sin. The believer is part of the whole of humanity as far as being a sinner is concerned. So also the believer is part of the whole of humanity when it comes to this righteousness of God which is manifest in the message of the evangel, in the message that says Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Everyone who is irreverent and unrighteous to any degree and at any time (*cf* Rom.1:18) and who is thus deserving of death (*cf* Rom.1:32) is here as an object which God has in view in this operation of His righteousness. Everyone who is under sin (*cf* Rom.3:9) and who ever has avoided God (*cf* Rom.3:12) is here in "third place."

What God has done in not sparing His Son but in giving Him up for sinners points ahead to a future realization which encompasses the entirety of the human race. But, in God's grace, the justification which has been gained by our Lord Jesus Christ as the outworking of God's right-

eousness is even now applied to those who are believing, who are, in themselves, sinners just like everyone else.

#### FOR ALL

Romans is addressed to those who have accepted the evangel in faith (Rom.1:8), both Greeks and barbarians, both wise and foolish (Rom.1:14). It reflects Paul's eagerness to bring the evangel anew to the believers in Rome, to the Jew first and the Greek as well (Rom.1:15,16). The letter is written with believers, indeed *all* believers, directly in view. But after making this clear, the apostle devotes what amounts to one eighth of the entire epistle to establish the fact that *all* mankind are sinners. He directs attention to "all the irreverence and injustice of human beings" (Rom.1:18), to the fact that sinners are deserving of death (Rom.1:32) and the fact that everyone who condemns the unrighteousness of others is condemning himself (Rom. 2:1-3). Because of this, the apostle points out, God's indignation is coming on humanity in the form of being given over to their decadence, and it will come in the future upon unrighteous humanity in the day of God's indignation and righteous judgment (Rom.2:4-10). This includes the Jew, despite the fact that God has promised much in the way of prerogative and benefit, to which He will be faithful (Rom.2:17-3:4). Yet the Jew also must be judged fairly (Rom.3:5-8). *All* are under sin (Rom.3:9). When God judges even the hidden things of humanity, it will be found that *all* avoid Him (Rom.3:12), and that *no flesh at all* can be justified by their works.

It is thus altogether fitting in this context that when Paul returns directly to the subject of the evangel of God concerning Jesus Christ, he should make reference to the entirety of the human race. The problem which he has set forth in Romans 1:18-3:20 embraces all mankind. There can be no doubt that Paul is relating the evangel to all man-



kind in Romans 5:12-19. Similarly, the "for all" of Romans 3:22 should be understood as referring to all mankind, just as the "all" of 3:9,12.

Indeed there is a striking parallel in terminology between the phrase we are looking at in Romans 3:22 and the phrase in Romans 5:18:

*a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith  
for all . . .*

*through one just [act]  
for all mankind . . .*

In both passages the death of Jesus Christ on the cross is associated with righteousness. In Romans 3:22 it is presented as "Jesus Christ's faith" which manifests "a righteousness of God." In 5:18 Christ's death on the cross is referred to by two words, literally signifying "one just-effect." They speak of the act of Christ in dying for sinners which is the effect of the demands of righteousness. Both passages also use the preposition "through" in the same sense. It is "through" the channel of that most pivotal and supremely righteous act of Christ upon Golgotha—it is "through" His faith, that all mankind will be blessed with justification and that we are blessed in spirit today.

Just as God's righteousness in judgment is related to all humanity in Romans 1:18-3:20, so is God's righteousness as it operates through the death of Jesus Christ related to all humanity. This is brought out briefly in Romans 3:22 and more extensively in 5:12-19.

#### DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS MANIFESTED

We have noted from the testimony of the law and the prophets that God's righteousness was associated, not only with divine judgment but also and most essentially with salvation. The righteousness of God being made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ must indeed take into

account every sin of every sinner. But in doing so it leads to salvation. If there are no saving results, God's righteousness could never be made manifest in the act of giving His Son to the sufferings and death of the cross. If there are no saving results for all, even if only one human being was left under the power of sin, the righteousness of God would be trapped in obscurity.

It is absurd to suppose that God's Word, provided for human beings, refers to God's righteousness in a way that cannot be understood by human beings as a matter of righteousness. There is no secret and hidden meaning to the word "righteousness" when it is used of God, indicating that it may include something we would never otherwise call righteousness. In fact, the more clearly we grasp what is revealed in the evangel of God concerning God's righteousness, the more truly we will exclaim, "This is righteousness indeed!"

How could we as believers who were chosen by God and designated for the place of a son long before we were born, come to perceive God's righteousness if only a chosen few are ever brought into salvation, while the rest are to be eternally denied the effects of Christ's faithful obedience to the cross? God's righteousness as it is manifested through Jesus Christ's faith is a quality of God that has all humanity in view; it is for all. It is activated in a righteous operation which manifests God's righteousness at every turn. It leads ultimately and surely to salvation. It leads to justification. It leads to God's glory. It righteously brings an end to the irreverence and unrighteousness of all humanity and supplants it with life's justifying.

#### ON ALL WHO ARE BELIEVING

Both prepositions, the "for" (Greek, *eis*) and the "on" (Greek, *epi*) preserve the focus on God and His activity and reflect the human position as receivers of what God

has done. This is not to say that believing and receiving are not acts. But they are acts that center upon and direct attention to God and His acts. They are acts of appreciation and reliance and enjoyment. We would boast in ourselves if justification came by way of our obedience to instructions of law. But our act of believing, if it is defined scripturally (and is not made to be an act that makes the difference between eternal bliss and everlasting hell) puts the spotlight on the One we believe.

God is the One Who establishes justification and brings its values into our lives. The gaining of justification is the direct operation of God by means of the faithful obedience of His Son. The granting of justification to us when we believe is also His work. And our act of believing, which is itself a gracious gift which God imparts to us, is the means God has chosen to convey what He has gained for all to us. For believers, boasting in ourselves is debarred and replaced by boasting in what God has accomplished.

As for the present, righteousness is reckoned to us. This blessing is presented especially in Romans chapter four. That is surely a major significance of the word "on." Paul had used this preposition earlier in reference to God's indignation when he wrote, "God's indignation is being revealed from heaven *on* all the irreverence and injustice of men" (Rom.1:18). It is God Who expresses His indignation in the giving over of sinners to their lusts and dishonorable passions and a disqualified mind. It is God also Who now expresses His grace in the reckoning of the righteousness achieved through the obedience of Jesus Christ to those who are believing.

This theme of God's present placement of the justification earned by Christ upon the believer will come before us as we continue forward from Romans 3:24. It is hardly enough to say that we are exceedingly blessed. But we are blessed in a way that blesses God (*cf* Eph.1:3) for His right-

eousness in His work of justification, a righteousness that is without mystery and redounds to His glory.

#### THE BELIEVERS IN RELATION TO ALL

As believers we receive special and transcendent blessings, not the least of which is the revelation that God's righteousness operates for the good of all. We receive blessings others do not receive, but we are still part of the entirety of the human race. In coming to appreciate our blessings we are not crippled in mind concerning God's purpose for the rest of mankind, of whom we are a part. We are part of the "all" in the phrase "for all," even as we are part of the "all" in the clause "all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God."

Note how Paul encloses the reference to believers between two references to all mankind:

*God's righteousness through Christ's faith for **all**,  
and on **all who are believing**,  
for there is no distinction, for **all** sinned and are wanting  
of the glory of God.*

Paul is not referring to two exclusive groups, such as believers and unbelievers, in Romans 3:22. He is referring to the whole of humanity and then to a special part of that whole. The believers are included in both the "for all" and the "on all who are believing."

When it comes to being a sinner, as well as when it comes to being objects of the righteousness of God as it operates through the faith of Jesus Christ, there is no distinction. The effects of this righteousness of God are for all, and will ultimately be enjoyed by all, even as all are sinners who, in themselves, stand in great need of the glory of God. The believer must realize that the benefits we receive now and in the eons ahead are due to the operation of the righteousness of God and are based upon what

God accomplished for all in the giving of His Son. Like the Jew of old, we who believe the evangel must realize that we all are sinners just like everyone else, and we are dependent on God and what He does through Christ for the benefit of all.

#### A PARALLEL PASSAGE

We have already referred to the parallel thought in 1 Timothy 4:10. Romans 3:22 says that the righteousness of God as it is manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ is for all and on all who are believing. God is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. In both cases the emphasis is on God first of all. He is the Saviour. He is righteous in His work of justification. 1 Timothy had previously identified God's will to save all mankind (1 Tim.2:4) with Christ Jesus giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (2:5,6). Our passage in Romans identifies the manifestation of God's righteousness with the faith of Jesus Christ. The objective in both cases embraces all humanity with a special application to the believers.

#### GOD'S RIGHTEOUS OPERATIONS

This accords with and helps greatly to elucidate all Scripture. They are filled with promises that have not yet been fulfilled. God's dealings with humanity involve leniency and patience and special choices, warnings and forbearance, followed by sudden acts of judgment. Paul has already reminded us that God will be faithful to the oracles He had given to the Circumcision, despite their unfaithfulness (*cf* Rom.3:1-4). Apart from faith, it all appears hopeless. The psalmist pleaded with Yahweh, saying, "Remember how transient is my life," and he even saw this in relation to everyone else, adding, "For what futility have You created all the sons of humanity?" (Psa.89:47). Yet he spoke with a marvelous hope that what seems to be so is not so. And the

psalm ends with an expression of faith that was expressed first by praise ("Blessed be Yahweh for the eon") followed by a double *Amen!* It was a hope that harmonized with the promise which came to Abraham that "In you all the families of the ground will be blessed" (Gen.12:3). Again it accorded with Yahweh's later words through the prophet, saying, "For to Me shall bow every knee, and every tongue shall swear fealty" (Isa.45:23).

However, since Christ had not yet, in His vast love, died for all (2 Cor.5:14), the basis of these prophetic words of promise could not have been seen. But now it is made manifest.

Continually, in the types provided by the offerings and reflected by chosen individuals such as Noah, Joseph, Moses and the prophets, there was a pointing ahead to Jesus Christ. It is only that these various themes of human lacks and needs and God's unique choosings and directings were not brought together as they now are by the evangel of God concerning His Son.

Yet now God has announced His evangel through His chosen apostles and prophets, speaking directly to our hearts through the ministry of the apostle Paul. Romans 3:21,22 has already made it clear that God has not created the sons of humanity for futility.

#### A SOLID JUSTIFICATION

Paul has not told us simply that we are justified. He would have us see the basis and nature of this justification which God has graciously and gratuitously granted to us. Its basis is solidly laid in the faithful act of Jesus Christ in His death for sinners, and its nature is solidly embedded in the righteousness of God.

To be a believer of the evangel—what a benefit, what a prerogative, what a blessing for our lives every day! Thanks and praise be to our God!

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 2005  
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-SIX

EDITORIAL

WHEN we speak of “the evangel of the *untraceable* riches of Christ” (Eph.3:8), we are mindful that it was the apostle Paul to whom these glorious revelations were first made known, who was granted the grace of bringing this evangel to the nations. In this service, then, it becomes the apostle’s privilege even as the burden of his ministry, “to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the *secret*” (Eph.3:9a), that is, this secret revelation concerning Christ as comprised in the *untraceable* riches of Christ.

Both in type and in prophecy, the Hebrew scriptures have much to say concerning the Messiah, or Christ, Who is destined to reign over the house of Jacob in the oncoming eons. Likewise, throughout the non-Pauline portions of the Greek scriptures, whether in the various accounts of the personal ministry of Jesus, the Nazarene, or in any of the remaining, related Circumcision writings, these scriptures as well set forth an abundance of disclosures of inestimable worth concerning this One Who is the Christ of God.

The salvation appointed unto the apostle Peter even as unto the chosen expatriates of the dispersion to whom he writes (1 Peter 1:1), is the salvation “concerning which . . . the prophets *seek out and search out*, who prophesy concerning the grace which is for *you* [i.e., for the believing Israelites, such as these chosen expatriated ones of the dispersion]” (1 Peter 1:10). In their inspired prophecies, as God’s spokesmen, these prophets of Israel thus engaged themselves, “searching into what or what manner of era *the spirit of Christ* in them made evident, when testifying beforehand to the sufferings pertaining to Christ and the glories after these” (1 Peter 1:11).

Conversely, those revelations comprised in the *untraceable* riches of Christ, which had been “concealed from the eons in God” (Eph.3:9), include the purpose and allotment

in grace of the ecclesia which is Christ's body (Eph.1:22b, 23a), the knowledge of "the secret of [God's] will . . . to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ" (Eph.1:9,10), even as "through [Christ] to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens" (Col.1:20). Thus it is that "God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2:9-11).

In our possession, however, of this transcendent grace of God which has been bestowed upon us ("the transcendent grace of God on you"; 2 Cor.9:14), if we would be citizens walking worthily of this *evangel* of Christ (Phil.1:27), we need to be walking worthily of the Lord *Himself* as well, "for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God" (Col 1:10).

We ourselves, however, are not competent to achieve any such lofty goal: "Not that we are competent of ourselves; to reckon anything as of ourselves [would be to err], but our competency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5). Our prayer, then, is not that God would simply help us to be faithful while still in the end finally leaving us to our own devices, but that He would *make us competent* in our service for Him (*cp* 1 Cor.15:10). Therefore, our prayer, in meekness yet in boldness, is that God Himself, Who loves us, and is giving us an eonian consolation and a good expectation in grace, would also be consoling our hearts and *establish us in every good work and word* (2 Thess.2:16,17). Accordingly, we pray as well that *God* should be fulfilling in us *every* delight of goodness and work of faith in power, so that not our name but the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, and we in Him, in accord with the *grace* of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess.1:11,12).

Blessed be the name of the One Who is our Lord, Who is also our Saviour!

J.R.C.



## ISAAC'S SOJOURNINGS

26 + There <sup>l</sup>came to be a famine in the land—aside from the former <sup>f</sup>famine <sup>w</sup>that <sup>b</sup>occurred in the days of Abraham—and Isaac <sup>l</sup>went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, to<sup>d</sup> Gerar. <sup>2</sup> + Then Yahweh <sup>l</sup>appeared to him and <sup>s</sup>said: You must not go <sup>l</sup>down to<sup>d</sup> Egypt. Tabernacle in the land of which I <sup>l</sup>sa<sup>a</sup>pprise <sup>γ</sup>you. <sup>3</sup> Sojourn in <sup>t</sup>this land, and I shall <sup>b</sup>be with you and bless you. For to you and to your seed am I giving <sup>all</sup> these <sup>l</sup>lands. And I will carry out <sup>t</sup>the oath <sup>w</sup>that I swore to your father Abraham. <sup>4</sup> + I will increase <sup>γ</sup>your seed like the stars of the heavens, and I will give to your seed <sup>all</sup> these <sup>l</sup>lands. + All nations of the earth will bless themselves in your seed, <sup>5</sup> inasmuch as <sup>γ</sup>your father<sup>n</sup> Abraham hearkened <sup>i</sup>to My voice and <sup>l</sup>kept My charge, My instructions, My statutes, and My laws.

<sup>6</sup> + So Isaac <sup>l</sup>dwelt in Gerar. <sup>7</sup> + When the men of the <sup>r</sup>i<sup>l</sup>place were asking <sup>γ</sup>about <sup>γ</sup>Rebecca<sup>o</sup>, his wife, + he <sup>s</sup>said, She is my sister, for he feared to say, <sup>γ</sup>She<sup>c</sup> is my wife, lest the men of the <sup>r</sup>i<sup>l</sup>place <sup>l</sup>kill <sup>γ</sup>him<sup>o</sup> on account of Rebecca, for she was of good appearance. <sup>8</sup> + It <sup>l</sup>came to be, <sup>t</sup>when he <sup>γ</sup>had been there <sup>long</sup> days, + that Abimelech king of the Philistines was gazing out through <sup>his</sup> window, and behold, + he <sup>s</sup>saw Isaac caressing <sup>his</sup> wife Rebecca. <sup>9</sup> + So Abimelech <sup>l</sup>called <sup>γ</sup>Isaac and <sup>s</sup>said <sup>γ</sup>to him<sup>o</sup>: Behold, she is <sup>γ</sup>surely your wife; and how could you say, She is my sister? + Isaac <sup>l</sup>sa<sup>a</sup> replied to him: <sup>t</sup>Because I <sup>l</sup>sa<sup>a</sup> thought, otherwise I might die on her account. <sup>10</sup> + Then Abimelech <sup>s</sup>said: What is <sup>this</sup> that you have done to us? Quite easily someone of <sup>γ</sup>my<sup>o</sup> people might have lain <sup>with</sup> your wife, and so you would have brought guilt upon us! <sup>11</sup> Abimelech

+then <sup>m</sup>gave 'instructions `to all <sup>7</sup>his<sup>n</sup> people, > saying-: 'Whoever touches<sup>l</sup> <sup>i</sup> 'this man +or <sup>i</sup> his wife shall be <sup>c</sup>put to death, yea death-.

<sup>12</sup> + Isaac 'sowed in 'that land and 'found <sup>7</sup>the barley yield<sup>cs</sup> in 'that year to be a hundredfold, +for Yahweh was blessing him. <sup>13</sup> + Thus the man became 'great and 'went on <sup>go</sup>getting- greater until <sup>t</sup> he became very great. <sup>14</sup> + It 'came to pass when he >had a stock of flocks + a stock of herds and many servants, +that the Philistines were 'envious `of him. <sup>15</sup> +As for all the wells which his father's servants had delved in the days of his father Abraham, the Philistines had obstructed them and had 'filled them with soil. <sup>16</sup> Abimelech +then 'said to Isaac: Go away from our people, for you are very much stauncher <sup>f</sup>than we are.

<sup>17</sup> +So Isaac 'went away from there and 'encamped in the wadi of Gerar and 'dwelt there. <sup>18</sup> + Isaac 'again + 'delted 'the water wells which <sup>7</sup>the servants<sup>n</sup> of his father Abraham had delved; +but the Philistines had 'obstructed them after the death of Abraham. And he called their names <sup>as</sup>by the same names <sup>w</sup>that his father had called > them. <sup>19</sup> +When Isaac's servants 'delted in the wadi <sup>7</sup>of Gerar<sup>o</sup>, + they 'found there a well of living water. <sup>20</sup> +But the shepherds<sup>l</sup> of Gerar 'contended with Isaac's shepherds<sup>l</sup>, > saying-: Ours is the water. +So he 'called the name of the well Esek, for they had annoyed <sup>w</sup> him there. <sup>21</sup> <sup>7</sup>+When Isaac 'shifted from there<sup>o</sup> and they 'delted another well, + they 'contended <sup>mr</sup>again over it. +So he 'called its name Sitnah. <sup>22</sup> +When he 'shifted from there and <sup>M</sup>they<sup>nc</sup> 'delted another well, + they did not contend over it. +So he 'called its name Rehoboth and 'said: 'Because now Yahweh has <sup>c</sup>given > us wide spaces, and we will be fruitful in the land.

<sup>23</sup> + From there he went 'up to Beer-sheba. <sup>24</sup> + <sup>i</sup> 'That night Yahweh 'appeared to him and 'said: I am the Elohim of your father Abraham; do not 'fear, for I am `with you! + I will bless you and increase `your seed <sup>t</sup>for the <sup>p</sup>sake

of My servant Abraham. <sup>25</sup> And he <sup>l</sup>built an altar there and <sup>l</sup>called <sup>i</sup>on the name of Yahweh. <sup>+</sup> Then he <sup>l</sup>pitched his tent there, and Isaac's servants <sup>l</sup>dug a well there.

<sup>26</sup> <sup>+</sup> As for Abimelech, he <sup>go</sup>came to him from Gerar <sup>+</sup>with Ahuzzath his associate and Phicol the chief of his military host. <sup>27</sup> <sup>+</sup> So Isaac <sup>l</sup>said to them: For what reason have you come to me, <sup>+</sup> since you' hate <sup>me</sup> and <sup>l</sup>sent me away from <sup>you</sup>? <sup>28</sup> <sup>+</sup> They <sup>lsa</sup>replied: We have seen, yea seen<sup>-</sup>, that Yahweh <sup>b</sup>is with you. And we <sup>l</sup>said, Let <sup>pr</sup>there <sup>b</sup>be an oath of imprecation between our two sides, between us and <sup>bt</sup> you. <sup>+</sup> Let us contract a covenant with you, <sup>29</sup> that you shall assuredly do <sup>wi</sup> us no evil, <sup>+</sup> just as we have not touched you, <sup>+</sup> just as we have done <sup>wi</sup> you but good and <sup>lm</sup>let you go in peace. You are now the blessed<sup>l</sup> of Yahweh.

<sup>30</sup> <sup>+</sup> So he <sup>ld</sup>made a feast for them, and they <sup>l</sup>ate and <sup>l</sup>drank. <sup>31</sup> <sup>+</sup> They <sup>c</sup>rose <sup>early</sup> in the morning and <sup>l</sup>swore an oath to each <sup>his</sup> other. <sup>+</sup> Then Isaac <sup>lm</sup>let them go, and they <sup>l</sup>went from <sup>him</sup> in peace. <sup>32</sup> <sup>+</sup> It <sup>l</sup>came to pass <sup>i</sup> that same day <sup>+</sup> that Isaac's servants <sup>l</sup>came and <sup>l</sup>told <sup>him</sup> concerning the well <sup>w</sup> that they had delved, and they <sup>l</sup>said to him: We have found water. <sup>33</sup> <sup>+</sup> So he <sup>l</sup>called <sup>it</sup> Shebah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba until <sup>this</sup> day.

<sup>34</sup> <sup>+</sup> Esau <sup>lb</sup>was forty years old <sup>+</sup> when he <sup>l</sup>took as wife <sup>Judith</sup> daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the <sup>7</sup>Hivite<sup>~nc</sup>. And they <sup>lb</sup>gave rise to an embitterment of spirit for Isaac and Rebecca.

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#### SEED LIKE THE STARS

YAHWEH told Abraham that his seed would be as uncountable as the *soil* of the *land* (Gen.13:16), the *sand* of the *sea* (22:17), and as the *stars* of the *heavens* (15:5; 22:17). This latter figure of speech is used by Yahweh in renewing the promise to Isaac (Gen.26:4).

Two contrasting spheres, *spirit* and *flesh*, *faith* and *works*, *celestial* and *terrestrial*, operate in the life of Abram-Abraham. When applied to his descendants in figurative language, one is likened to the scintillating stars, high above our heads, the other to the soil and seaside sand, found beneath our feet. These should help us to realize the vast advantage of faith over flesh. Stars shed light into the prevailing darkness, but soil and sand make heavy walking for our feet. In general, the stars are Abram's sons by *faith* as we read, "those of *faith*, *these* are," not only the *seed*, but the "sons of Abraham" (Gal.3:7).

Abra[ha]m's seed is not confined to the physical offspring of Israel. These are the soil and sand seed. All *believers* today are his *sons*, who can claim him as their spiritual father. In our case the figure of the stars is especially apt, for we are blessed with every *spiritual* blessing among the *celestials*. Here we have one of the early intimations of the present secret administration, and the celestial destiny of a selection out of mankind, not based upon a physical relationship, but on a spiritual bond.

#### THE NEGEB

The patriarchs spent most of their lives in what is called the Negeb (*ngb*). The AV renders it south, south country, south side, southward. It is not the usual word for *south*, but indicates a *region*, not merely a direction. As the stem *gb* denotes ARCH, or *rim*, and the Negeb seems to be the low country south of the semi-circle of mountain country, the name may be understood as signifying "[south]-rim."

#### THE SECOND FAMINE

Until lately the Negeb was considered practically desert. There are no streams worth mentioning, except, perhaps, in the rainy season, only dry "wadis," as the Arabs call them, or *arroyos* in Spanish, as in Southern Cali-

fornia. We have sometimes translated the Hebrew *nchl* "watercourse." However, there seems to be a good supply of underground moisture. That is why the patriarchs dug so many wells there. The soil seems to be fertile, so far as I could tell. Indeed, Isaac raised a fine crop of barley there a little later (26:12). But when the seasonal rains fail, there is a famine. One came in the days of Abraham, and he went to Egypt. One came in Isaac's time, but he is warned not to go to Egypt. So Isaac went down the wadi to Gerar, not far from its mouth. Much water flows in the sand below the surface.

Abraham had made a covenant with Abimelech at Beer-sheba acknowledging Abraham's ownership of the well at that place. Nevertheless the Philistines had filled up the other wells which Abraham had dug. This time they seized this well also. So Isaac merely gives them an appropriate name. One he called Esek (Annoyance) and the other Sitnah (ADVERSE). In this way he seems to have been driven up the wadi Gerar toward Beer-sheba. Finally, however, Isaac, with his servants, delve a well which was not contested, so Isaac called it Rehoboth (WIDE-spaces). This was some distance from his headquarters, so he had plenty of elbow room. Thence he returned to his headquarters at Beer-sheba.

#### PROMISES AND ALTAR

Abram was told to walk in the land, its length and its width (Gen.13:17). But after Isaac's return from Gerar, the patriarchs seem to have made Beer-sheba their headquarters (Gen.26:23). There Yahweh appeared to Isaac and renewed the blessing of Abraham. So there he built an altar and called on the Name of Yahweh. This implied a certain permanence, which was further confirmed by the digging of the well, which has remained to this day. This is significant. The enemies of Israel have caused them much

unrest. Abimelech's oath has been broken many times in its history, but the promise of Yahweh remains, and will be fulfilled in due time. Of this Beer-sheba is the permanent symbol to this day.

#### WIVES OF ESAU

When Isaac was forty years old, Abraham would not allow a marriage with the Canaanites who lived near his dwelling place, because they were under a curse (Gen. 9:24). Now that Esau was forty he took two wives from the accursed line of Canaan. Hence, a son of Shem, the blessed, links up with daughters of Canaan, the accursed. The effect was that the spirits of Isaac and Rebecca were embittered by them. But it kept Jacob from such a forbidden union.

A. E. Knoch

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## A PSALM OF DAVID

**22** + David <sup>isp</sup>addressed `the words of `this `song to Yahweh <sup>i</sup>on the day Yahweh rescued `him from the palm of all his enemies<sup>l</sup> and from the palm of Saul. <sup>2</sup> + He <sup>l</sup>said:

O Yahweh! my Crag,

+ My Fastness, + my Deliverance<sup>l</sup> for me!

**3** <sup>7</sup>My<sup>o</sup> Elohim, my Rock! I take <sup>l</sup>refuge in Him,

My Shield and the Horn of my salvation!

My Impregnable Retreat and my Haven!

My Saviour<sup>l</sup>, You Who are saving me from violence!

**4** The One being praised! I <sup>l</sup>call on Yahweh,

And I am being saved from my enemies<sup>l</sup>.

**5** For the <sup>M</sup>cables<sup>~c</sup> of death have enveloped me,

<sup>7</sup>And<sup>cs</sup> the torrents of decadence, they <sup>l</sup>frighten me.

**6** The cables of the unseen, they surround me;

The traps of death have confronted me.

**7** In my distress I <sup>l</sup>called on Yahweh,

And to my Elohim I <sup>7l</sup>implored<sup>~cs</sup>.

+ From His temple He <sup>l</sup>heard my voice,

And my imploring <sup>M</sup>before Him,

it <sup>l</sup>came<sup>c</sup> <sup>i</sup>to His ears.

**8** + Then the earth <sup>l</sup>reeled and <sup>l</sup>quaked.

<sup>7</sup>And<sup>cs</sup> the foundations of the <sup>M</sup>mountains<sup>~c</sup>,

they were <sup>l</sup>disturbed,

And they <sup>l</sup>reeled, for His anger grew <sup>-</sup>hot.

**9** Smoke ascended <sup>i</sup>from His nostrils,

And fire that <sup>l</sup>devours, from His mouth;

Flashing embers blazed forth from Him.

**10** + He <sup>l</sup>stretched out the heavens and <sup>l</sup>descended,

And murkiness was beneath His feet.

- 11 + He <sup>l</sup>rode on a cherub and <sup>l</sup>flew;  
 +So He <sup>M</sup>swooped down<sup>~c</sup> on the wings of the wind.
- 12 + He <sup>l</sup>set darkness round about Him;  
<sup>7</sup>His booth<sup>~cs</sup> was the <sup>7</sup>darkness<sup>~c</sup> of waters,  
 the thick clouds of the skies.
- 13 <sup>f</sup>Out of the brightness in front of Him  
 Flashing embers of fire blazed forth.
- 14 <sup>7+</sup>Then<sup>c</sup> Yahweh <sup>l</sup>thundered from the heavens,  
 And the Supreme, He <sup>l</sup>gave forth His voice.
- 15 + He <sup>l</sup>sent off His arrows,  
 +with which He <sup>l</sup>scattered them,  
<sup>7</sup>And He multiplied<sup>o</sup> bolts of lightning  
 +with which He <sup>l</sup>discomfited them.
- 16 +So the channels of <sup>M</sup>water<sup>~c</sup> were made to <sup>l</sup>appear,  
<sup>M</sup>And<sup>c</sup> the foundations of the habitation  
 were <sup>l</sup>revealed,  
<sup>7f</sup>By Your<sup>~cs</sup> rebuke, O Yahweh,  
<sup>f</sup>By the breath of the wind of ~Your~ nostrils.
- 17 He <sup>l</sup>sent from the height; He <sup>l</sup>took me;  
 He <sup>l</sup>removed me from many waters;
- 18 He <sup>l</sup>rescued me from my strong enemy<sup>l</sup>  
<sup>7</sup>And<sup>cs</sup> from those hating me;  
 For they were tougher<sup>f</sup> than I.
- 19 They <sup>l</sup>confronted me in the day of my calamity,  
 +Yet Yahweh <sup>l</sup>became my Stay.
- 20 + He <sup>c</sup>brought me <sup>l</sup>forth into a wide place;  
 He <sup>l</sup>liberated me, for He has delighted in me.
- 21 Yahweh <sup>l</sup>requited me according to my righteousness;  
 According to the purity of my hands  
 He <sup>l</sup>recompensed <sup>></sup> me.
- 22 For I have kept the ways of Yahweh,  
 And I have not been wicked by turning from  
 my Elohim.
- 23 For all His judgments have been in front of me,  
 And I have not <sup>l</sup>put away His statutes from <sup>M</sup>me<sup>~s</sup>.



- 24 + I have **'become flawless** <sup>7wt</sup>**'before~<sup>cs</sup> Him;**  
 + **Let me 'keep myself from my depravity.**
- 25 + **Yahweh 'recompensed > me**  
**according to my righteousness,**  
**According to my purity in front of His eyes.**
- 26 **With the benign one You show Yourself 'benign,**  
**<sup>7And<sup>cs</sup></sup> with a flawless master You show Yourself**  
**'flawless.**
- 27 **With the purified<sup>l</sup> one You show Yourself 'pure,**  
**+But with the perverse one You show Yourself 'cunning.**
- 28 **<sup>7For You~<sup>c</sup></sup> Yourself shall save the humbled people,**  
**+But You shall abase those whose <sup>7eyes~<sup>c</sup></sup> are exalted<sup>l</sup>.**
- 29 **<sup>t</sup>Indeed You <sup>M</sup>Yourself shall light up<sup>s</sup> my lamp,**  
**O Yahweh;**  
**<sup>M</sup>My Elohim~<sup>s</sup>, He shall brighten my darkness,**
- 30 **So that <sup>i</sup>by You I may run over a ~stone dike~,**  
**<sup>M</sup>And<sup>s</sup> <sup>i</sup>by my Elohim I may leap a barricade.**
- 31 **The One, El, His way is flawless;**  
**The <sup>sa</sup>word of Yahweh is refined<sup>l</sup>;**  
**He is a Shield to all who are taking refuge in Him.**
- 32 **For is there any ~Eloah~ apart from Yahweh?**  
**And is there any Rock apart from our Elohim?**
- 33 **He is the One, El, <sup>7the One</sup> belting me~<sup>Qc</sup> with valor,**  
**And He <sup>lg</sup>spreads flawlessness on my way,**
- 34 **The One poisoning my feet like hinds',**  
**And on my high-places He causes me to 'stand.**
- 35 **He is the One teaching my hands for the battle,**  
**So +that my arms may manage a bow of bronze.**
- 36 + **You 'gave to me the shield of Your salvation;**  
**And Your <sup>Q</sup>help~<sup>c</sup> made me <sup>lmn</sup>great.**
- 37 **You 'widened my steps beneath me,**  
**So +that my limbs have not tottered.**
- 38 **I 'pursued my enemies<sup>l</sup> and 'exterminated them,**  
**And I did not 'return until they were <sup>all</sup>finished<sup>-</sup>.**
- 39 + **I <sup>all</sup>finished them and I 'transfixed them,**

And they were not able to <sup>l</sup>rise.

+ They <sup>l</sup>fell beneath my feet.

40 + You <sup>l</sup>belted me with valor for the battle;

You <sup>l</sup>bowed beneath me those rising against me.

41 + As for my enemies<sup>l</sup>, You <sup>l</sup>gave to me the scruff  
of their necks,

And those hating me, I <sup>l</sup>effaced them.

42 They <sup>7</sup>implored<sup>~s</sup>, <sup>+</sup>yet there was no salvation;  
They called to Yahweh,

<sup>+</sup>yet He would not answer them.

43 + I reduced them to <sup>l</sup>powder like the soil of the earth;

Like the mud of the streets I <sup>l</sup>pulverized them;

I <sup>l</sup>stamped on them.

44 + You <sup>l</sup>delivered me from the disputes of my people;

You <sup>M</sup>placed<sup>~</sup> me <sup>’</sup>at the head of the nations.

A people I had not known, they <sup>l</sup>serve me;

45 The sons of the foreigner, they <sup>l</sup>cower <sup>’</sup>before me;

<sup>’</sup>As soon as the ear is hearing<sup>~</sup> they <sup>l</sup>hearken to me.

46 The sons of the foreigner, they <sup>l</sup>disintegrate,

And they come <sup>M</sup>cringing<sup>~</sup> from their enclosures.

47 Alive is Yahweh, and being blessed is my Rock;

+ Let the Elohim of the rock of my salvation  
be exalted.

48 He is the One, El,

<sup>’</sup>Who is <sup>g</sup>rendering vengeance for me,

And the One <sup>c</sup>bringing down the peoples under me,

49 The One <sup>c</sup>bringing me forth from my enemies<sup>l</sup>.

+ From those rising against me have you <sup>l</sup>exalted me;

From the man of violence have You <sup>l</sup>rescued me.

50 Therefore, I shall acclaim You <sup>l</sup>among the nations,  
O Yahweh,

And to Your Name shall I make melody.

51 He is the One magnifying the salvations of His king.

And <sup>d</sup>showing benignity to His anointed,

To David, and to his seed <sup>fr</sup>for the eon.

## DAVID'S ROCK

THIS CHAPTER contains Psalm 18 with minor changes. In this psalm David interprets the experiences of his life from his personal point of view. He spent much time as a shepherd and as a fugitive in the wilderness, and on numerous occasions found safety hiding in the rocks or by climbing to some craggy height where he had seen the wild goats look down on a hunter with complacency. God was the Rock.

Commenting on Psalm 18, Donald G. Hayter wrote, "David's first place of refuge in his flight from Saul was a cave in a rock at Adullam. He returned also to it later for safety (2 Sam.23:13). For him the rock was a stronghold and a place of security where he was exalted above his enemies. In the rock he saw an ideal picture of his Lord. Not only was it a place of concealment, but there was water there (Psa.78:15) and even honey (Psa.81:16). In the rocks were clefts, fissures and caves, providing protection. The Lord is the Rock of our salvation."<sup>1</sup>

## HE HEARD MY VOICE

David revelled in the truth that God heard his prayers. Even from the holy courts of His heavenly temple, David's Elohim heard his cries for help and came to his rescue with earthshaking power and dreadful might that dumbfounded David's enemies. With Yahweh on his side, or, rather, he on Yahweh's side, it mattered not that David's enemies were larger and stronger than he. What mattered was that David loved and honored God, and from the bottom of his heart he was devoted to God. His stumblings along the way just served to remind him that God was his first and every need. He was the One, El, Who belted him with valor and caused him to stand (2 Sam.22:33,34).

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1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.65, pp.40,41.

David had an exceptional ability in trials and under stress to approach God, looking at God and praising Him, rather than focusing on his problem. His descriptions do not suggest that the laws of nature were repeatedly suspended, but rather he was enabled to visualize God delivering him through whatever means were employed. He saw God working in and through everything that happened. David saw what others did not see. His confidence in God is proven and emphasized by what some might dismiss as poetic exaggeration. His inspired expressions may be figurative, but the inescapable truth is that he saw and knew God as his Deliverer.

It was God Who delivered him from trouble. It was God Who blessed and strengthened him and made him secure. It was God Who prepared for David's future, bringing him to peace and prosperity and promising to establish his house in the generations to follow.

J. Phillip Scranton

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#### WITH CHRIST IN VIEW

In the *preceding psalm*, as in many others, the words of David have the Lord Jesus Christ in view. (Note Paul's use of 2 Samuel 22:50 in Romans 15:9 in reference to Christ.) David spoke of himself, but he spoke as led by the spirit of Christ in him (*cf* 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Sam.23:2). Consequently, David's feelings and thoughts foreshadowed those of the Lord in His sufferings under the attacks of His enemies and even more pointedly in the rescue and triumph which God would provide for Him.

What must our Lord have felt as He fed on such words as these in "the days of His flesh," when He was "offering both petitions and supplications with strong clamor and tears to Him Who is able to save Him out of death" (Heb.5:7)! The psalm speaks of facing "violence" (v.3) and being confronted by "the traps of death" (v.6) in the day of His calamity (v.19). But with even greater detail it reflects our Lord's assurance in God as the Horn of His salvation, His Rock and Stay, Who will brighten His darkness with salvation over His strong enemy (*cf* verses 2-4, 18,19,29).

D.H.H.

## PERCEPTION AND REALITY

### **Question:**

Even among believers in Christ who believe that, to accord with God's will to save all (1 Tim.2:4) that all will eventually be saved, there is great diversity of opinion concerning nearly every other teaching. Is the only unity, then, common to our faith that, in the end, all will finally be saved?

Also, I have recently been severely criticized by certain fellow believers, ones with whom, in fact, I share much common faith, even though we differ in various particulars, especially as to the authoritarian claims they make concerning their own ministry, ones which entail their teachings necessarily being correct. While I reject their claims here, I do not reject their place as members of the body of Christ. Yet they have gone so far as to say that I am not saved, that I am serving an idol, and the like (see their letter to me, enclosed).

Please be so kind as to help me with these concerns.

### **Answer:**

YOU ASKED, in relation to your mutual faith with others who also acknowledge God as the Saviour of all mankind yet disagree with you on other subjects, "Is the only unity, then, common to our faith that, in the end, all will finally be saved?"

Those who recognize God according to His glorious title as the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10), are agreed that in order for a title to be declarative of who one is, that same title must be reflective of what one does, else one cannot actually be such a one as his title declares him to be.

Yet even so, concurrence of faith among such believers as to the scope of salvation, is no assurance of concurrence of understanding among these same believers concerning other scriptural themes. As you noted, even among those believers in Christ who rejoice that God will become All in all (1 Cor.15:28), beyond their foundational faith that Christ died for their sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3,4), there is indeed great diversity of opinion on ever so many other subjects.

Therefore, yes, among those sharing common faith in God as the Saviour of all mankind, there may be few other particulars of interpretation on general doctrines concerning which all such believers enjoy common agreement.

However, even though they embrace some type of partialist (as opposed to universalist) view concerning salvation, there are others who are nevertheless genuine believers since they genuinely believe in Christ. Among these believers as well there is also a wide diversity of opinion, except on this fundamental theme of the death and resurrection of their Saviour, Who died for their sins.

It is God Who enlightens, and grants understanding. Even as Paul declares concerning the believer's faith: "I plant, Apollos irrigates, but God makes it grow up . . . . God's farm, God's building, are you" (1 Cor.3:6-9). And, "The entire body . . . is growing in the growth of God" (Col.2:19).

In some ways, not only as concerns others but as concerns ourselves as well, we would certainly like for "the growth of God" to be different than it is. But then we would also like not to get old and die, not to experience pain and suffering, never to be discouraged or unhappy—in a word we would like to never have occasion to have any need for patience and endurance.

Surely we are unwise in all of this, including in our exces-

sive worries over the fact that both our friends and associates in faith in particular and we ourselves just as surely are not yet nearly as mature in Christ as we ought to be, ideally speaking. Yet if we are all growing in the growth of God, and it is God Who makes our faith grow up, it being the case that, "For everything there is a stated time, and a season for every event under the heavens" (Ecc.3:1), then, as to God's purpose, all is well with the world, including in all ways in which the world, considered in itself, is ever so far from well. Let us, then, enter into this truth, and in so doing, enter as well into *the peace of God*: "... the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind ... [the peace of God that] shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:7).

Now, concerning your other area of concern, in which you stated that you had recently been severely criticized by certain fellow believers, ones who presented themselves to you as authorities, in such a way even as to claim that you were necessarily wrong and they were necessarily right, I can only say that it is sad to hear of these exceedingly critical and negative attitudes. Because of the acridity and extreme severity of their tone, I will herein only cite in briefest form from their writing you shared with me, and without any personal reference.

For all that I have seen of various most ungracious persons over the years, I do not think that I have ever seen the equal in sheer self-confident scornfulness toward others of that exhibited in these present vituperations of your detractors. "Biting and devouring" (Gal.5:15) of one another, even as adverse "judging" of one another (Rom.14:4,10,13,22), is always wrong; but when such injurious acts are engaged in repeatedly and to such a great degree—and even then without shame even as acknowledgement of what one is doing—the consequences of such acts are bound to be very injurious. That these folks of whom you speak affirm

the eventual salvation of all makes their, as you say, "Eternal torment-like spirit" toward those who differ with them all the more regrettable.

Declaring to you even that "you are not saved," that "you are serving an idol, not God, [hence that] you need to repent," besides saying that another man whom they also criticize "does not know the Lord either," and that still another "was not a genuine servant of God," while all the while assertively equating with "the truth" what can only be their own opinions and interpretations, is truly a dangerous and deleterious mixture.

Our greatest need, surely, is for a spirit of humility, gentleness, meekness, kindness, and graciousness. Then, as a complement to such nobility of heart, just as it would be very helpful for us all to be more familiar with various matters of language, it would be at least as helpful as well for us to have a good, working knowledge of the elements of critical thinking, which includes an awareness of the constituent elements of fallacious argumentation.

Foundational to critical thinking is the distinction between epistemology and ontology.

The philosophical term "epistemology" speaks of the study of the nature of knowledge. "Knowledge" is "that which is perceived with the mind" (see Keyword Concordance entry "know," p.169: "[to] perceive with the mind"). One's own personal epistemology, then, is simply one's own theory of knowledge, which explicates one's own opinions and conclusions.

The philosophical term "ontology" (which is the study of the nature of being), however, speaks not of what we perceive, but of that which actually exists, or is constitutive of reality.

One's epistemology speaks simply of one's *perceptions* (i.e., conceptions) as to what is true, correct, or real; it is simply incorrect to equate or identify it with what *is* true,



correct, or real. Whether explicit or implicit, in any human statement of what is true, one should understand that what is declared to be so is not necessarily so, but is so simply according to a certain person's knowledge or perception of things. Our knowledge and understanding not only of the Scriptures but of anything else as well is just that: it is our knowledge and understanding *of* reality (as in the expressions, "to the best of my knowledge," and "according to my understanding"), not necessarily reality itself.

Yet nothing is more common than for people to speak of what they "know" to be true (based simply on their confidence in its correctness) as being that which *is*—in actual reality—true. They *perceive* something to be so; ergo, it *is* so! The ubiquity of such faulty thinking seems amazing, until we consider that such irrationality is simply native to the flesh. It is surely a gracious gift indeed to enjoy some clarity on this point, for left to ourselves, we would be no different than anyone else, whether concerning this failing or any other.

As concerns our faith, by God's grace, we can become *settled and unmovable* (1 Cor.15:58) as to what the Scripture actually says, but in this only to the degree that we can intelligently discriminate between (1) what the Scripture says, and (2) what we interpret as being constitutive of its proper sense, in which it should be understood. Even this can hardly be gained without sufficient ability, substantively, to discern between a correct and incorrect translation of any certain scriptural declaration.

And, also by God's grace, we can become *settled and unmovable* (not in a stubborn sense, but in a sense of allegiance to truth) as even concerns the Scripture's interpretative meaning (the sense in which it should be understood) as well, yet only to the degree that God enlightens and otherwise enables us not only to engage in critical thinking concerning the true sense of His Word, but to do

so faithfully and well. Thus, we may become settled and unmovable *in the knowledge and understanding which God has granted us.*

What we must not do, however, is equate what we believe to be our God-given knowledge and understanding with ontological reality. Now the person who does not like this fact and does not wish to adjust his thinking to accord with it, will say (effectually at least): "Well, if that is true, then I cannot, warrantably, be absolutely certain, beyond any doubt, about anything. Yet I abhor any such thought and find it totally unacceptable; therefore, I reject it." Of course my rejoinder here is simply that it is not a question of what any certain person may abhor or not abhor, find acceptable or unacceptable, but of what is true, and demonstrably so, to all who are able to make the distinction between what we perceive to exist and what actually exists.

I make mention of all of this in the context of these severe charges which certain persons have rendered against you, as well as against various others, in the hopes that we ourselves at least—let others do what they will—will in any case refrain from being so dogmatic and cocksure concerning what are necessarily, at best, only our considered judgments and careful opinions.

What a travesty this situation is: folks who seem quite unaware of what they are actually doing in this regard, speaking as if their word were tantamount to God's Word, and then, beyond this, carrying on in such an offensive and unhelpful way. It simply does not follow from the fact that "the Bible says" a certain thing (even on the assumption that the original Scripture also says that same thing), that our reasonings concerning and conclusions therefrom are correct. That is, it simply does not follow that the two may be equated, that one is the equivalent of the other.

We are continually interpreting Scripture, even when we may not realize that we are doing so, and perhaps espe-

cially when, in our naiveté, we confidently suppose that we are *not* doing so. It is a matter of considerable perspicacity and much effort to distinguish declaration from interpretation, to be able to discriminate between the two; and, even if we should truly possess the former, this is no guarantee that our ratiocinations will lead us faithfully into possession of the latter.

Among humans, so-called “philosophical certainty” (in the sense of being constitutive of that which, beyond question, is necessarily correct) is something that any philosopher worth his salt knows cannot be had. Any believer, then, who would also be worth his salt, needs to be equally aware of this, that is, of the vital distinction between perception and reality.

The “problem of uncertainty,” like “the problem of evil,” need not actually be a problem—surely not in any sense unmitigable. For believers at least, it does not lead—“inexorably” or otherwise—either to relativism or to nihilism (the latter term refers to the notion not only that, at present, nothing can be known to a “philosophical certainty,” but that this will always be so and that therefore all values are baseless, including religious and moral values). Any abiding unsatisfactoriness here that we ourselves may feel at present, may be greatly and perhaps even wholly relieved through our heartfelt engagement in, confidence in and reliance upon the living God, Who is our Friend and our Father, Who loves us with a vast love, and of Whom it is written: “all My counsel I will do.” Ultimately speaking, then, our confidence is not in our understanding of Scripture (even in its most precious particulars), but in the God of Scripture, Who is love, and Who will exercise judgment and do right.

It is not that, as concerns our faith, we may have no certainty of any kind, but only that, in the nature of things, we cannot have a certain kind of certainty, the certainty that no man is warranted in having, the conceited (or at

least unattainable-desire) certainty that he simply *is* right (hence, that he cannot be mistaken), which is a certainty we do well not to seek.

As believers, we can have and do have a certain certainty; it is the certainty of *conviction*, which is to say the certainty of faith. And in this we are growing in *confidence*, in *trust* in the word of the living God. In fact, it is this proper certainty which is the essential idea of the word "certainty" itself in its Latin root from which it is derived (*certus*, from *cernere*, "to determine"). Properly, then, that of which we are "certain" is that which we have determined (i.e., "settled") to be so. The beyond-all-doubt type of certainty, however, that men may want even today (yet would do well not to want, while we are still walking by faith, not by literal, tangible perception) is simply a windmill of the mind, an unachieveable *desiderata*.

We must humbly acknowledge that even those writings that we deem our best and most faithful efforts are ones which still we wish were better. On rare occasions, due to some hindrance or inadvertency of circumstance, a statement may have appeared within our pages which was not in accord even with our own findings, which findings themselves, even at their best, are never infallible.

Even as with all other human undertakings to teach God's Word, the same is true in our own case, through our own publication. *Unsearchable Riches* magazine is not the Sacred Scriptures; nor is any other human publication the Sacred Scriptures.

As concerns our own personal faith and as concerns our publication *Unsearchable Riches* as well, we can only say that we are thankful for the faith God has given us and for the little place of service He has allowed us to be in. We trust that our readers will find much that is good in our writings over the years, including in the articles found in our present issue. May God bless the good, to the glory of His Name.

J.R.C.

## CONSCIENCE AND THE EVANGEL

BEFORE Adam and Eve sinned they may not have been consciously aware of right and wrong, but once they sinned their conscience was suddenly awakened: "Then the eyes of both of them were unclosed, and they realized that they were naked" (Gen.3:7).

Although "conscience" is never mentioned in the Old Testament, the idea of conscience is there. The first to refer specifically to conscience was the apostle Paul. Of the thirty-two times conscience appears in the New Testament, he mentions it twenty-two times. The conscience can be *weak* and thus *polluted* (1 Cor.8:7,12) and *defiled* (Titus 1:15). One can have "a *good* conscience" (1 Tim.1:5,19; 1 Peter 3:16,21), as well as have a *clear* conscience (1 Tim.3:9; 2 Tim.1:3). It is also possible that peoples' consciences can be *cauterized* (1 Tim.4:2). One's conscience can be *cleansed* (Heb.9:14) and be figuratively *wicked* (Heb.10:22). One can also possess an *ideal* conscience (Heb.13:18).

The conscience is that which recognizes what is right. However weak or cauterized, it will be called upon to testify concerning mankind in the day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity according to Paul's evangel, through Jesus Christ (*cf* Rom.2:15,16).

### CONSCIENCE IS AGAINST ETERNAL TORMENT

Conscience in an ideal state will repudiate the doctrine of eternal torment. Many ministers who teach eternal torment, admit that they wish it were not so. Whether consciously or not, when they say such things they are crit-

icizing God as to what they think His will is for mankind. Even though they believe everlasting woe is taught in the Scriptures and they may have been inculcated with this since youth, they seem to be revolted by this very teaching. Their conscience cannot stand together with it. That which such ministers are propagating does not commend itself to their consciences, nor can it commend itself to any man's conscience, since the basic nature of conscience is that it sides with what is perceived as good.

#### THE EVANGEL

Paul's evangel commended itself to every man's conscience:

"Therefore, having this dispensation, according as we were shown mercy, we are not despondent. But we spurn the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor yet adulterating *the word of God*, but, by manifestation of *the truth*, *commending ourselves to every man's conscience* in God's sight.

"Now if *our evangel* is covered, also, it is covered in those who are perishing, in whom the god of this eon blinds the apprehensions of the unbelieving so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them" (2 Cor.4:1-4). Here Paul sandwiches his reference to conscience between "the word of God," "the truth" and "our evangel."

Albert Barnes wrote concerning the common teaching on hell, "I have never seen a particle of light thrown on these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind; nor have I an explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest which would be of relief to you. I trust other men—they profess to do—understand this better than I do; and that they have not the anguish of spirit which I have; but I confess when I look on a world of sinners and of sufferers; upon death-beds and graveyards; upon the

world of woe, filled with hosts to suffer forever; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow citizens; when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger; and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned; and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet He does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark, to my soul, and I cannot disguise it.”<sup>1</sup>

Had this commentator seen just “a particle of light” concerning the evangel as to the outcome of that which is procured for all mankind, this would have commended itself to his conscience and would have assuaged his tortured mind. “God . . . wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth . . . Christ Jesus is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all” (1 Tim.2:4,6).

Please take special note that Barnes could not conscientiously side with what he perceived God was doing with humanity. His conscience was working very well, yet he makes note of those who had no “anguish of spirit” over this matter. He also wrote in the same book: “These and kindred difficulties meet the mind. They meet us when we endeavor to urge our fellow sinners to be reconciled to God, and to put confidence in Him. On this ground they hesitate. These are real, not imaginary difficulties.” He is correct. Anyone with a conscience finds it difficult to be at peace with and put trust in a God Who eternally tortures certain of His creatures.

Yet, when people see, according to Paul’s evangel that God’s judgment is *just* (Rom.2:5), that Christ’s obedience more than offsets Adam’s disobedience (Rom.5:18,19), and that God has a wonderful goal to be All in all of humanity (1 Cor.15:28), how can this not commend itself to every man’s conscience? The true evangel allows one to “put confidence in Him” and “to be reconciled to God.”

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1. Albert Barnes: PRACTICAL SERMONS, pp. 123-125.

When eternal torment is taught our conscience must conclude:

God's love is brought in question,  
 God's justice is brought in question,  
 God's glory is brought in question,  
 Christ's sacrifice is brought in question,  
 God and Christ seem to be fiends rather than friends.

#### COMMENDING TO OUR CONSCIENCE

Paul said he and his fellow evangelists were "by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in God's sight" (2 Cor.4:2). Christians and non-Christians need to have the truth manifested and commended to their conscience.

The elements of the Greek word *sunistêmi* are TOGETHER-STAND. It is translated as "commend, have cohesion, cohere, stand together" (KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.54). Paul, and those with him were, by manifestation of the truth, *commending* themselves to every man's conscience. Every man's conscience, when presented with the true evangel of the glory of Christ, will stand together with it. A person may conscientiously say, "That sounds right to me." However, due to the flesh or the god of this eon blinding their apprehensions (*cf* 2 Cor.4:4), they may say they have a hard time believing it.

George L. Rogers wrote this concerning conscience: "It is the supreme faculty in man, for however bewildered his intellect, conscience, if allowed to speak, always declares for right as against wrong. It is the ally of the preacher of righteousness and truth. Paul appealed for its support in his advocacy of the truth (2 Cor.4:2). As faith lays hold of Christ, so conscience lays hold of the divine will so far as revealed, legislating and judging accordingly."<sup>2</sup>

2. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.20, pp. 220,221.



## CONSCIENCE ALLIED WITH FAITH

The conscience is a strong ally of faith. Often the apostle Paul would join the two in the same breath. For instance:

“Now the consummation of the charge is love out of a clean heart and a good *conscience* and unfeigned *faith*, from which some, swerving, were turned aside into vain prating” (1 Tim.1:5).

“... having *faith* and a good *conscience*, which some, thrusting away, have made shipwreck as to the *faith*” (1 Tim.1:19).

“... having the secret of the *faith* in a clear *conscience* (1 Tim.3:9).

“Now the spirit is saying explicitly, that in subsequent eras some will be withdrawing from the *faith*, giving heed to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons, in the hypocrisy of false expressions, their own *conscience* having been cauterized” (1 Tim.4:1,2)

We can see from the above verses that faith, the faith in the evangel, and a good conscience were of utmost importance. In fact, Paul often gave stress to his conscience and that of others in relation to service. Concerning himself he wrote, “Grateful am I to God, to Whom I am offering divine service from my ancestors with a clear conscience” (2 Tim.1:3). However, some, such as Hymeneus and Alexander, were thrusting away a good conscience. Upon thrusting it away they began to calumniate (*cf* 1 Tim.1:19,20). The words, *calumniate* and *blaspheme* are used for the same Greek verb, *blasphêmeō*. We find that the elements of that Greek word in the Keyword Concordance, are HARM-AVER. Calumniate: “To make maliciously false statements about; slander.”<sup>3</sup> In a sense, they became rudderless, drifting aimlessly into hazzards unknown, thus making ship-

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3. THE AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY.

wreck as to the faith. The faith became a complete ruin due to thrusting away what used to be a good conscience.

Paul linked conscience to the withdrawal from the faith which would occur in subsequent eras (1 Tim. 4:1,2). Once a person's conscience has been cauterized, the way is open to "giving heed to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons, in the hypocrisy of false expressions." A doctor may cauterize or seal up a wound or abnormal tissue with a cautery. This is done by means of caustic substances, electric currents, lasers, or very hot or very cold instruments. Cauterization is used to stop heavy bleeding as in the case of amputations. A person's conscience may thus be sealed so that it becomes incapable of recognizing the spirits which deceive and the teachings of demons in the hypocrisy of false expressions.

I remember when I was a young man, camping out and sitting around the fire, I would look intently into the flames and glowing embers and ask my friends just how it is possible that people can go to a place like that for eternity. No one ever had an answer. My conscience was so stirred by the nightmarish scenes conjured up in my mind that I could not rest until I had a good answer. Not until a friend, years later, handed me a **CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT** and some writings from the Concordant Publishing Concern, were my fears put to rest. My conscience exalted at the wonderful truths! It could not side with the doctrine of demons called "eternal torment." I thank God my conscience was not cauterized so that I could not recognize the truth when it was brought before me!

#### EXPOSING SEVERELY

Paul left Titus in Crete (Titus 1:5) where many, especially those of the Circumcision, were insubordinate, vain praters and imposters (Titus 1:10). Do we avow an acquaintance with God? Do our acts deny what we avow? Are we

abominable? "All, indeed, is clean to the clean, yet to the defiled and unbelieving (un-faithing) nothing is clean, but their mind as well as *conscience* is defiled. They are avowing an acquaintance with God, yet by their acts are denying it, being abominable and stubborn, and disqualified for every good act" (Titus 1:15,16).

We should not look outside the walls of the ecclesia concerning what our apostle wrote to Titus here. Paul told Titus to "be exposing them severely, that they may be sound in the faith" (1:13). Paul's concern was with believers, that they would be without weakness and error in faith. Notice how he brought in the conscience: "... their mind as well as conscience is defiled" (v.15). He associated a defiled conscience with those who were unsound in the *faith*, who were in this sense, "*unbelieving*." (Belief and faith have their origins in the same Greek word *pistis*.) While Paul usually connects conscience with faith, here he connects it with faith in the negative, i.e., "*unbelieving*."

#### CONSCIENCE CAN BE INURED

Some of the Corinthians had a problem with believers and their relationship with idol shrines. Others did not seem to have any difficulty at all, conscientiously, lying down in idol shrines and eating idol sacrifices, because they had the knowledge that an idol is nothing and there really is only one God, the Father and one Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Cor.8:4,6,7). The problem was that there were new converts who were weak in the faith. They might be walking past an idol shrine and see another believer from their ecclesia lying down and eating the food sacrificed to the idols. Their conscience, already weak, would take a severe beating (1 Cor.8:12). The weak might then become inured or accustomed to the eating of the idol sacrifices once again (v.10), which could even lead them back to idol worship. At the very least there was a danger of being stumbled in the faith.

Word must have gotten back to Paul concerning this dilemma, and so Paul wrote to them to correct this situation (*cf* 1 Cor.8:1-13). Hence he entreated those who were mature: "Now beware lest somehow *this right of yours* may become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone should be seeing you, who has knowledge [that there really is only one God and one Lord], lying down in an idol's shrine, *will not the conscience of him who is weak be inured* to the eating of the idol sacrifices? For the weak one is perishing also by your knowledge; the brother because of whom Christ died. Now in thus sinning against brethren, and *beating their weak conscience*, you are sinning against Christ. Wherefore, if food is snaring my brother, I may under no circumstances be eating meat for the eon, lest I should be snaring my brother" (1 Cor.8:9-12). Under grace, believers have *rights* of freedom not allowed those believers who were under the law. However, Paul believed it is much better to think of the weak ones and not exercise those rights which might cause them to falter in growth and maturity and might beat their weak conscience.

Believing the evangel and having a good conscience was important to the apostle Paul. It should be important to us as well. How happy are those whose consciences stand together with what they believe. Though we may fail often, let us, by God's grace, run the race that is set before us and lawfully obtain the incorruptible wreath.

May we hold to the faith with a good and clear conscience, commending ourselves and the truth we proclaim to every man's conscience. Let us pray that our "love may be superabounding still more and more in realization and all sensibility, for [us] to be testing what things are of consequence, that [we] may be sincere and no stumbling block for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that is through Jesus Christ for the glory and laud of God" (Col.1:9-11).

Tony Nungesser

## WISDOM FROM ABOVE

THERE is a wisdom hidden in God and revealed through His Word to those who dig for it like buried treasure, and its purpose is salvation. It is the wisdom found in the evangel of God.

### 1. THE SCRIPTURES ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOU WISE

Wisdom is defined in the Keyword Concordance (p.329) as "The faculty which makes the highest and best application of knowledge." Paul reminded Timothy that he was "acquainted with the sacred scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3: 15). And to the Colossians he declared similarly that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed (hidden) in God (Col.2:3).

"Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear, do not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full with the *realization* of His will, in all *wisdom* and *spiritual understanding*, you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God; being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy; at the same time giving thanks to the Father, Who makes you competent for a part of the allotment of the saints . . ." (Col.1:9-12).

God's purpose for the body of Christ is to be filled full with the realization of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Paul was keenly aware of this fact and had such a great desire to see it accomplished that he did not cease praying to that end.

Paul also understood this was the key for walking worthily of the Lord for all pleasing. How our hearts long for the assurance that we are pleasing our Lord, and how difficult it seems to find the way to do this! Many of us who know God and find no pleasure in ceremonies and rituals still live with guilt and shame wondering if we will ever be in a position to walk worthily of our Lord let alone actually bring pleasure to the heart of God.

Hebrews 11:6 says: "Now apart from faith it is impossible to be well pleasing, for he who is coming to God must believe that He is and that He is becoming a rewarder of those seeking Him out." That which pleases God is rooted more deeply in what we believe about Him than in what we do, for our actions are reflections of our faith.

After speaking of a worthy walk "for all pleasing" Paul prays that we might be "bearing fruit in every good work" (Col.1:10). This accords with Ephesians 2:10 which says God makes good works ready beforehand for us to walk in them. In applying these words not only to the future, but to the present as well, we see that God prepares good works ahead of time for us, as the fruit of faith. As we daily walk in them, by faith, He is pleased, and we will be "growing in the realization of God." What a joy it is to behold and willingly participate in what God is doing in our lives.

Verse 11 of this Colossian prayer gets more glorious: "... being endued with all power in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy." *All power . . . the might of His glory and all endurance and patience with joy* are expressions of great consolation and expectation to encourage us in time of need.

This is not the self-serving, self-gratifying power the world is chasing after. It may not be easily recognized outwardly, but make no mistake, God wants us to be filled with all power in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience and joy. This is real power and

this is the wisdom all mankind really needs, but because they don't realize it they are looking in all the wrong places. We, the saints of God, have come to know that this power and wisdom is found in God and His word, the Source of our endurance, patience and joy.

Verse 12 says, "at the same time giving thanks to the Father," acknowledging where the endurance, patience and joy is coming from. All is out of Him; it does not originate in us, so be giving thanks to the Father who makes you competent.

"When the Supreme Deity, receives His due in thanksgiving and blessing, this is the very summit of righteousness. Nothing else is so utterly and inexcusably wrong as the failure to recognise, to appreciate, and to recompense the Deity for His numberless and limitless benefactions. To bless Him is the greatest act of righteousness of which His creatures are capable."<sup>1</sup>

For what purpose is God making us competent? It is that we might have a part of the allotment of the saints. Our allotment is an actual permanent possession in the celestials. This is our great expectation, the expectation of God's calling in Christ. Being made competent is a process, a good work that God has undertaken, and He will be performing it until the day of Jesus Christ.

## 2. GOD'S WISDOM FROM ABOVE AND THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD

Paul expounds further on the wisdom we are looking for, when he says. "Wisdom we are speaking among the mature, yet a wisdom not of this eon . . . wisdom in a secret, wisdom which has been concealed . . ." (1 Cor.2:6,7). And he adds, "Let no one be deluding himself. If anyone among you is presuming to be wise in this eon, let him become

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1. A. E. Knoch, adapted from *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.36, p.277.

stupid that he may be becoming wise, for the wisdom of this world is stupidity with God" (1 Cor.3:18,19).

First he says this wisdom is not for everyone; it is for the mature. He also tells us that it does not come from the wise men of this eon and neither is it for them; it is foolishness to them. And, vice versa, the wisdom of this eon is stupidity to God and must be discarded by those who would receive God's hidden wisdom.

James refers to wisdom from above and wisdom of the earth in his letter and makes clear distinctions about the effect they both have. "Now if you are having bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, are you not vaunting against and falsifying the truth? This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but terrestrial, soulish, demoniacal . . . . Now the wisdom from above is first, indeed, pure, thereupon peaceable, lenient, compliant, bulging with mercy and good fruits, indiscriminating [without partiality], unfeigned" (James 3:14-17). The wisdom we acquire will have a bearing on how we act.

In Ephesians 4:32 we find the basis for ideal conduct. "Deal graciously among yourselves according as God also, in Christ, deals graciously with you." Christ is the supreme example, and wisdom from the Head will reflect His character through the body and by His grace. "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for this we are toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers." (1 Tim.4:9,10) What a privilege it is to be aware of our total reliance on the living God. This is wisdom from above.

Our dependency on God appears as weakness to those around us, but hopefully we of like faith and spirit can see a powerful operation taking place in each other. Paul was well aware of God's operation working in himself, and he ends the discussion on his thorn in the flesh with a most incredible statement: ". . . whenever I may be weak, then I



am powerful" (2 Cor.12:10). We may be sure the Adversary is also aware of this process. Ephesians 3:10 says the multifarious wisdom of God is made known to sovereignties and authorities among the celestials through the ecclesia. Even the mighty spiritual beings that we struggle against are learning from us weak, often confused humans, us strange beings who are subject to sin and death and often walking in error.

How can this be? It is a very simple matter once we see it. It is God's wisdom we are to make known, not aiming to make ourselves look good! "For we are not heralding ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord . . . We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor.4:5,7). It is for His glory not for ours! We are "being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory" (Eph.1:11,12). Therefore, we can agree wholeheartedly with Paul: We are offering divine service in the spirit of God and are glorying in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). This is wisdom from above.

### 3. THE WORD OF THE CROSS

"Around the cross lies God's wisdom . . . Christ crucified starts the reference to God's wisdom."<sup>2</sup>

This is the testimony of Paul: "For the word of the cross is stupidity, indeed, to those who are perishing, yet to us who are being saved it is the power of God . . . Does not God make stupid the wisdom of this world? . . . Jews signs are requesting, and Greeks wisdom are seeking, yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity, yet to those who are called, both Jews

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2. E. H. Clayton: "The Cross and Wisdom."

and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God . . ." (1 Cor.1:18-25).

Yet not only so, but also God's righteousness is revealed in the evangel which tells us Christ died for our sins (*cf* Rom.1:18; 3:31,25,26), and His love is commended in Christ's death for sinners (Rom.5:8). If our evangel does not make known God's love and righteousness, calling it "the power and wisdom of God" is nonsense. The modern day "gospel" of Christendom is only "good news" for a few, and at the end of the day it shows God to be anything but loving, wise, powerful or righteous. Just using the words does not make it so.

Jonathan Edwards in his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," said that we the saved, when in heaven, will be able look across the great gulf between heaven and hell and see our loved ones, even children and parents, writhing in pain. He went on to say this sight will actually cause us to appreciate our heavenly bliss even more. And many in Christendom buy into this theology. How can anything be so stupid?

There is an explanation found in the first chapter of Romans. When people, knowing God, fail to glorify Him as God or thank Him, they are made vain in their reasonings, and darkened is their unintelligent heart. Alleging themselves to be wise, they are made stupid. And according as they do not test (form a careful opinion of) God, to have Him in recognition, God gives them over to a disqualified mind (*cf* Rom.1:21,22,28). By human caprice and craftiness they are carried about by every wind of teaching and are systematically deceived (*cf* Eph.4:14). In some cases it may take years to acquire this kind of belief system. Christendom calls this process, in other circles, "brain washing".

Volumes have been written trying to make sense out of these doctrines of demons. They try in vain to reconcile a view of God, Who calls His creation very good, with

that which sees Him ending up ruining a good part of it in "hell." He is a God Who, by their own admission, is all powerful and desires all mankind to be saved, but somehow has no choice but to torture many of His children for all eternity. And what must be the height of stupidity this whole picture is called an expression of divine love.

I trust it helps us see, by contrast, how beautiful, wise and loving God's real evangel is. God does love the world, and He dispatches His only begotten Son into the world, that the world may be saved through Him (*cf* John 3:16,17). Christ came that "He should be tasting death for the sake of everyone" (Heb.2:9). He came to save sinners by giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Tim.1:15; 2:6).

"Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2:9-11).

What a precious gift it is to have the eyes of our hearts enlightened, we who have been graciously granted to believe this wonderful message. May we ever look to Him with uncovered face, mirroring the Lord's glory, and be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory. (2 Cor.3:18). This is the only "good news" that has the power to produce the fruit of the spirit, which begins with love (Gal.5:22,23).

God wants us to be filled with His love, and He also wants us to mature in love, in all wisdom, making the highest and best application of this knowledge spoken of in the evangel. Love is believing "all," love is expecting "all" and love is enduring "all." Here is a wisdom concealed in God, but now manifested in His evangel, that can open the eyes of our spiritual understanding for our present needs as we face the experiences of our lives. May we run the race

with patience, grasping more and more the vast dimensions of His love, depending on His wisdom and enjoying His great salvation daily.

Looking steadfastly to Jesus Christ, the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith (*cf* Heb.12:2), empowers us to love and work for the good of all, especially those of the family of faith (*cf* Gal.6:10). It empowers us to forgive each other and ourselves, to be lenient, without partiality, genuine and bulging with mercy. This wisdom empowers us to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. It empowers us to believe all and expect all and to endure all. This is not the wisdom of this eon nor of this world. This is the powerful wisdom that is concealed in God, and which God gives to those who are believing His evangel, and in this way are seeking for it like buried treasure. O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and knowledge of God!

### 3. CLOSING EXHORTATION

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy [set apart ones] and beloved, pitiful compassions, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another and dealing graciously among yourselves, if any one has a complaint against any. According as the Lord deals graciously with you, thus also you. Now over all these put on love, which is the tie of maturity. And let the peace of Christ be arbitrating in your hearts, for which you were called also in one body; and become thankful. Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing yourselves; in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing, with grace in your hearts to God. And in everything, whatsoever you may be doing, in word or in act, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father, through Him” (Col.3:12-17).

Don Bast

## CHRIST'S FAITH AND OUR BELIEVING

THE FAITH of Jesus Christ is the connecting link between God's righteousness and the justification of the sinner. The believer's faith is the connecting link between the justification gained by Christ and the reckoning of that justification to the believer. Our faith is that graciously granted response to the evangel which brings justification into our lives. What Jesus Christ did in believing His Father's word and faithfully carrying out His will was the greatest work of faith in all the eons. What we do in believing that Christ died for our sins is an extraordinary blessing from God that wholly debars us from any boasting in ourselves but multiplies its many beneficial effects continually in our lives, to the glory of God.

The Concordant Version of Romans 3:21,22 reads as follows:

*Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God*

*through Jesus Christ's **faith**,  
for all, and on all who are **believing** . . .*

The words "faith" and "believing" represent different forms of the same basic term in Greek. We could say "belief" and "believing," or invent a new term and say "faith" and "faithing." There are two faiths in view here, the faith of Jesus Christ and the faith of believers. They differ greatly in quality, but they both speak of an acceptance of something as true, leading to some measure of

faithfulness. And in both cases the "something" that is believed is the Word of God.

God has purposed to manifest His righteousness in a work of salvation through the faith of His Son. In faith, our Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners, not for ex-sinners, nor in any exclusive way for certain sinners, but for sinners who have failed in achieving that state of perfection which is characteristic of the glory of God (*cf* Rom. 3:23; 5:8; 7:18-20). Our Lord's faith and faithfulness to the death of the cross is the means of justification. Whatever the phrase "justification by faith" comes to signify it must always keep its foundational sense of justification through the faith of Jesus Christ, in His work of deliverance (*cf* Rom. 3:22,24; Gal. 2:16).

Our faith is vitally important, but as a blessing from God, not as a requirement that achieves justification. The gracious gift of justification is gained solely on the basis of Jesus Christ's faith in dying for our sins. And that must be the channel for the justification of everyone else, whether Circumcision or Uncircumcision, or those who finally come to believe, know and acclaim God's Son as Saviour and Lord, by empirical evidence.

#### THROUGH JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH

Jesus Christ's faith is perfect. We cannot expect to reach His level of faith as long as we are in these bodies of humiliation. But the *pattern* of His faith is the pattern of our faith. It is a pattern of believing what God says to us.

So it was with Abraham who believed God when the evidence was against what He had said, who faced God's word to him, not doubting in unbelief, giving glory to God, being fully assured that what He has promised He is able to do also (Rom. 4:17-21). But even more truly and consistently and expectantly our Lord accepted and retained God's Word concerning Him, apart from doubt and with

strong assurance, and He faithfully responded with His words and deeds.

Jesus spoke of giving His disciples the declarations which His Father had given Him (John 17:8), but these do not lie outside God's written Word which foresees and supports all that He believed and taught. In Romans three Paul is concentrating on the message of Christ's faithfulness in dying for sinners, and we can discover throughout the Scriptures themselves that which God had said concerning Him and God's will for Him.

In His years in the form of a slave and likeness of humanity Jesus held tenaciously to God's Word as His strength and encouragement. At twelve years of age He testified that He had to be among the things which were His Father's (Luke 3:46-49). In His early manhood He told the Adversary: "It is written that, 'Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration of God'" (Luke 4:4). Later, He spoke to His disciples of the fulfillment of the scriptures which testified to those things which must occur (Matt.26:54). Facing the prophesied events of the coming day, His assurance and comfort in prayer before His God and Father was "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). To those of His disciples who were on the road to Emmaus with Him, He spoke of His sufferings and entering into glory. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interprets to them, in all the scriptures that which concerns Himself" (Luke 24:25-27).

Jesus Christ's faith was solidly centered in God's will as expressed in what He said. Our Lord was *obedient* unto the death of the cross. This was God's will (*cf* Matt.26:39, 42,44), foretold in passages such as Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 and pictured in types from Genesis forward through all the Hebrew Scriptures, in all the offerings and the patterns of divine service in tabernacle and temple and in such incidents as Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah

and Jonah cast into the sea. There is hardly a portion of the Scriptures of old that does not speak of some aspect of the cross, entombment and resurrection of Christ or promise blessings that could never be fulfilled apart from His great work of faithfulness.

Jesus knew from the Scriptures, that:

1. God's route to His purposed goal of good and glory was by way of humiliation and suffering and death. Our Lord was to die (Isa.53:8).

*For He is severed from the land of the living;  
Because of the transgressions of My people,  
He is led to death.*

2. As the Saviour, He was to die for sinners. Israel is the definitive case of what is in humanity. They were transgressors (Isa.1:2), a nation of sin, a people heavy with depravity, seed of evildoers, sons who were corrupters, forsakers and spurners of God (Isa.1:4). There was nothing apparent in them worth saving. Nevertheless, as Jesus well knew, He was to be wounded because of their transgressions, with the depravity of them all coming to rest on Him so that He was humbled and fetched to slaughter as a flockling (Isa.53:6,7).

3. God would achieve His goal. Concerning Israel, this was a goal of good that would be manifested in full light and experience (Isa.53:11).

*From the toil of His soul He shall see light,  
And He shall be satisfied by His knowledge.*

For our Lord, God's Word spoke personally of suffering and death and of glory to follow (1 Peter 1:11).

It is through Jesus Christ's faithful adherence to the Word of God concerning Him that every good purposed by God is achieved. Not only His deliverance of Israel, but the justification of all who come under the name of sinners



and transgressors is gained through the faith and faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

His giving of Himself manifests God's righteousness in the achievement of justification. This is established for all and will be enjoyed by all in God's own time, but even now it is placed upon those who are believing that He died for their sins, was entombed and has been roused from among the dead. Justification is out of His faith, and it is for our faith even today in the midst of failure and weakness, suffering and shame, sorrow and dying. But for us also, there is expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:2).

#### THOSE WHO ARE BELIEVING

Abraham is our human example of believing (Rom.4), but our believing is centered on what Christ did in faith. And, as with our Lord (and Abraham), what we believe is what God has said concerning us as human beings and as God's chosen vessels for a special purpose. Abraham believed that God had appointed him to be a father of many nations (Rom.4:17). But the basis of this promise was not revealed to him. God also speaks to us concerning matters of glory and joy and peace, concerning our justification and conciliation and glorification, but He relates these to the faith of Jesus Christ in dying for us.

It cannot be emphasized too much that what we believe is what God has said in His Word concerning us. To begin with, this is what is called the evangel of God. It is a "well-message." It is centered in what Christ has done and what He is and on God's achievements in Him. The evangel of God concerning Jesus Christ our Lord is the solid foundation of all the good God has spoken of in His Word.

#### WHAT GOD HAS SAID TO US

What Genesis 12:2,3, and the expanded promises in succeeding chapters, were to Abraham, the evangel of God as

presented in Romans and the expanded revelations of his continued ministry are to us in speaking of good to come. But what God says to us is far more than what He said to Abraham. For Paul's evangel and its associated revelations reveal the depths of God (1 Cor.2:10) simply because they are explicitly built on the basis of our blessings, which is the cross of Christ. This is the center of our faith, the very core of what we believe. Let us anticipate some of these words of God which Paul is about to set before us. They are divine declarations for our believing:

*Being justified gratuitously in [God's] grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus . . . where, then, is boasting?*

*For Christ, while we are still infirm, still in accord with the era, for the sake of the irreverent, died.*

*God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes. Much rather, then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation, through Him.*

*For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much rather, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life.*

*Consequently, then, as it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying. For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just.*

*What, then, shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?*

These are all statements of the evangel which plainly

refer to the key element of blessing coming through Christ Jesus. In one way or another they direct attention to His faith in dying for sinners. What He has done is the heart of our faith. Every detail of blessing presented in these chapters of Romans is built on this fundamental revelation of the evangel, that Christ died for our sins. We cannot know God as *just* in His place as *Justifier* (Rom.3:26) apart from Jesus Christ's faith. We can have no access to God or expectation of glory (Rom.5:1,2) apart from what our Lord, Jesus Christ, has done. The force of Paul's entreaties in Romans 6 for walking in newness of life rests on Christ's death for us and our identification with Him in His death. The spirit of sonship in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!" (Rom.8:15) comes to us in our believing of the evangel concerning God sparing not His own Son.

#### THE BELIEVER'S FAITH

Our believing is a great blessing in what it brings into our lives of joy and peace, of spiritual strength for endurance and patience in expectation. But it is also a miracle. From the standpoint of human longings and desires, the evangel more than satisfies. But there is a darkness in our being that cannot accept what God has said in this message. We are blinded (2 Cor.4:4). And it takes God Himself to open our hearts to faith.

The gracious gift of believing (Phil.1:29) longs to share the message that is believed (*cf* Rom.1:8-12), but it does not belittle others who have been given a lesser measure of faith. Like its companion grace of love, faith is patient, is kind, is not jealous, is not bragging, is not puffed up (*cf* 1 Cor.13:4).

Thus faith bears fruit in inner blessings and in faithful activity. Paul speaks of "the work of [the] faith" in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, not as some sort of requirement, but as a benefit in itself which calls for thanksgiving to God.

## NO DISTINCTION

I have tried to show something of the critical connection between our faith and that of Jesus Christ. But it is also important that we see the critical connection between our need of justification and the need of humanity as a whole for justification. The evangel points our attention to Christ; it concerns Him Who is God's Son and our Lord. But it does not allow us as believers and as those who are "beloved by God, called saints" (Rom.1:7) to forget that we are part of the human race, all of which is under sin (Rom.3:9).

We do not know Christ or grasp the vital value of His faith if we suppose He did not die for all sinners. It is a fair question to ask how He could have died for us if He has not died for all. But beyond that, how could He be the Christ of the Scriptures if all are not ever to enjoy that justification He has gained for sinners, and become subjected to His Lordship? Again, we cannot perceive the glory of God's righteousness if we think it is concerned only with those few sinners who are believing today, apart from sight. There can be no doubt that all sin and that all are wanting of the glory of God. But there seems to be much doubt among us that the glory of God is unrestricted and all-encompassing.

The "all" of Romans 3:23 is the "all" of Romans 3:9, a reference to the entirety of the human race, not one of whom is righteous (Rom.3:10), not one of whom could ever be justified in God's sight by works of law (Rom.3:20). The immediate connection of verse 23 is with the words "all who are believing," but our believing does not remove us from being, in ourselves, a part of the mass of humanity described in Romans 1:18-3:20. We are distinguished by God's grace, and this is powerful in dealing with sin, and is full of promise for the future, but we remain descendants of that one man, Adam, through whom sin came into the

world, and through sin death (Rom.5:12). Sin makes its home in our flesh (Rom.7:17-20), even as in all.

Paul is very careful that we not imagine there is something about us that makes us intrinsically superior to others who do not believe. As human beings we all stand before God with the same need of justification. Hence the evangel speaks in a context apart from requirements of works of law placed upon us and from any personal achievements of righteousness. It speaks of God's righteousness, not of ours. It focuses on Christ's faith as the operating factor and notes human faith simply as a factor for receiving what Christ's faith gains. What the believer receives is gratuitous. It is in God's grace. It allows no boasting in self.

Believers must never forget that they are sinners and come short of the glory of God, just like everyone else. Paul allows no room for any of us to think God sees something more salvageable in us than in the unbeliever. If anything, as far as the flesh is concerned, we are less likely candidates for His special choice than many who are not chosen. Most all of us know better people than ourselves who are unbelievers. There can be little doubt God does too, Who sees in this that which will display the transcendent riches of His grace in the oncoming eons (*cf* 1 Cor. 1:26-29; Eph.2:7-9).

It is in this context, that we must understand Romans 3:23. Paul speaks of believers, but of believers as human beings, whose record includes sin and failure. All humanity sins, and all come short of the glory of God. This is what the evangel says about us.

Yet we are blessed with faith, in believing that Jesus Christ's faith has gained justification in that He has died for us.

Now we are ready to concentrate once more on God and His Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord.

D.H.H.

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