

# **The Purpose of EVIL**

**by Guy Marks**

# The Purpose of Evil

Hello there, I'm Guy Marks. God called me from my sinful ways when I was a young man. Now I am old, but the fire still burns brightly in my heart, the fire that God kindled when I was just a lad. After many years of searching the scriptures, I have come to the conclusion that the most profound acts of God are centered in His dealings with what is usually called "the problem of evil." But evil is not a problem with God, though it has been a great problem with the theologians. God uses evil to accomplish His purpose. I remember when our daughter was born and what an evil thing the doctor did to that little baby, for no sooner was she born than the doctor gave her a resounding slap. Now she certainly did not deserve to be treated like that. What do you think of a full-grown man striking a tiny, new-born babe? If I had not known what the doctor's purpose was, I would have been ready to strike him. But you see, the evil was necessary at the very beginning of our daughter's life, and produced the results the doctor wanted. And so it is with God, for evil begins with Him and is a necessary part of His plan. It is the method He uses to accomplish His purpose.

At the beginning of this study, we first must recognize that evil is not sin. No act of any creature is sinful in itself. Sin originates in the heart, and is determined by the motives that sponsor it. Usually when man works evil he sins because his motives are wrong, but this is not true of God for His motive is always to produce good.

The forces of evil in God's universe are many. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:12, "For it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials." Now where did these evil forces come from? We will let Paul answer the question from Colossians 1:16, "For in Him," that is, in Christ, "is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him." There is no need to go into a long rigmarole of speculation as to where these forces of evil came from. Paul says they were created in Christ and for Him. Who is the Creator Who has the power to create, and Who

gave them this authority? Did they usurp authority from God? Dare we think that this is even possible? If so, what kind of a god do we have? Will these forces eventually take over complete authority, and will they eventually bring God's universe to total corruption? Just what will we do with the statement that they are created for Him, that is, for Jesus Christ?

Too long have we looked at the forces of evil from a human standpoint. It is time that we considered the divine perspective. God says that these sovereignties and authorities, these spiritual forces of evil are Christ's helpers. They are His assistants in bringing about the reconciliation of the universe. Now do not throw up your hands in horror and shout blasphemy, rather let us reason together sanely for a few minutes. For the sake of argument, let us suppose that God did not create them thus, or give them this authority. Did God know when He created them that they would rebel and destroy all but a small portion of God's creatures? Did God give them authority, knowing that they would use that authority against Him? Do we dare to think that there was a weakness with God on this point, that He lacked knowledge here? Or dare we suppose that He cared not that they would rob Him of His own creatures and turn Him against those whom He created and loved? No, they were not created to be against Him, but for Him.

We shall see that God uses the forces of evil to bring about good. Indeed, the greatest good of the universe comes from God's use of evil to accomplish His purpose. To those who would have us believe that these forces of evil were created good and afterward fell from their original condition, I would ask why the messengers ("angels" King James Version) who kept not their own sovereignty, have been placed in imperceptible bonds until the day of judgment? (Jude 6). And 2 Peter 2:4 also speaks of sinning messengers, that are placed in the gloomy caverns of Tartarus ("hell" King James Version). Now why does God restrain these sinning messengers and leave the great hosts of evil powers, including Satan himself, to wage warfare against all the forces of good, even to rob God of His own creatures and strip Him of His glory? If Satan and his messengers "fell," why are they not treated the same as the sinning messengers of Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4? Are we to harbor the idea that God cannot control these forces of evil, or is it that He does not care?

When Jesus was being tried by Satan, He was led up into a high mountain and the Adversary said to Him, "To you shall I be giving all this authority and the glory of

them, for it has been given up to me" (Luke 4:6). Now where did the Adversary get this authority and why does he still have it? Again we see the authority of the Adversary in Jude, verse 9, "Now when Michael, the chief messenger, doubting the Adversary, argued concerning the body of Moses, he dares not bring on a calumniating judging, but said, 'May the Lord rebuke you!' " Why could not Michael rebuke the Adversary? Well, a captain does not rebuke a five-star general. For the time being, the authority of Satan stands. But in Revelation 12, Michael and his messengers battle Satan and his messengers and then Michael will be the victor and this will be the beginning of that which will strip Satan of all his authority. But until then, these sovereignties and authorities are a necessary part of God's plan and purpose. They but prove the supremacy of God. They prove His power, they establish His authority, they reflect His deity in that they form a foil for the revelation of Himself. They supply the opposition that is necessary for God to display His wisdom, His love, and His grace. When their mission is fulfilled, then God will judge them with righteous judgment.

The forces of evil must be operating in accord with God's intention or contrary to His intention, one or the other. We must determine which premise is true if we are ever to know God's purpose in evil. I do not feel that we should cover this seeming problem with a dark cloud that would prevent our minds from following God's actions in dealing with that through which He makes known the heights of His power, the zenith of His love, the boundlessness of His grace, and the brightness of His glory.

Since in the experiences of man, evil came on the scene at the very outset of his history, we shall take a good look at Adam and his original condition as he came fresh from the hands of God. The record of his creation gives us no information as to his spiritual standing or of his moral nature. We do know that God had instructed him not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, this is not to say that it was God's intention that He would not eat of it. God instructed Israel to keep His holy law which He had given to them, but it never was God's intention that they would keep the law. In fact, God knew full well that they would not, and could not, keep that law. And when God told Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He knew full well exactly what would happen. Yet God made no provision to help Adam obey His instructions. But God had already made provision for dealing with Adam's sin, for Peter speaks of the precious blood of Christ as of a flawless and unspotted lamb, foreknown indeed before

the disruption of the world (1 Pet.1:19,20). And as soon as Adam had sinned, sacrificial blood began to flow, forming a stream that reaches to the cross of Calvary and to the sacrifice that repudiates sin and brings life and incorruption to light (2 Tim.1:9-11).

Now Adam did not have an incorruptible life, a life that could not sin, or that could not die, yet Paul says that such a life is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian. Now if you cannot see that God had a purpose in the fall of man, then we need an answer to this question: Why did not God create Adam with an incorruptible life? If God is to abolish death, as Paul declares in 2 Timothy 1:10, why do we have sin's entrance into the world in the first place? What a tragedy to have thousands of years of the reign of sin and death bringing untold sorrow to countless millions before we reach the goal of incorruptible life if there is nothing else to be gained by the experiences of sin. Adam did not know God's love. This is evident from the fact that he tried to hide from God when he heard Him coming in the garden. Now you do not try to hide from someone when you know that he loves you. You don't flee from grace. But let us remember that God's love and grace had never yet been manifested or made known. Indeed, where in the account of the creation and fall of man will we find any occasion for God's love and grace to be exercised? Had there as yet been any need for His love and grace or any means whereby they could be made known?

The teaching that sin and death are eternal is a travesty of God's character, for it presents God standing by in complacency while Satan introduces an evil that all but destroys the human race. Such teaching is the result of placing the advent of evil into the category of the unknown and the unknowable. Anyone who will take a concordance and trace what the scriptures say concerning evil, will soon see that over and over again God used evil to accomplish His purpose. Just as the tree of which God said, "Ye shall not eat," was a tree of knowledge of good and evil, so we must never consider the evil apart from the good when we are considering God's purpose and ends. Adam is an example of this. His sin, if separated from the sacrifice of Christ, could never result in good. The constituting of all men as sinners (Rom.5:19), the bringing of all men under condemnation (Rom.5:18), the placing of all under the reign of death (Rom.5:12), could never result in good if this were the final result of Adam's sin.

I believe that most theologians worthy of the name will agree that those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ

will be exalted to a much higher life, to a far greater glory than Adam ever possessed. So then, as far as the redeemed are concerned, Adam brought no evil, for the blessings of redemption would never be possible apart from Adam's sin. And the blessings that come to the redeemed outweigh by far any and all of the blessings that Adam possessed. The purpose of evil, then, as far as the redeemed are concerned, is to establish a background for a display of God's love and grace which we could never know apart from the experiences of sin. I am sure that none of the redeemed in glory, when these bodies of humiliation have been transfigured to conform to the body of His glory, will ever regret that they were constituted sinner's through Adam's disobedience. So there is no problem of evil as far as the redeemed are concerned, but rather it is a necessary part of God's purpose to mold us and to fashion us in the image of His beloved Son.

So evil is a problem only to those who fail to see God's purpose in it and who refuse to believe that God will bring blessings to all mankind through His dealing with evil and sin. But let me offer you the following facts for your consideration: God has control over Satan and all evil. Notice what God said to the serpent in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise [literally, crush] thy head." Now this will take place in accord with God's purpose, for Paul writes in Romans 16:20, "Now the God of peace will be crushing Satan under your feet swiftly." Why does God wait to crush the head of the serpent? Why does He not crush him on the spot? No, there is still a need for the work of the serpent in God's plan and purpose. Genesis 3:14 also reveals that God has control over the serpent, for God pronounced a curse upon him and said, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." This certainly tells us that God has control over the movement of the serpent. He can only go as, and where, God permits. He is anything but free in his activities and he cannot defy the God Who made him. Read the first two chapters of Job and see how God restrained Satan in his dealings with this patriarch. He could go just so far and no further. And what did Satan's evil upon Job produce? Why, it just proved God's word to be true. God had said that Job was righteous, and all the evil that Satan wrought but heralded the fact that God is true and that His word is immutable.

The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, according to Matthew chapter 4, proves the weakness of Satan, for he

was unable to defeat the Son of God. Moreover, Christ cast out many demons and gave His disciples power over them. When Satan desired Peter, to sift him as wheat, Jesus said to Peter, "Yet I besought concerning you that your faith may not be defaulting." Thus the will of Christ restrained the work of the serpent. Read the second chapter of 2 Thesalonians. In Paul's account of the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, who is opposing and lifting himself up over everyone termed a god, and is seated in the temple of God demonstrating that he, himself is God, whom the Lord Jesus will despatch with the spirit of His mouth and discard by the advent of His presence. These forces of evil cannot continue beyond the circumference of God's purpose in it. God always has control over the forces of evil and evil never has any power apart from the authority of God. What a tragedy it would be if the forces of evil were unrestrained and of endless duration, for they would dethrone the God of the universe.

We now turn to Revelation, chapter 20, and we read, "And I perceived a messenger descending out of heaven, having the key of the submerged chaos and a large chain in his hand. And he lays hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Adversary and Satan, and binds him a thousand years. And he casts him into the submerged chaos and locks it, and seals it over him (lest he should still be deceiving the nations) until the thousand years should be finished. After these things he must be loosed a little time."

Satan is not a problem to God, and He has no difficulty in disposing of the cunning serpent. How can I believe that Satan deceived Eve contrary to the will of God, when God unlocks him so that he can deceive the nations? If Eve's deception was contrary to God's purpose, why did not God lock up the serpent prior to his entrance into the garden? And why must Satan be loosed again at the close of the thousand years? Does not this tell us that God has complete control over Satan and all of his activities? When Satan has fulfilled God's purpose he will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev.20:10). When sin is no longer needed in God's process of making Himself known, then it will be repudiated (Heb. 9:26). Surely the scriptures make clear the fact that God has complete control over all the forces of evil.

The key that unlocks the door to our understanding of the purpose of evil lies in two secrets made known by the apostle Paul. The first of these secrets is mentioned in Romans 16:25-27: "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 manifested 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!”

The second secret is mention is 1 Corinthians 2:6-8: “Yet wisdom are we speaking among the mature, yet a wisdom not of this eon, neither of the chief men of this eon, who are being discarded, but we are speaking God’s wisdom in a secret, wisdom which has been concealed, which God designates beforehand, before the eons, for our glory, which not one of the chief men of this eon knows, for if they know, they would not crucify the Lord of glory.”

These two secrets deal with the exit or the repudiation of sin. The teaching that sin is to continue eternally blinds our minds to an understanding of the purpose of evil. In these two secrets, Paul deals with the entrance of sin into the world, its far-reaching effects on mankind and God’s dealing with it which will bring God and His creatures glory for the eons of the eons. Moreover, Paul reveals that this plan originated in the wisdom of God before the eons began. But let us examine these secrets. The secret mentioned in Romans 16:25 is concerned with a truth that had been hushed up or silenced. That is, Paul speaks of a truth that was being made known and then it was hushed. In this letter to the Romans, the first four chapters contain no secret and the truth revealed therein is based on previous revelation. From the Hebrew scriptures Paul proved that there is none righteous, no, not even one. He emphasizes the fact that by the law is the knowledge of sin, and that by its works no flesh at all shall be justified in God’s sight. But the propitiatory, or mercy seat, which God provided under the law was a testimony to the righteousness of God now manifest through Jesus Christ’s faith. Redemption under the law through the blood sacrifice was typical of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, through which we are justified. To illustrate that righteousness is not attained by works, Paul points to Abraham and the fact that righteousness was imputed to him on the ground of faith before the law was given.

All of these marvelous truths are traceable in the Hebrew scriptures. They were not a secret, they had not been concealed. But when we come to chapter five, we then are introduced to the secret that had been hushed up. God had revealed the truth of justification by faith to Abraham. Then the law entered, or as we read in Romans 5:20, “Yet law came in by the way.” And with the entering of the law,



the offense increases. The coming in of the law hushed up the revelation of the truth of conciliation which Paul is now to reveal. A clear, sound analysis of the fifth chapter of Romans is necessary if we are ever to understand the purpose of evil. So we invite you to study it carefully, especially verses 12 to 21.

We notice first that through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind. As we consider the fact that through Adam's sin all became dying creatures, let us keep in mind that Paul's subject here is that of conciliation. He has just written that being enemies we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son and that through Christ we have obtained the conciliation (verses 10, 11). So in making conciliation known, Paul would have us know how we became estranged from God. This was not through our sin, but by Adam's sin. Remember that God had said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Actually, thou shalt begin to die. Paul now reveals that this dying condition was to include all of Adam's posterity. So we read in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "in Adam, all are dying." Universal death is not the result of universal sin; rather universal sin is the result of this universal dying condition. In 1 Corinthians 15:56 we read, "The sting of death is sin." Thus all are constituted sinners (Rom.5:19), through this dying condition inherited from Adam or brought about by Adam's sin. What could be a greater evil than death? Yet it is transmitted to the human race by Adam's sin and we had absolutely nothing to do with bringing about our dying condition. Sin does not cause death. The angels who sinned did not die, yet sinless infants do die. We all are born as dying creatures, and sin reigns in death (Rom.5:21). In our dying condition, Sin is a monarch on the throne. When Adam sinned the entire creation was severed from its source of life, and so the inevitable result is sin and death. As a result of Adam's sin the entire creation is estranged from God.

The second truth, stated in Romans 5:1, is that Adam is a type of Him Who is about to be. Now this One, of Whom Adam is a type, Who is about to be, can be none other than the seed of the woman, Who was promised in Genesis 3:15. You cannot understand the type apart from the antitype. If you separate Adam from Christ you make evil the master. But when you recognize that Adam and Christ are two representative men, both representing the entire human race, then evil becomes a servant instead of a ruling king. In and through Jesus Christ every act of God is fully

and completely justified. But if evil is a master instead of a servant, then the Deity has failed, we bring him down to a human level, we make God a man and we make man a god.

The secret which God hushed is the revelation of conciliation, which is based on the truth of justification, and this takes us back to Abraham where justification was first made known. But conciliation takes us back to Adam and estrangement from God. In justification God deals with sin. In conciliation God deals with the offense of sin. Before we consider Adam's offense and its effect on the entire human race, we pause to consider the sacrifice of Christ, in which God deals with sin. This is vital if we are to lay hold of the truth of conciliation. The truth of conciliation justifies God for the entrance of sin and death. The idea that God had nothing to do with the entrance of sin into the world is as false as the devil's lie, "Ye shall not surely die." The argument that God hates sin and therefore could have nothing to do with it, or with its existence, is a false argument. It is important for us to know God's attitude toward sin, and this is one reason for sin's existence. If there were no sin, God's attitude towards it would never be known. But more than that, we need to know that God loves righteousness. And apart from sin, the righteousness of God would be an unknown factor. The height of all revelation from God to man comes to us through the sacrifice of Christ. There are some who say, "We have been to the cross, now we want to go on to higher ground." But there is no higher ground. He that reaches the summit of Calvary has reached the highest peak in God's revelation of Himself. Few there are, indeed, who have scaled its heights or explored its depths. But those who have made the greatest progress in seeking out the revelation of the cross no longer consider evil to be a problem, for the cross of Christ turns all the evil of sin into infinite good.

We shall look at two aspects of the cross. First, the cross and sin. Second, the cross and the offense of sin. First God deals with sin at Calvary, your sin, my sin, all sin. Romans 5:8 tells us that, "While we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes." Since Christ died for sinners, He must have died for all sinners. In verse 7, He died for the irreverent. In verse 10, He died for His enemies. These are the ones for whom Christ died, and these are those who became sinners through Adam's transgression. Romans 5:19 says, "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." Thus we see

that in the death of Christ, God was dealing with all the sin which resulted from Adam's disobedience. The teaching that Christ died only for the elect is foreign to the scriptures, and nowhere do the scriptures declare that the death of Christ was effective only for the believer. When God offered up His Son as a sin offering, He was dealing with sin itself. He Who arranged for sin's entrance is now arranging for its exit. This is the purpose of the sin offering, to repudiate sin and to establish the righteousness of God in dealing with it.

There are many false statements concerning sin and the sin offering that many assume to be true. I just read the statement of a professor of theology who said, "All who are in Adam die, and all who are in Christ will be made alive." This is a perversion of the scriptures. 1 Corinthians 15:22 reads, in the King James version, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." All are to be made alive in Christ, as all became dying in Adam. Therefore in Christ, God must deal with Adam's sin and its effect on all men. In the scriptures, death and sin are always linked together. They are inseparable twins. Thus in the death and resurrection of Christ, God deals with both sin and death. He repudiates sin and He abolishes death through the cross.

The purpose of the sin offering is to put sin away. Thus in the sin offering of Leviticus 16, there was the scapegoat over which Aaron confessed the sins of Israel, and the goat was sent away into the wilderness bearing those sins. The scapegoat was a sin bearer. Isaiah 53:6 says, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Verse 11 says, "He shall bear their iniquities." And verse 12, "And he bare the sin of many." As we read in 1 Peter 2:2, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." As a sin offering, Christ was a sin bearer, bearing away the sin of all. There is a very important statement in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him." This is not that He might become our righteousness, as expressed in 1 Corinthians 1:30, "Who became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance," but that we might become God's righteousness. In and through the sin offering God becomes righteous. You say, "When was God ever unrighteous?" Well, apart from the sin offering, God would be an unrighteous God. How? By bringing the evil of sin and death into the world, for apart from the sin offering, sin could not be repudiated and death could not be abolished. So,

through the sin offering, the righteousness of God is maintained. But God does infinitely more than repudiate sin and abolish death. He does not simply restore the human race to the status of Adam in the garden. If this were true, then all the suffering of sin and the pangs of death would still be an evil. Good must come out of the experience of sin and death or God is still unrighteous. God not only abolishes death, but He also brings life and incorruption to light, through the evangel (2 Timothy 1:10).

An incorruptible life is something that Adam did not have. Like the experience of Job, who lost all he had through the evil which he, himself, said was from God (Job 2:10), but in his latter end Job had twice as much as he had had at the beginning (Job 2:12). But the experience of evil will do far more than lead us into an incorruptible life, it will bring us into the very inner recesses of God's heart. For we are not only justified in the blood of Christ, but we are also conciliated to God through His death (Rom.5:9,10). As we have said, conciliation has to do with offenses, not with the guilt of sin. Offense is that aspect of sin which causes injury, so let us remember that our sin has injured God, and that He has suffered far more than we have suffered.

Have you ever loved someone but received no love in return? If you have, you know something of the suffering of love. Suffering results from the injury sin has caused. But God has not only dealt with the guilt of sin, but has also dealt with the offense it has caused. Romans 4:25 says Jesus our Lord was given up because of our offenses. In Romans 5:15-21, Paul is dealing with the offenses, for remember, his subject in this chapter is conciliation. And there can be no conciliation until all offenses cease. The word "offense" occurs six times in Romans 5:15-21. A careful examination of these references should help us to understand the purpose of evil.

I would ask you to study carefully Romans 5:15-21, comparing "offenses" with "the gratuity of grace." Every statement in verse 15 is very important. The first statement is, "But not as the offense, thus also the grace." You see, Paul here is comparing Adam's one offense with the fact that grace deals with the offense of all. How else can God bring good out of evil? How else can the justice of God be maintained? For if even one person is to suffer endlessly because of Adam's sin, the justice of God would be defeated. So the grace differs from Adam's offense because it accomplishes far more than Adam lost. Then too, that which resulted from Adam's offense is temporary but the results of grace are permanent. Sin can never raise its ugly head

again, for grace is going to reign as we shall see.

The second statement, "For if, by the offense of the one, the many died." When Adam sinned, he brought all into a helpless condition, that is, it is hopeless apart from grace. That man is a hopeless creature as a result of Adam's sin, is usually denied. Always the sinner is told what he must do to be saved. And if he can do something, he is not dead. Adam's sin brought total ruin to the human race. Now apart from God, no one can repent, they cannot believe, they cannot seek, they cannot turn from sin, for man is a helpless creature. God has made it so to magnify His grace.

The third statement is, "Much rather the grace of God and the gratuity in grace." The King James version renders the word for "gratuity" by five different words as follows: for naught, freely, in vain, without a cause, and gift. The phrase "without a cause" comes nearest to expressing the true meaning of the word, and this is also the meaning of the word "gratuity." In John 15:25, Jesus said, "They hated me without a cause" (King James version). Jesus went about doing good, and they hated Him. He saw a man who had been born blind, and He gave him his sight, and they hated Him the more. They hated Him gratuitously. Such is the character of the grace that deals with our offenses. Indeed, we became helpless, hopeless creatures, that we might become the recipients of gratuitous grace. You see, by such grace, God takes His enemies into the very innermost communion with Himself.

The fourth statement of verse 15 is that this grace, to the many, superabounds. This statement is important to Paul's argument, for if there be any deficiency in grace, then evil would be the victor. But the very opposite is true, for grace more than meets the need. Let us check a couple of references where this word for "superabundance" occurs. In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." In Luke 15:17, the prodigal son said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare!" Such is the meaning of superabundance. It more than meets the need, for it exceeds the need by far. It is enough and to spare, for it is a superabundance. And this proves conclusively that the ruin caused by Adam's sin is overcome, and more, by the superabundance of grace.

In verse 17 of Romans 5, Paul speaks of two that reign, "For if, by the offense of the one, death reigns through the one, much rather, those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning

in life through the One, Jesus Christ." No argument is needed to prove that death reigns, but we do need to see that death reigns by the offense of one, not by the offense of many. It is not because of our offenses, but by Adam's one offense. This is usually denied, for it charges God with conveying judgment for Adam's sin to all mankind. We can understand God's judgment upon Adam, but apart from the gratuity and the superabundance of grace, it is impossible to understand why all should be made to suffer for Adam's sin. This certainly would be a great evil, and would bring condemnation on the head of God. But the reign of death must cease, for we are told that life is to reign through Jesus Christ.

I am aware that many will point to the word "obtained" ("received" in the King James version), and say that only those who receive Christ will receive life. With this I wholly agree; however, if you will check the word "receive," or "obtain," you will find that it is in the passive voice. When this Greek word is in the active voice, it is translated "get" or "take." Now you can readily see that unless all are made alive, the reign of death would never cease.

Moreover, life is not to reign through our acts, but through the one act of Christ's obedience. In this entire passage of Romans 5:12-21, not a single act of ours is ever mentioned. It is not concerned with our sin or our offense, but with Adam's sin and his offense. And never once in the passage are we ever told that we must take or believe or do anything else, but we are engaged with what Christ has done. The entire argument is centered in Adam's disobedience and the obedience of Christ. The one introduces the reign of death, the other introduces the reign of life. And the reign of life will exceed by far the reign of death. Thus the evil will be turned into good, and God will be justified of His every act.

In Romans 5:18,19, we have a summary of Paul's arguments. "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."

If you will follow the word "then" through the book of Romans, you will find it to be a conjunction that always introduces the logical conclusion of an argument. So in this summary we have a comparison of one offense with one just award. A just award is literally the effect of justice. A jury, in its course of deliberation, weighs all of the evidence and

thereby reaches a verdict. If justice has been followed, it is a just award. Adam's offense, in itself, is only evil. And the death of Christ also, in itself, is only evil. No sane reason can be given for either of these two evils unless they can be turned into good. A just God cannot condemn the human race because of Adam's sin unless He can bring good from it. Neither can a just God send His Son to the cross unless He can bring good from it. When we think of those who rejected and crucified Christ, we think of them as committing the greatest sin in the annals of history. What greater evil has ever been done? Which sin do you think calls for the most severe judgment, Adam's sin or the sin of those who crucified Christ?

It may be difficult for us to understand that these two evils result in the greatest good for all mankind, and from the greatest of all evils flows the greatest of all blessings. The result of Christ's death is the conciliation of all. The sweetness of love is never realized by those who have never been estranged. Conciliation is the dearest experience of affection and love. But until Paul makes the secret known, it would seem that evil would be the victor. But all who dare to believe what Paul has made known will rejoice in God's purpose of evil, through which He will bring all into dearest fellowship with Himself. This is the secret of conciliation which was hushed up when the law came in. The secret of 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, has to do with the wisdom of God. It is concerned with that which God designated before the eons, but which He concealed. If this secret had been made known, then God's purpose in evil would have failed, for Paul says that if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. This would have thwarted God's purpose. Adam's sin made the cross necessary or good could not be brought out of evil. So God, in His wisdom, prepared all the events that would make sure His purpose would not fail. He designates them beforehand.

Our study would not be complete if we did not consider that which God designates beforehand. The root word "horizo" literally means "to make visible to the mind." The King James version uses four words in the rendering of this word, namely, declare, determine, limit and ordain. Twice it is used in connection with the death of Christ. In Luke 22:22, Jesus said, "Lo! the hand of him who is giving Me up is with Me on the table, seeing that the Son of mankind is indeed going, according as it has been specified," or "as it has been determined," King James version. God had always seen His Son as going to the cross and so He arranged for Judas to betray Him. He even arranged for Satan to enter

the heart of Judas, that His purpose should not fail. This was all a part of God's prearranged plan in the sacrifice of His Son. But this was a secret, and was concealed from those who had a part in it. In Acts 2:22 we have the statement: "Jesus, the Nazarene, a Man demonstrated to be from God for you by powerful deeds and miracles and signs, which God does through Him in the midst of you, according as you yourselves are aware—This One, given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God," or "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (King James version).

It should not be difficult for us to see that all that took place concerning the death of Christ was a part of God's plan and purpose. But it was concealed from those who were the actors. The word translated "designates beforehand" in 1 Corinthians 2:6,7, is the same Greek word with the prefix "before." The cross of Christ was designated beforehand, before when? Before the eons, before there was any evil, before there was any sin, God designated all the events that would make sure that not one would be trapped in the forces of evil, but that all should be delivered from death and sin, for He designated these things for our glory. So we read in Acts 4:27,28, "For of a truth, in this city were gathered against Thy holy Boy Jesus, Whom Thou dost anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the nations and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel designates beforehand to occur."

Yes, God prearranged it all, from the fall of man to the glory of the consummation. Not one thing was left to chance. All was founded on His wisdom. The concealing of the secret was only for the fulfilling of His purpose. It is in Paul's writings that God's secrets are made known. True, Jesus made known the secrets of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13). And even in that secret, evil forms a major part, such as Israel's blindness. But the secrets that reveal the complement of God's purpose are found only in Paul's writings. Yet almost all teaching today is void of all the secrets Paul made known. Not only are they ignored, that would be cause enough for concern, but they are usually denied. Failure to see that Paul had a special ministry, and the practice of trying to make his ministry fit that which is written concerning Israel and the earthly kingdom, blinds many eyes to God's purpose of evil. To some, evil will never cease, or so they believe. God is never able, or at least He never tries, to bring about so much good that all evil will vanish. They try to justify God with the false teaching that man is a free moral agent. The only freedom of man that the scrip-



tures present is the freedom that comes through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

I would entreat of you to make a careful study of this subject. If you have questions, please send them to me by letter, by tape recording, or by telephone. My address is:

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We would be very glad to hear from you. So, until we come together by tape recorder again, this is Guy Marks saying goodbye. May God richly bless you.

*(This exposition was transcribed from a tape recording.)*

*The author wishes to express his appreciation to the Claudia J. Severn Foundation, 5414 East Vienna Rd., Clio, Michigan, 48420, for making the publishing of this booklet possible. If you desire to do so you may make a gift to the foundation which will be used to publish other Bible studies.*