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The Concordant Commentary

A. E. Knoch’s Commentary (or “Notes”) was first published nearly eighty years ago. It is based on the Concordant Literal New Testament, and follows the sequence of books from Matthew to Revelation. Important passages are dealt with succinctly, yet with remarkable helpfulness, especially in light of the relative brevity of the entries. Ample cross-references to notes on related sections of Scripture are provided. Literary frameworks of the various books of the New Testament are included.

As Brother Knoch wrote, “The writer of these notes cannot help uttering a heartfelt prayer that they will never be taken for more than what they are intended to be—suggestive thoughts which lead to and not from the Sacred Text. He would rather they would vanish than that they should stand between anyone and the living oracles. May we never be tainted with the spirit of the ancient Rabbis who did not scruple to place their words above the Sacred Scrolls... In the same way, the commentaries and confessions and creeds of Christendom have a stronger hold on the hearts of many of His saints than the inspired Scriptures. May He grant that many will return to the fountain undefiled!”


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Unsearchable Riches

A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME XCIV

co-editors:
Dean H. Hough
and
James R. Coram

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A Hymn

Mark how the swift winged minutes fly
   And hours still hasten on!
How swift the circling months run round!
   How soon the year is gone!

Let us indulge a serious thought,
   The year that's past, review;
What good, what evil, have we wrought?
   What work have we to do?

How is our debt of love increased
   To that sustaining Power,
Who hath upheld our feeble frame,
   And blest each rolling hour.

For all Thy favors, O our God,
   Thy goodness we adore;
Thou hast our cup with blessings filled,
   And made that cup run o'er.

What shall befall in future life
   We would not, Lord, inquire:
To be prepared for all thy will,
   Be this our chief desire.

Author unknown
EDITORIAL

Sometimes when people are going through hard times they are cheered by a sort of vague thought that it all will work out in the end. Others criticize such thinking as unrealistic and even harmful in the long run. The fact is, according to the Scriptures, that ultimately the first viewpoint will prove correct. God’s word on the matter is not at all vague. God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). He is working all together for good (Rom. 8:28).

We are aware of this by faith, not by appearance. It is realistic because it is based on what God has said, and what God has said is true. What God has said about His works of salvation, past, present and future, about His commissions and judgments, about His righteousness, about the abolishing of death, about the kingdom on earth and our allotment among the celestials, and all the other matters discussed in this issue of our magazine, it all is true. We may be wrong in our understanding of these matters, but we rely on the living God that what He says about them fully accords with His goodness, His righteousness, His power and wisdom and love, as manifested to us in the death and resurrection of God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This does not mean we believe things will always be pleasant and good right now. But we have this outlook, which is both optimistic and realistic, concerning the consummation because we are believing the evangel concerning the cross of Christ. And it spills over into the present with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control (Gal. 5:22).

We hope our magazine will help direct our readers along these lines. We expect God will faithfully work all together for good.

D.H.H.
THE DELUGE

7 *Then Yahweh "Elohim said to Noah: Come, you and all your household, into the ark, for I have seen "you righteous before Me in 'this generation. 2/ Of every clean "domestic beast you shall take "with you seven by seven, the sire and his dam, and "of the beast "that is not clean, of "them pairs, the sire and his dam. 3 Also, "of "the clean" flyer of the heavens seven by seven, male and female, "and "of the flyer "that is not clean, of them pairs, male and female, 4 to 'keep seed alive' on the surface of the entire earth. 4 For 'in seven days further I will cause it to rain' on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will wipe out, off the surface of the 'entire' ground, 'everyone' who has risen, whom I have 'made.

5 * Noah 'did according to all "that Yahweh "Elohim had instructed him. 6 * Noah was 600 years "old 7 when the deluge of waters came to be on the earth. 7 * So Noah 'came into the ark, and "with him his sons and his wife and his sons' wives, 8 because of the waters of the deluge. 8 Of the clean "domestic beast and "of the beast "that is not clean, and "of the flyer and "of "everything 'that is moving on the ground, "pair by pair they came to Noah into the ark, male and female, just as Elohim had instructed 'Noah.

10 * It "occurred after the seven days 'that the waters of the deluge "came upon the earth, 11 in the six hundredth year 'of Noah's life, in the second month 'on the 'twenty-seventh' day 'of the month. 'On this day all the springs of the vast abyss broke forth, and the crevices of the heav-

en were opened, 12 and the downpour was "coming on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 * On 'this very 'day Noah came into the ark 'with Shem, 'Ham, and Japheth, Noah's sons, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons 'with them, 14 they and every 'wild animal according to its kind, and every "domestic beast according to its kind, and every 'creeper 'that was creeping on the earth according to its kind, and every 'flyer according to its kind, every bird, every winged thing. 15 * They were coming to Noah into the ark, pair by pair 'of all flesh which has the spirit of life in it. 16 And 'those entering, male and female 'of all flesh, came just as Elohim had instructed 'him. 17 * Then Yahweh "Elohim 'closed 'the ark "about him.

18 * Now the deluge was "coming forty days 'and forty nights 'on the earth, and the waters were increasing. 19 * They 'lifted up the ark so 'that it was 'high above the earth. 20 +While the waters were gaining the 'mastery over the earth and were exceedingly 'increasing, the ark was "floating on the surface of the waters. 21 +Exceeding exceedingly, the waters gained the 'mastery over the earth, and all the lofty mountains "under the entire heavens were 'covered. 22 At fifteen cubits upward, the waters had gained the 'mastery, so 'that all the lofty 'mountains were 'covered.

23 * All flesh 'that had been moving on the earth had 'deceased, 'of the flyer, 'of the "domestic beast, 'of the wild animal, 'of every swarming thing 'swarming on the earth, and every 'human. 24 Everyone who had the breath of the spirit of the living in his nostrils, 'everything 'that had been in the drained area, they all died. 25 +Thus He had "wiped out 'everyone 'who had risen "on the surface of the ground, from human unto 'domestic beast, unto the creeper and unto the flyer of the heavens, 'they were wiped 'off the earth; 'only Noah 'remained and 'those
The Earth was Prepared

with him in the ark. 24 + The waters had the *mastery over the earth* for 150 days.

---

**THE QUANTITY OF WATER**

Seeing that there is enough water to cover the entire land surface even today to a depth of more than a mile, shows the possibility of a universal flood. Even now marked changes are going on. Islands disappear. Near the tip of South America the water has recently increased ten feet in depth. Moreover, the previous earth, after the disruption, was entirely covered by water (Gen.1:2,3). Then the water was stored both below and above the atmosphere. The water on the land flowed together to form the seas (1:6-8).

The deluge was simply the reverse of this. Much of it was in the vast abyss. This came up. The rest was in the heavens. This came down (7:10-12). These together formed the deluge. Nothing new was created. It was simply shifted from one place to another.

---

**THE FIRST RAIN**

We are distinctly told that, at first, there was no rain on the earth. Instead, humidity ascended from below, from the vast abyss, and irrigated all the surface of the ground (2:5,6). This continued throughout that eon, so there must have been an immense storehouse of water in the abyss. There must also have been a very different climate, with none of the extremes of moisture or drought, which makes some of the earth uninhabitable in this eon. This may be one reason for the long lives at that time. The two sources together sufficed to cover all the land. The earth had been prepared beforehand for the deluge of water, just as it is now stored with fire for the future conflagration.

In the second day's restoration (Gen.1:6-8) the atmosphere is made a separation between the water which is for the Great Deluge above the atmosphere and that beneath it. There is no record that this water ever descended before the deluge. Then we are told that it came down from the heavens through “windows” or rather *crevices*, for forty days and forty nights (7:11,12). It evidently was not allowed to fall down as a whole, all at once, but to descend in small drops, as rain, for a prolonged period.

---

**THE FUNCTION OF RAIN**

Rain did not commence until the deluge, and it seems that it will be absent in the new earth, for there will be no sea and all is permanent. Some other means of feeding the rivers was used in the days of Adam, and it may be used again in the future. As long as this earth lasts, with day and night, there will be rain (Gen.8:21,32). But in the new earth, when there is no night (Rev.21:25), this may not apply. Between these two, the earth is sometimes given a name in the *disintegrate* family, rendered in the CV by the word “habitance.” This word, *thbl*, comes from the same stem as deluge, *mbul*. The rain today is the cause of many miniature floods, and is gradually disintegrating the surface of the earth.

---

**MOUNTAINS RISE**

We may ask, what became of all this water? The answer may help to solve another mystery. How high were the mountains which were covered by it? This we do not know. The height of the land surface is continually changing in the three eons. Before the restoration of the first of Genesis there seems to have been no very high places at all before the dry land first appeared. As the lands rose, the water flowed to the low areas. There is no mention of mountains at all during the thousands of years before the deluge. Such changes are still taking place. So we cannot reason from the condition of the earth's surface at pres-
ent, when the mountains seem to be much higher than before the deluge.

**THE WIND**

After forty days the waters reached their maximum, and remained so for a hundred and fifty days (7:17-24). This sufficed to cause all that had the *breath of the spirit of the living* in their nostrils to die (Gen.7:22). This is a notable and instructive expression, showing the relation of breath to life in the creatures on the surface of the earth. Humanity cannot live on food alone. It needs air to breathe. The deluge did not kill by cutting off their food, but their air. It is here called the breath of the spirit of the living. It is the spirit which gives life, through the breath. This is not only literally true, but a fine figure of the spirit of God, which gives real, divine life. The earth dwellers were already dead in the higher sense, so the deluge simply conformed their physical condition to their spiritual state.

**GENESIS EIGHT**

8 Yet Elohim was *mindful* of Noah and of every animal and of every beast that was with him in the ark. *So Elohim caused* a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters *subsided.* 9 The springs of the abyss and the crevices of the heavens were held in check, and the downpour from the heavens was shut up. 10 The waters were returning off the earth, going and returning, and at the end of 150 days the waters were abating. 11 Then in the seventh month *on the twenty-seventh* day of the month the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. 12 The waters *continued* to go and to abate until the tenth month. In the *eleventh* month, *on day one* of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

9 *a porthole of the ark* "that he had made" and *sent* out "a raven *to see if the waters were slight*". And it was faring "forth to fare forth* and* to turn about* until the waters had *dried* off the land.

10 Then he *sent* out from *him* "a dove* to see if the waters were slight above the surface of the ground." 11 Yet the dove did not find a resting place for the sole of her foot and returned to him to the ark, for there was **water on the surface of the entire earth.** *So he stretched out his hand and took her and brought her to him into the ark.*

12 He *then* waited still another seven days and *proceeded* to send out *the* dove from the ark. 13 When the dove *came back* to him *at* eventide, *he* beheld, a torn-off olive leaf was in her beak. 14 *Then Noah* knew that the waters were slight above the earth. 15 *So he waited* still another seven days and *once more* *sent* out *the* dove; *yet not anymore did she return* to *him* again.

16 *It* *occurred* in the six hundred and first year of Noah's life, in the first month *on day one* of the month, that the waters had drained off the land. *When Noah* *took off* the covering of the ark, *he* *saw,* and behold, the surface of the ground had drained. 17 *In the second month,* *on the* twenty-seventh day *of the month,* the land was dry.

18 *Yahweh* *spoke* to Noah, *saying*: 19 Come forth from the ark, *you* and *your wife,* *your sons* and *your sons' wives* with you. 20 Every wild animal "that is with you, some of all flesh *among* the flyer and *the* domestic beast, *also* *every creeper* that is creeping on the earth, *bring them forth* with you, *so they can swarm in the earth* and be fruitful and increase on the earth.

21 *So Noah* came *forth,* and *with him* his sons, *his wife* and *his sons' wives.* 22 *Every* wild animal, *every creeper and every flyer,* everything moving on the earth, they came forth from the ark by their families.
Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh Elohim, and he took some of every clean domestic beast and some of every clean flyer and offered up ascent offerings on the altar. Yahweh Elohim smelled the fragrant smell, and Yahweh Elohim said in His heart: Not anymore will I maledict again the ground on account of humanity, for the bent of the human heart is evil from its youth. And not anymore will I smite every living flesh, just as I have done. In the future, for all the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and warmth, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.

WIND OR SPIRIT

When the deluge reached its highest point it was reversed by means of a wind, or spirit (Gen.8:1). The Hebrew word ruch may be translated either way. In the corresponding passage, it is rendered spirit. And the spirit of Elohim was vibrating over the surface of the water (Gen.1:2). Then, as here, it caused the water to flow together into seas, and leave the land dry (Gen.1:9,10). Spiritually speaking, mankind had brought the world back into a condition corresponding to the earlier disruption, and the deluge only conformed them to it in the physical sphere. And now, once again the spirit steps in to provide for a new beginning.

Ever so much greater will be the changes in the future new creation. There the sea will vanish entirely (Rev.21:1), as it was in the beginning. So we see that the sea never was a permanent part of the earth. It is found only during the evil eons. It probably attained its highest level during the deluge. Its Creator disposes of it to suit His plan and purpose, and is able to change it, or the chemical elements of which it is composed, to work His will. It is used to figure restless impermanence, as seen among the changing gentile nations, in this eon. It must be reckoned among the evil things which He uses as a background for the good. This is best seen at the deluge.

GOING AND RETURNING

When we consider the present tidal variations of the ocean, it is easy to see that these would be much greater if they were not hindered by surrounding continents, for then they would not be checked. Therefore, the waters did not simply sink, but rose and fell, while they were subsiding. In the higher places, it would actually leave for a time, and then return as it does on our beaches today. Such a rush of water over the land would fully account for the many deposits of shells on the earth, far from the sea, especially where hills or mountains would tend to check the rushing water. Therefore we do not read that the waters simply subsided, but were “going and returning” (Gen.8:3). Later on the phrase is changed to “go and abate” (8:5), when the water was much lower, and hindered by the irregularities of the earth’s surface and the wind.

THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE

Noah, in sending out a scout to search the scene and see if the time had come to leave the ark, picked out a raven. As it did not return, he sent out a dove (Gen.8:6-12). Are these not significant, as indicating what kind of world it was to be? The raven eats anything, and could live on carrion. It was the first inhabitant of this world, and has had many human followers. It no longer needed the shelter of the ark, so did not return. The dove, however, could find no place to light and rest, so it came back to the shelter of the ark. It is a symbol of peace and holy spirit (Matt. 3:16). So is the one who has the spirit and the peace it gives. There is no place for him to rest down here. Refuge can be found only in Christ.

The later trip of the dove, when it plucked off the olive
leaf (Gen.8:10,11), may well suggest the state of this world, after God was conciliated to all humanity. The cultivated olive, and even the wild olive, after being grafted into the cultivated, light up this dark scene, so that it is liveable again. It is worthy of note that the dove, unlike the raven, even after it found the olive tree, did not stay away from the ark, but returned to it. So it is in the antitype. Even though we are in the world, we are not of it, but return to the Ark for shelter.

According to the figures given during the deluge, the flood year contained only 360 days, and the month 30 days. We find the same in the book of Daniel and the Unveiling, where forty-two months are equal to 1,260 days, which allows 30 days for each month. It is usually called the “prophetic year” as though it applied only to the future predictions in the Scriptures. But is it at all likely that such a reckoning be without the least foundation in nature? The present reckoning of 365 and a fraction is not ideal, and neither is anything else in man’s day. Could it not be that the great cataclysm which introduced it caused the change, and the fearful seismic disturbances introducing the next eon will speed things up, so that it will be set right again in the day of Yahweh?

In a very real sense, all mankind since the flood is not only in Adam in Eden, but also with Noah in the ark. All were saved with him from the waters of the deluge. This puts them in a dearer relation to the Subjector than those living in the previous eon. Then He had created men and made them. In this eon He has also saved them through a great cataclysm, which is a clear intimation of the future, when He will once more become the Saviour of all mankind, not in the ark, but in Christ (1 Tim.4:10). Not by creation, but through salvation, will the Father bring all under His beneficent and loving sway at the consummation.

A. E. Knoch
**THE DEATH OF THE CROSS**

*CHRIST, IN JUDGMENT AND SALVATION*

**Question:**
Can you inform me as to the meaning of the word "cross" as well as concerning the meaning of the phrase "the death of the cross"? I have been told, since the common symbol of the cross is pagan and the Greek word translated cross does not actually mean cross but simply "stake" (without any crosspiece), that symbols of the cross should not be used and that even the word "cross" itself should not be used in reference to the death of Christ.

**Answer:**
The Greek word translated “cross” is *stauros*, to which we have assigned the standard *stander*.1 *Stauros* is apparently derived from *stau*, which was the name of an ancient Greek letter which “stood between” “E” (epsilon) and “Z” (zayta) and was retained as a numeral = 6.

The noun *stauros* (“cross,” CV) is used simply of an *upright pale or stake* in the ancient Greek epic poem *Odyssey* (traditionally attributed to the ninth century B.C. poet Homer).2

---

1. That is, an upright device (see entry “cross,” Keyword Concordance, p.63); cp the term “stanchion,” in the sense of a standing support.
A Malediction of Elohim

While the verb *staurō* ("crucify," CV), similarly, is used in early antiquity in the sense of "to fence with pales," the later use, as an instrument of death as in the New Testament and as corresponds to the modern "crucify," may be seen as early as the second-century B.C. in the works of the historian Polybius. 3

It is evident, then, that by our first century A.D., the use of *staurus* for the Roman instrument of death by affixation to a wooden device, was well established. It spoke of a vertical-standing, fearful instrument of death, by affixation thereunto and hanging thereupon; but it said nothing as to the particular form of any particular *staurus*-instrument.

Under Moses’ law, death was by stoning (e.g., Deut. 21:20,21; 22:20-24). Afterward, the corpse was sometimes hung upon a tree (Deut.21:22,23). This served at once as a warning to others (cp Joshua 10:26) as well as an especial mark of God’s malediction ("one being hung is under a malediction of Elohim"; Deut.21:23).

This explains Galatians 3:13: “Christ claims us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for our sakes, for it is written, Accursed is everyone hanging on a pole . . . ".

The cross (staurus) is often called a “pole” (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 1 Peter 2:24). The Greek word here, *xylon* (wood), however, unlike the English “pole” which speaks of shape, refers not to the shape of the object, but to the material from which it is made. Thus, by means of the word *xylon* (wood), the cross (staurus) is connected with the Hebrew

---


4. “Pole” is one of the idiomatic variants used in the Concordant Version for the Greek *xylon*, for which we have assigned the standard wood. *Xylon* is “the solid fiber of the trunk and branches of a tree, after cutting, hence [is used] of many things made of wood” (Keyword Concordance, p.331).

An Oriental Punishment


In the Hebrew Scriptures, we discover the awful associations connected with one who was hanged upon a tree. And, in the Greek Scriptures, we perceive something of the horror of the ignominious pain and shame of “the death of the cross” (Phil.2:8). Through a familiarity with these considerations, we begin to understand one of the reasons why the heralding of “Christ crucified” so thoroughly scandalized the Jews (skandalizo, SNALE; 1 Cor. 1:23), thus entrapping them in their snare of unbelief.

Crucifixion was originally an Oriental punishment. That is, it was practiced in the countries east of the Mediterranean or the ancient Roman empire. It was practiced by the Persians, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, and the Egyptians. Later, it was practiced by the Greeks, probably in imitation of the Persians, and by the Romans who likely learned it from their enemies the Carthaginians. Being mindful of its horror and tortuous nature, the Romans reserved it for slaves, for especially egregious criminals, and for provincials, deeming it too deep a disrespect to impose it on a Roman citizen.

“[There were two kinds of cross] {staurus}:

“(1) The crux simplex, which was a single stake. Sometimes the victim was fastened to it by his hands and feet, the former being extended above his head. Usually, however, it was a sharpened stake, and the victim was impaled upon it. It passed through the length of his body, issuing from his mouth.

“(2) The crux compacta [i.e., joined together], which was composed of two pieces. It had three forms: (1) The crux decussata [i.e., in the shape of an “X”] . . . (2) The crux commissa [i.e., set together, at the start of the beam] . . . resembling the letter T . . . (3) The crux immissa [i.e., growing out, in the sense of ‘above’], which had the top
of the upright protruding above the transom, ‘t: From the middle of the upright there projected a peg . . . on which to support its weight, the body rested as on a saddle.’ 5

Since it is evident from the Scripture account that our Lord was not impaled upon a sharpened stake, and it seems unlikely that the less common practice of attachment by the hands and feet to a post was employed, it has generally been assumed that Christ was executed upon a two-piece device according to the most common prevailing custom, upon which the hands would be outstretched upwardly and then nailed to a crossbar or patibulum. Whether the terrible tool of death were in the shape of a ‘T’ or a ‘t’, there would have been room in either case for the attachment of the board inscribed with His name and accusation put up over His head (Matt.27:37).

Thus, by stauros, all that can be known is that it was a vertical-standing device composed of wood, which served as the means of execution. Since these fearful contrivances were fashioned in various shapes, and we possess neither declarative nor corollarial evidence of the shape of the particular stauros upon which Jesus was put to death, we therefore do not know its shape. We do know, however, that the word stauros does not speak of any certain shape, and therefore that it provides us with no evidence concerning this minor question.

Instead of giving undue attention to minutiae, we would instead center our thoughts on things of consequence, namely, upon the purpose and achievements of God as a result of the death of Christ and our justification “in His blood” (Rom.3:25; 5:9).

As to the historical issue of certain cross-shaped pagan images, let me say in reply that what pagans may have done with cross-like symbols before the death of Christ has nothing to do with how the Romans crucified people.

It is well to become acquainted with the fact that various popular traditions such as the religious observance of Christmas or Easter are not to be found in the Scriptures. Indeed it is true that certain of the accouterments attending such traditional observances have been adapted from their earlier “heathen” connections and pressed into “Christian service.” As is our own practice, if one considers such things unfitting, one may simply decline to incorporate them into one’s own customs. We need not become preoccupied with such things and their perceived evils, nor should we make overmuch of our knowledge concerning them while diminishing much that is excellent in the faith and lives of many of those devoted to such enshrined traditions.

We have nothing to do with the customs of ancient pagans nor with any more or less t-shaped objects of veneration which some among them evidently possessed.

We would say, however, that a common symbol need not have a common identification. Further, the appropriateness or tastefulness of the use of any such “logo” is manifestly a subjective question. Certainly, in a particular culture, some might well and with a clean heart see fit to exhibit such an emblem of their faith, while others, equally sincere, might deem it inappropriate to do so.

Let us not confound the issue here, by confusing those who “venerate” or worship a cross with those who consider the cross as a symbol of faith in Christ, and so view it as a symbol of their own faith in Him accordingly. While it is not our custom to employ such a symbol personally or as a part of our ministry, we realize that many see fit to do so, and we see no reason to think less of them because of this.

Even though the meaning of the word stauros does not include the notion of “cross member,” neither does it exclude it. The question is not, What was its import in the

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most ancient usage of this word, but, What is its essential meaning and what was its referential meaning in first century Palestine under Roman rule.

Of the latter there can be no question. There, the term *stauros* was used of the awful wooden instrument of death—whatever its shape—which served as the means of execution of convicted persons in the Roman world.

The learned definition of “cross” found in Webster’s New International Dictionary is as follows: “A structure, *typically* an upright supporting a horizontal beam, ancienly used in the execution of malefactors.”

Since this accords fully with both the New Testament usage of *stauros* as well as with the best historical records concerning crucifixion practices, it follows that the modern word “cross,” rather than being a supposedly improper term that we should somehow repudiate, is instead the ideal word to use when translating the Greek *stauros*. Therefore, in speaking of the instrument of Christ’s death, not only may we use the word “cross,” but we may do so freely, without reservation.

*Question:

I was always taught that Jesus suffered for our sins on the cross, bearing our sins away, so that we who believe would be saved. But if all will eventually be saved, why is there still a future day of judgment, a “day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God”? Concerning the judgment of that day, Paul says that “indignation and fury, affliction and distress,” will come upon those “persuaded to injustice,” even


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John's Vision of the New Earth

“on every human soul which is effecting evil” (Rom. 2:5-9). In a word, if Jesus suffered once for all, taking away the sin of the world, why should there be a day of judging and a second death?

I am struggling with the teachings in the last three chapters of the book of Revelation. It is difficult to square these chapters with a belief in universal salvation.

Also, if it is true that Jesus died for everyone and that everyone will be saved in the end, why, then, are only certain ones to receive an eternal salvation?

**Answer:**

In replying to your questions, I would like to begin by making a general comment regarding the last three chapters of Revelation, chapters 20–22. In fact, concerning salvation, it is no more difficult to square these chapters with a universalist belief than with a partalist belief.

Let me explain what I mean. You are correct that (a) there is nothing in Revelation 20–22 that teaches the eventual salvation of all. But I wonder if you have also noted that (b) neither is there anything within this section of Scripture which precludes the eventual salvation of all. Statement (a) and Statement (b) are both fully true.

Revelation 20–22 neither affirms nor denies the eventual salvation of all. It simply does not address the question. In fact, if this portion of Scripture were all that had been provided us concerning distant future events, we could neither say that all will or will not be saved. In that case, we could only say that we have no testimony either affirming or denying either proposition.

As far as the apostle John is concerned, he simply speaks of the second death; he does not address the question of whether there is any life beyond the second death for those having been committed to it.
Paul Completes the Word of God

But it does not follow since John does not address this question here, that neither does any other writer inform us concerning it elsewhere. Much less does it follow because John is not granted a vision of a day when those who had entered the second death will finally be delivered from it, that there simply is no deliverance from the second death.

Paul necessarily sees farther into the future than John; and, unlike John, Paul alone—to whom it was given to complete the word of God (Col.1:25)—deals with ultimate issues:

“For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified” (1 Cor.15:22). The vivification of all, however, will occur in “classes”: the Firstfruit of vivification is Christ Himself; thereupon, in due course, those who are Christ’s will be vivified; and, thereafter, the consummation of the vivification of all will finally occur.

This will be whenever Christ may be giving up the kingdom (lit., the “reign”) to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. He will achieve this, since He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. And, this will occur, since He subjects all under His feet. Finally, “the Son Himself” also shall be subjected to God, “Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all” (cf 1 Cor.15:22-28).

It follows, then, that at the consummation, every person who entered the second death will be fully returned to life, but this time to unspeakably glorious life, in immortality and incorruption, no longer subjected to vanity but instead truly constituted just—vivified—fit for the indwelling of God Himself in such a way that He may be All in all.

From these considerations it follows as well that the apostle John’s vision is one of an epochal period, not of endless duration. We know this simply because while John, in Revelation 21 and 22, speaks of the reign of Christ, of saints, and of kings of the earth, while affirming the presence of the second death, Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, speaks of Christ reigning until He gives up the reign (the kingdom); indeed, of the time when all sovereignty and authority is nullified (which therefore includes that of both the saints and the kings of the earth), and even of the time when death itself is abolished, the glorious day when all will finally have that life of which Christ is the Firstfruit, all unto the end that God may be All in all (1 Cor.15:28).

SET FOR LIFE EONIAN; SIN, OFFENSES, AND ACTS

You also asked, “If it is true that Jesus died for everyone and that everyone will be saved in the end, why, then, are only certain ones to receive an eonian salvation?”

In reply, I would simply say that while the living God, on Whom we rely, is the Saviour of all mankind, He is especially the Saviour of believers (1 Tim.4:10). Eonian salvation is the “special” salvation granted to God’s chosen ones, who are also graciously granted faith.

That is, to a very special extent or degree, the One Who is the Saviour of all mankind is also the Saviour of believers in particular, to whom alone, eonian life is given.

Here it is important to keep in mind that faith is the consequent gracious blessing given to those who are, first of all, chosen, foreknown, designated beforehand, and then, in due time, called and granted faith (cf Eph.1:4; Rom. 8:29,30,33; Acts 13:48; 1 Cor.1:24; Phil.1:29).

We are not told why we are chosen and others are not, with respect to membership in the ecclesia and the blessing of eonian life. We simply know—as concerns untold other things as well concerning which we are likewise not informed as to the particular “why” of things—that God has actually chosen (i.e., “willed”) that things be as they are, not otherwise, to accord with His purpose (Eph.1:11).
Indignation upon Irreverence and Injustice

We stand in awe of it all, relying on Him as the Almighty, trusting in His wisdom, goodness, and love.

Now, finally, let me address your primary concern, which you yourself summed up as follows: “In a word, if Jesus suffered once for all, taking away the sin of the world, why should there be a day of judging and a second death?”

I would first of all stress, since the Lamb of God did indeed take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), not only do we who are God’s chosen one’s not suffer for our sins, but neither does any one else suffer for his or her sins.

This, however, in no way denies the consideration—which is another matter—that in this life, “God’s indignation is being revealed from heaven on all the irreverence and injustice of men who are retaining the truth [i.e., whatever truth they do know] in injustice.” This is, “the retribution of their deception which must be” (Rom.1:18,19,27b). That is, God’s “indignation” here is upon the irreverence and injustice itself; a consequence of this, it is true, is that the effects thereof are experienced by those engaged therein.

This consequence, however, is not in the form of “male-dictions” along the lines of the “curses” of the law. Instead, though often dreadful deeds do indeed result in present-day suffering, this is by no means always the case.

It seems evident that “the retribution of their deception” has both a subjective and an objective aspect. That is, we human beings are deceived and led astray both in and as a result of our deeds of irreverence and injustice. If we were not already corrupted, we would never do these things; and, as those who have done them, we must also experience something of what God thinks of them, even if the penalty here consists in continuing on in our darkness (which is by no means a trivial judgment in itself!), whether or not it also includes consequent, corresponding suffering.

There are three terms to consider: (1) “sins” (which refers to one’s failures; lit., “missings” of the mark); (2) “offenses” (which speaks of that which wounds the feelings); and (3) “acts” (i.e., actions, or “works,” which speaks simply of deeds themselves, without, at least as such, noting their “missing” or “offending” aspects).

As the Lamb of God, the Sin Offering, Jesus takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29); and, God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself (i.e., uniting them unto Him; cp 1 Cor.7:11), which entails His not reckoning their offenses to them (2 Cor.5:19).

Therefore, men’s ongoing practices in which they continue to miss the mark of God’s ideals, and continue as well to be offensive therein, do not stand in the way of their salvation. In Christ, God has made provision for their needs concerning both their failings and the offensiveness thereof. Therefore, neither men’s sins nor their offenses inhibit their salvation: God has formed the decision (1 Tim.2:4) that all mankind be saved; and, in Christ, all shall be vivified (1 Cor.15:22).

These considerations, however, glorious and significant as they are, do not change the fact that God will bring every act into judgment (Ecc.12:14; God’s “judgment” simply speaks of that which God decides to do or bring to pass). Now, in judgment, there are two grand classes of humanity: (1) vessels of mercy, and (2) vessels of indignation (Rom.9:22,23; it should be kept in mind that even the vessels of indignation will subsequently enjoy mercy themselves; cf Rom.11:32).

All God’s judgments (i.e., everything that He decides to accomplish) are ultimately salutary and corrective. In judgment, in His judging of a part of mankind, God will display His mercy therein, according to His grace (“mercy” is the mitigation, or diminution, of the severity of judgment). And, in His judging of the remainder of mankind, God, Who is love (1 John 4:8; cp 1 Cor.13:5), in the person of
His Son, will assume the role (cf Heb.1:3) of One Who is indignant, thus manifesting a corresponding severity, with a view toward displaying His indignation and making His powerful doings known (Rom.9:22).

This is what God has determined to do, and He will do it. He has a purpose in it all, and that purpose is to glorify Himself and bless His creatures—to the degree and in the way that He intends.

In consideration of the second death, we need only note that it is not according to God’s purpose for all to live during the eon of the eons, which is the final duration, prior to the consummation (it is this eon which is the object of John’s vision of Revelation 21, 22). It was not God’s purpose for us to have lived in times of old. For such a long expanse of time, there was no life for us to be found. Similarly, then, even as we ourselves were not afforded life in millennia past, neither will the majority of mankind be endowed therewith during the eon of the eons.

But it is according to God’s purpose for the day of judging to transpire subsequent to the thousand years, and yet prior to the eon of the eons. And, in that “day” (we do not know its duration, but take it that even if comparatively brief it will not be an insignificant period; cf Matt.12:42), the acts of the vessels of indignation will be judged; where appropriate, in severity. Following the day of judging, those brought forth for judging (cf John 5:29b) will be returned to death, being cast into the lake of fire: “This is the second death—the lake of fire” (Rev.20:14b).

We who are God’s chosen ones, who are vessels of mercy, will enjoy eonian life until the consummation when we together with all mankind will enter upon the field of endless life which follows.

In closing, I would only declare, “Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.15:57).

J.R.C.
THE UNVEILING OF THE SONS OF GOD

UNVEILING! This strong emphasis on the spectacular transformation of the sons of God is quite deliberate. Such is the importance of this long-awaited revelation, that it were well to carefully consult God’s holy Scriptures:

“For I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us. For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travelling together until now” (Rom.8:18-22).

The apostle Paul earnestly besought that God, the Father of glory, would be giving us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of our hearts having been enlightened, for us to perceive what is the expectation of His calling (Eph.1:17,18). Down through the years these searching words reach out to the spirits of those beloved in Christ Jesus; precious members of the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (1:23). But just what is the expectation of God’s calling?

Each one must carefully note the occurrence of the word “creation” in the above text from Romans. *Four times* is this term set before us! In very truth, while most privileged to be graced with the firstfruit of the spirit, we are certainly
not exempted from the grievous travelling, so much in evidence during these perilous periods. Despite this, and often in anticipation of that advent of the glory of God and our Saviour, we, in these bodies of humiliation, whose realm is inherent in the heavens, are consoled by this same spirit! This experience of God assuring Paul that “Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is being perfected,” surely prompted the apostle to record: “Wherefore I delight in infirmities, in outrages, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ sake, for, whenever I may be weak, then I am powerful” (2 Cor.12:10).

“When clothed in His brightness transported I rise,
To meet Him in clouds of the sky,
His perfect salvation, His wonderful love,
I’ll praise with the millions on high.”

Messer of Light

“It is only by stealth and deception that [Satan] holds fast the homage of humanity. If men knew that the serpent of Eden had been transformed into a messenger of light in order to better carry on his work of weaning men’s hearts away from God, if they knew that the angelic glory hid the serpent’s heart, would they so blindly do his bidding? Our adversary is the god of this eon. He is worshipped in Christendom as well as among the heathen. Everywhere is found his worship, except among the feeble few who to Christ are true. He it is who blinds the minds of unbelievers 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.4:4).”

In the account of Satan’s challenge with our dear Lord in the wilderness, he was summarily defeated, in abject failure, with declarations of the Word of God. However, our


The Body of His Glory

timid spirits are quite daunted to discover that not until his instant dismissal do messengers approach to minister to the Lord. We may not underestimate the eminence of the adversary.

But wait! In one very vital blessing we are by no means inferior or helpless. Heed Paul’s exultation: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (Rom.8:38,39).

The blessing? Immortality! Again we quote, for here the matter is so incredible, so wonderful, that our spirits leap within as we read the very words: “For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself” (Phil.3:20,21).

“Face to face with Christ, my Saviour,
Face to face—what will it be?
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ Who died for me.
Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by.”

Can this possibly be true? Is the ecclesia—unique in all creation, apart from One Who is the Son of God’s love—to be graced with immortality? Here we tread with great care! Heed our Lord’s exaltation: “He is King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone has immortality, making His home in light inaccessible, Whom not one of mankind perceived nor can be perceiving, to Whom be honor and might eonian! Amen!” (1 Tim.6:16).
In support of this revelation, we further learn the status of our own transfiguration: “We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality” (1 Cor.15:51-53).

The more we search out this stupendous, gracious blessing, the more we gain courage. Still timid and hesitant, we read: “Now the God of peace will be crushing Satan under your feet swiftly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you!” (Rom.16:20). All this is so amazing that we might lapse into a stupor. Did not Michael, the chief messenger, not daring to bring on a columniating judgment, declare to Satan, “May the Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 9)?

We are aware that the role of the Adversary, was in like manner to that of Pharaoh. In the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, we can perceive how Satan can only be an instrument in God’s hands. Satan’s vilest act of malevolent hatred advances the Subjector’s purpose!

AMONG THE CELESTIALS

With all these transcendent blessings, we might become prone to a blissful indifference to the plight of those with whom we share life’s heartaches. Be not misled. Until we are summoned, our lives should always be a literal reflection of thankfulness and peace. “Now you did not thus learn Christ, since, surely, Him you hear, and by Him were taught (according as the truth is in Jesus), to put off from you, as regards your former behavior, the old humanity which is corrupted in accord with its seductive desires, yet to be rejuvenated in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new humanity which, in accord with God, is being created in righteousness and benignity of the truth” (Eph.4:20-24).

Our Future Allotment

“If we realize the great truth that we are a new humanity in Christ, and that the old was crucified with Him, we will not disgrace ourselves by entering the lists against the decaying and decrepit humanity to which our bodies still belong but which we should put off, by the power of the spirit, just as we discard garments too worn and filthy for further use. Let there be no conflict with the old humanity. With men we are at peace, even as God is conciliated toward them now. For them our feet are sandaled with the readiness of the evangel of peace, for our feet alone are in contact with the earth. Our very panoply provides for a truce with mankind (Eph.6:15). Only as we mount, by faith, to our celestial allotment, will we wage war.”

We began this study with emphasis on the unveiling of the sons of God. Frequent reference has been made into the disclosure of so momentous an occasion. True, there is a premonition of so great and wonderful a change, “... in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye,” but as this startling figure suggests, the speed with which this occurs will be so swift as to be beyond the observation of all ultra-high frequency point-to-point radio waves.

Our allotment is among the celestials, bringing “good news” to those vast regions. Who better qualified than those who have suffered so much agony of the spirit, so much loneliness and sorrow? This earnest of spirit surely makes us not less, but more sensitive. Between the time of the “snatching” away of the ecclesia, and the binding of Satan for one thousand years, this one, now crushed swiftly beneath our feet, will have undergone a distinctive change—a drastic diminution of his powers! How else account for the very fact that there a messenger (note: not Michael), descends out of heaven, lays hold on Satan, and peremptorily arrests all his further intrusive mischief.

The Subjector's Love
during the thousand years in a kingdom once described by
Jesus Himself as paradise, a time when God confirms His
promise of great blessings for the nation of Israel.

GLORY AND HONOR

One last question remains. Why is the ecclesia thus hon-
ored? Why, among all the myriads of God's creatures, are
these present, lowly, insignificant beings chosen for such
high and mighty distinctive blessing? The method, the
wonderful and glorious grace of it all, now seems so sim-
ple to ourselves. The basic lesson was plain. Among all the
many impressive creatures in God's great universe, one
only, mankind, was chosen to represent His loving, obe-
dient Son. Small wonder that the centurion was heard to
declare: " Truly this was God's Son! " He witnessed obedi-
ence, defying all comprehension!

Following the course of the eons, leading to the consum-
mation, these same images of the mighty Subjector, shall
be bringing the message of His great and gracious love.
When, ultimately, His dear Son, our Lord and Saviour, lov-
ingly abdicates, all, including His servant, Satan, shall be
joyfully embraced by God, Who shall then, be All in all!

Donald Fielding

WEEKEND CONFERENCES

February 22: The Grace Evangel Fellowship, P.O.Box 6, Wilmore
KY 40390, has scheduled an all-day conference to be held at the Hol-
day Inn-Lexington South. For further details phone Bob and Jill Evely
(859-858-3652).

March 15, 16: The theme, " Be Seeking That Which is Above, " has
been set for a conference to be held at the Pilgrim Manor Chapel,
2000 Leonard St. NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, sponsored by the
Bible Fellowship (contact Orville Hunt, 616-457-2213).

April 4-6: The Richmond Bible Fellowship has scheduled meet-
ings to be held at the Days Inn, 2100 Dickens Road, Richmond, Vir-
ginia (for reservations phone 804-282-3300), Friday evening at 7:00,
during the day on Saturday, and Sunday morning.
THROUGH THE APOSTLES

GOD HAS SPOKEN through the apostles. The word apostle is a transliteration of the Greek word apostolos; its nearest equivalent in English is “commissioner.” Often it is instructive to look at the English equivalents of the Greek elements making up a Greek word. In this case they are FROM (apo-) and PUT (-stol-). Hence, the fundamental sense is, FROM-PUT, referring to someone who is put aside as a representative, as citizens do when they elect a commissioner.

An apostle was given a commission, with authority to enforce it. The commissions for the twelve were given them by the Lord while He was yet with them. Paul also received his commission from the Lord, but after His resurrection. Paul was not numbered among the twelve, nor did he receive his commission from or through the twelve (Gal. 1:1, 12).

What commissions did the apostles receive? How were they selected? What were their messages, and what did they do? To discuss these questions, the apostles must be divided into two groups.

THE TWELVE

Early in His earthly ministry, the Lord selected the twelve apostles and gave them their commission. His clear instructions and explanations of their authority and conduct are recorded in Matthew 10. Included there are the following surprising words:

“Into a road of the nations you may not pass forth, and into a city of the Samaritans you may not be entering. Yet be going rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
The Commission of the Twelve

Now going, herald, saying that ‘Near is the kingdom of the heavens!’” (Matt.10:5-7).

You might well wonder, Why the restrictions on going to those of the nations (Gentiles)? Why specifically restrict their message to the “house of Israel”? Why are the nations excluded from receiving the message?

The answer to all these questions is very simple, yet often overlooked. *Israel had been promised a kingdom centuries before through the prophets.* The kingdom was promised to Israel as its administrator, not to the nations. Hence its proclamation was restricted to Israel. There was nothing sinister in the “discrimination.”

Of course you know the result of the proclamation. It was rejected! Not only so, the King was crucified!

The door to the kingdom was opened again at Pentecost. Peter, the leader of the apostles to whom was given the keys to the kingdom opened it. The proclamation of the kingdom resumed, and again rejected. You can read of the formal cessation of that gospel when Paul publicly proclaims the apostasy of the nation of Israel (Acts 28:23-28). Now Israel is temporarily set aside—the nation, that is, not individuals. During this pause in the establishment of the kingdom of the heavens on earth, what is God’s program?

**PAUL**

Why do we separate Paul? We see a hint of this in the Acts reference just cited from Acts 28. Another hint opens

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1. See Matthew 28:16-20 for a preview of the actual establishment of the kingdom. The nations will be wonderfully blessed under the kingdom administration of the apostles
2. Apostolic authority was not confined to the twelve. For the kingdom, under Israel, there must be twelve, for Israel’s twelve tribes call for twelve rulers. For the nations, there is no such limit. Paul, however, is so great that he overshadows the apostles associated with him in his ministry to the nations, and so we mention only him in this heading.

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The Commission Given to Paul

the book of Romans. There he writes that he was “severed” for the evangel of God. More directly: “To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations…” (Eph.3:8). “… For which I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth” (1 Tim.2:7).

This can’t be misinterpreted: “…perceiving that I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision (for He who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations), and, knowing the grace which is being given to me, James and Cephas and John, who are supposed to be pillars, give to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we, indeed, are to be for the nations, yet they for the Circumcision…” (Gal.2:7-9).

Paul (and those apostles associated with him) were given a different commission from the twelve. He is to be for the nations. That is, the people comprising the nations other than the “nation,” or Israel. When Paul was given his commission, Israel had not yet been formally and officially set aside. But when that took place, the proclamation of the kingdom ended. Paul’s evangel is the only evangel, and it is for all. Paul could write “there is no Jew nor yet Greek, … for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal.3:28,29).

Paul is the apostle for the present; his epistles contain the gospel for the present, the good news about our wonderful place in God’s purpose for the celestials to be carried out through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Paul’s epistles will not fit the past nor the future on the earth.

On the other hand, the writings of the twelve apostles concerning the kingdom, its law and glories on the earth will not fit the present. They apply to the past and to the future on the earth.

Robert B. Killen
GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED

God has sent the welcome word to us that we are justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). When we first believe this evangel, we certainly do not grasp all that it means, both in terms of what happened when Christ died for our sins and what it means to us, to the world, and, most essentially, to God Himself. But we receive this word as a most welcome message of salvation, for our need is critical. In every way it is an evangel (WELL-MESSAGE).

Paul’s eagerness to bring this evangel of God testifies to his deep-rooted pride in it. He was not ashamed of it (Rom.1:16). On the surface, it spoke of a dreadful experience of humiliation and weakness endured by the Son of God in view of a glory that can be known at present only in spiritual terms of faith and expectation. Nevertheless, spiritual blessings are far from being mere provisions when they are centered in truth. It is true that, while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes, and all that was accomplished by this great act of faithful obedience will be realized! Since it is true, its benefits are real.

The spiritual blessing of believing the evangel had stirred Paul’s enthusiasm for it and its proclamation. This longing pulsed at the very center of his life (Rom.1:9-15). But Paul’s zeal was not simply focused on what the evangel said concerning humanity in general and the believer in particular, but at the very core on what it made known concerning God. It was the evangel of God (Rom.1:1), not simply from God, but reflective of His very essence.

God’s Power and Righteousness

WHAT THE EVANGEL IS

The evangel is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16). The evangel itself is a message of God’s power for salvation. Salvation, whether its past accomplishment or its future realization or its present enjoyment, is all of God. Sin and infirmity are entrenched in us. Corruption and mortality are everywhere and do not go away. But the evangel is a message of powerful deliverance.

THE THEME OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Now in Romans 1:17 our thoughts are directed to the righteousness of God. This is the first direct reference to the theme of righteousness in Romans, where the various terms based on the Greek root, -dik- (JUST), occur, as a group, nearly seventy times. In the first half of the epistle, from Romans 1:17 to Romans 8:33, where Paul expounds the evangel, such words as righteous (or just), righteousness and justify appear no less than fifty times. And to these usages we should add eight occurrences of the words unjust and injustice (which could also be rendered “unrighteous” and “unrighteousness”).

This major theme of righteousness is opened in Romans as a matter applying to God, being revealed in the evangel. Paul speaks of God’s righteousness quite literally here, much as he does in Romans 3:25,26 (“display of His righteousness”), and, using a slightly different Greek construction, in Romans 3:5 (“if our injustice is commending God’s righteousness”). Before the apostle expounds the evangel as it relates to our justification, he draws our attention to God’s glorious attribute of righteousness as it is brought to light in the evangel. What the welcome message of God’s power for salvation tells us about God’s righteousness is basic to our lives and ongoing appreciation of this evangel, of which Paul was not ashamed.
If we miss this order of divine priority, we will miss much of the powerful and saving influence of the evangel on our lives, while we deal with the perils of the present era. The righteousness of God as it is made known in the evangel of God concerning the death and resurrection of His Son undergirds all that is said in Romans about justification, righteousness reckoned to the believer, and the believer’s enslavement to righteousness and confidence in God, the Justifier. And it undergirds our assurance in what the evangel says and our reliance on God day by day. The righteousness of God as we apprehend it in believing the evangel is a continuing source of happiness and strength.

It is not only that we take for granted that God is righteous. In believing the evangel, we are believing that which reveals God’s righteousness to us. The justification of sinners is a righteous work of God, revealing that God’s righteousness leaves nothing wrong. No sin or offense, no deed or thought of irreverence or unrighteousness is ignored, and no wrong is left unrighted by God’s righteousness in the giving of His Son for us all. As we continue to follow Paul’s presentation of the evangel in Romans, especially as it relates to justification, we will see how these features of God’s righteousness are brought out.

**RIGHTeousNESS OF GOD**

As in Romans 1:1-7, which draws attention first to God, Who has an evangel for us, then to His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, concerning Whom the evangel speaks, and finally to us who receive this evangel, so also Romans 1:17 speaks first of God. The passage speaks also indirectly of Christ, in the word “evangel” which is God’s welcome message concerning His Son, and in the phrase “out of faith” which corresponds to the phrase “through the faith of Jesus Christ” in Romans 3:22. And, in third place, Romans 1:17 speaks at length about the believer in the words “for faith” and

in the Evangel

the citation from Habakkuk. But what it says about God stands at the head of Paul’s thought and shapes our understanding of what follows. The following arrangement may help to make this emphasis more visible:

1. For in [the evangel] God’s righteousness is being revealed,
2. out of faith
3. for faith, according as it is written: “Now the just one by faith shall be living.”

This same order appears in the further development of Romans 1:17 which is found in Romans 3:21,22, as follows:

1. Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God
2. through Jesus Christ’s faith,
3. for all, and on all who are believing . . .

It is not often this way in our experience. When we first hear and accept the evangel almost our full attention is centered on what it means for ourselves. Martin Luther’s testimony regarding the effects of this very passage on his life seems to be fairly typical. It is indeed a great breakthrough to be rescued from slavery to religious works into the happiness of faith. But how few seem to be taken further into an appreciation of Jesus Christ’s faith! It is Christ’s faithful obedience leading to His death for sinners that will ultimately be appreciated as the real cause, the critical source, of justification, and the fullness of God’s righteousness will be known and honored specifically in light of that supreme act of faith.

Our faith must not be focused on our believing, as blessed as it is to be believing and to be blessed by God on the basis of believing, rather than carrying out requirements of law. More fundamental is the faith of Jesus Christ, which is the basis of salvation gained for all and reckoned now to
us who are believing. And standing behind the evangel of justification through the faithful obedience of Christ and reckoned to those who are believing, is the glorious, personal righteousness of God.

The evangel speaks of God's work through the death of Christ on behalf of sinners. It tells of God's achievement of salvation and justification and reconciliation through the gift of His Son, but also in doing so (and this seems often to be missed) it makes God Himself known as no other work of God could ever do.

APPRECIATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

The fact that God's own, personal righteousness is made known in the evangel should help open up its glories to us and strengthen our appreciation for it. The insight into God's righteousness which the evangel provides is a guard against much wrong thinking about salvation.

The idea, often vaguely felt, and sometimes clearly expressed, that salvation is a matter of God's grace but not of His justice (which is His righteousness), is mistaken. God's grace harmonizes fully with His righteousness. In fact, because of the nature of His righteousness God's grace would not be exercised apart from a sure and righteous foundation. If the death of Christ on the cross does not provide an actual, righteous basis for salvation, then it accomplishes no more than the sacrifices of sheep and goats. Christ is the Antitype of the propitiatory shelter (Rom.3:25) and of the sin offering (2 Cor.5:21) and of the approach present (Eph.2:8; cf 5:2). The types could only be a shadow of the operation of God which really brings an end to sin and offense, enmity and infirmity and death. God's righteousness in dealing fully and finally with sin is now revealed.

Salvation is all of God, entirely based on His giving of His Son. It is His power at work. But also in God's pow-

the Righteous Basis of Salvation

erful work of salvation we see God's very own attribute of righteousness at work. The joy and peace of the believer grasps with tight hold to this revelation of God.

PSALM 98

As he often does in his epistles, whether consciously or unconsciously, Paul employs the language of the Hebrew Scriptures here as he introduces the theme of righteousness. In this case he particularly borrows from Psalm 98 which anticipates the marvelous works of the kingdom and the praise of Yahweh the King. The psalm speaks of a “new song” (Psa.98:1) which is one of good news, and Paul speaks of the evangel of God (Rom.1:16):

Sing to Yahweh a new song,
For He has done marvelous works;
His right hand and His holy arm
have brought His salvation.

For not ashamed am I of the evangel,
For it is God's power for salvation . . . .

But Paul is speaking of the message of Christ's death for sinners, not of Israel's delivery from their enemies and from the evil they represented. God's salvation of Israel was limited in extent. Yet indeed it was given with that absolute salvation which is announced in the evangel in view. Every divine operation of salvation is based on the truth of the faithful and welcome message that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim.1:15). None of the promises of future glory concerning Israel, and reaching to the nations of the earth as well, can be fulfilled apart from the cross of Christ. That is the real basis of all God's works of salvation and of the revelation of God's righteousness in His works of salvation. Apart from God's giving up of His Son for us all, there is no real and lasting salvation, and no possibility of a full revelation of divine righteousness.
The Removal of Idolatry and Wickedness

Hence certain key words of Psalm 98:2 appear in Romans 1:17 in a wider and deeper context:

Yahweh has made known His salvation;
To the eyes of the nations
He has revealed His righteousness.
For in [the evangel]
God's righteousness is being revealed . . .

How is it that God's work of the salvation of Israel, by His powerful arm, revealed His righteousness to the nations? God's righteousness was seen in His dealings with the idolatry and wickedness of the nations. Yet the psalm does not focus on the defeat of the enemy but on Israel's salvation from the enemy's influence of idolatry and wickedness. God's righteousness was not seen so much in paying back the enemy for its wickedness as in ridding Israel of that wickedness. In effect, the wickedness was taken away. Hence what the nations learned was that God's righteousness demanded the removal of evil. Irreverence and unrighteousness would not be tolerated.

To be sure, these displays of God's righteousness in His acts of deliverance of Israel from idolatry and its wicked associations, were impermanent and incomplete. In relation to the general situation of humanity when, in His patience and forbearance God does not execute His judgments on human unrighteousness, these works of temporary salvation gave a glimpse of divine righteousness to the world. But it was not the full orbited revelation that the evangel of God provides.

In addition of course, Israel itself was sinful, continually falling into idolatry and participating in corrupt practices. The salvation given them internally and externally was neither perfect nor permanent, and consequently the revelation of divine righteousness was limited.

But that is not the case with God's work of salvation

The Evangel Speaks of Absolute Removal

through the faithful obedience of Jesus Christ. This work deals with all unrighteousness and does so to a finality, as the writer to the Hebrews expresses it (cf. Heb.10:1-14).

IRREVERENCE AND UNRIGHTHEOUSNESS

Immediately after telling us that God's righteousness is revealed for our faith in the evangel, the apostle connects this revelation with the subject of God's indignation upon all the irreverence and injustice [unrighteousness] of human beings (Rom.1:18). The revelation of God's indignation is not the same as the revelation of God's righteousness, but they are associated. The victory sung about in Psalm 98 was, in fact, a revelation of divine indignation, but the psalmist does not mention that. It showed forth God's anger against irreverence and unrighteousness. But it also showed God's righteousness in that it got rid of the idolatry (relatively speaking), and this is stressed.

Now the righteousness of God in getting rid of human irreverence and unrighteousness absolutely, as revealed in the evangel, is brought forward before us in connection with His indignation against human irreverence and unrighteousness. This is by way of contrast, but that is surely not the whole purpose for Paul bringing up the matter. We will need to look at it more fully when we come to verse 18. But let it be said for now that Paul is leading us to see that God's indignation and judgment, His forbearance and giving of prerogatives, and all His operations during the current eons, find their justification in that one supreme and grand work of the giving of His Son.

LIFE'S JUSTIFYING

God deals with human irreverence and unrighteousness righteously in His judgments. But they do not lead to salvation. It is the cross of Christ that leads to salvation. And it is in that righteous dealing with sin, the death of Christ
for sinners, that all irreverence and unrighteousness are righteously eliminated. The subject of God's righteousness is appropriate within the context of God's judgments. But it is most gloriously appropriate within the context of the evangel that Christ came into the world to save sinners!

Yet if in the end there is a dualism where the unrighteousness of some people is finally dealt with only by their condemnation, and that of others by the cross of Christ, the subject of God's righteousness will invariably lead us into mysteries.

Everlasting pain and hate in hell for some people involves the permanence of irreverence and unrighteousness in God's universe. The annihilation of the irreverence and unrighteousness of some people by the irreversible destruction of the people means a permanence of loss and a permanence of sorrow for both Creator and creation.

Such theories do not seem to take thorough account of the evangel as to what it says and how it serves as a source of revelation of God's righteousness. Let us note again a truly relevant presentation of the evangel given in Romans:

“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” (Rom.5:18,19).

It is in the evangel that we see the righteousness of God as it never had been made known before. It is a righteousness which results in the justification of life for all mankind, so that those who were constituted sinners through Adam's disobedience will be constituted righteous through Christ's obedience. It is, in fact, a righteousness which justifies all the operations of God, His patience and mercy and choosings, as well as His acts of indignation and judgment which can now be seen to have a purpose as well as a cause.

D.H.H.
THE HOUSE OF GOD
AND HOUSE OF DAVID
(2 Samuel 7)

7 It came to be when the king was settled in his palace, and Yahweh Himself had granted him rest from all his enemies round about, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, See now, I am dwelling in a palace of cedars, while the coffer of the One, Elohim, is dwelling inside a sheet-tent.

3 Nathan replied to the king, Go ahead, do all that is in your heart, for Yahweh is with you.

4 But it was in that same night that the word of Yahweh came to Nathan the prophet, saying,

5 Go and say to My servant David, Thus said Yahweh: Should you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house from the day that I brought the sons of Israel up from Egypt until this day, but I have been moving about in Tent and Tabernacle. Wherever I moved about among all the sons of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to one of Israel’s judges whom I commissioned to shepherd My people Israel, saying, Why have you not built for Me a house of cedars? And now, thus shall you say to My servant David, Thus speaks Yahweh of hosts: I Myself took you from the homestead, from following the flock, to become governor over My people, over Israel. I shall be with you wherever you go, and I shall cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones who are on the earth. And I will provide a place for My people Israel; I will plant them so that they can tabernacle by themselves and shall no
†longer be disturbed; † the sons of iniquity shall not continue to humiliate them just as †at the first, 11 †ever since the day †when I commissioned judges over My people Israel. †I will †give †you rest from all your enemies'.

Moreover Yahweh tells †you that Yahweh shall †establish a royal house for you: 12 †When your days are †fulfilled and you lie down †with your fathers, †then I will raise up †your seed after you †that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish †his kingdom. 13 †He shall build a House for My Name, and I will establish †the throne of his kingdom †for the eon. 14 †I Myself shall become for him †like a father; and he †shall become for Me †like a son. 15 †When he †sins out of depravity", †then I will correct him †with the club of men and †with the contagions of the sons of humanity. 15 †As for My benignity, it shall not withdraw from him as †I withdrew it from †Saul whom I took away from before you. 16 †Your house and your kingship will be authenticated before †Me †for the eon; your throne, it shall become established †for the eon.

17 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak to David.

18 †Then king David came and †sat before Yahweh; †he †said: †Who am I, my Lord Yahweh, and †what is my house that You have brought me as far as hither? 18 †While this may be †still small in Your eyes, my Lord Yahweh, †yet You are speaking †also †about Your servant's house for †the far future; and this is the law for humanity, my Lord Yahweh. 20 †What †more could David †add †in speaking †to You? †For You Yourself know †Your servant, my Lord Yahweh. 21 †For the †sake of Your word and according to Your own heart You have done †all †this greatness, †and †made it known †to Your servant. 22 †Therefore You are †great, my Lord Yahweh, for there is †no †one like You, and there is †no Elohim except You †among all of whom we

have heard †with our ears, 23 †And †who is like Your people, like Israel, the only nation †on the earth †that Elohim went to ransom for Himself †as a people, †to †make for Himself a Name and to do for †them †great and fear inspiring deeds: †to drive out †nations and their elohim †before Your people †that You ransomed for Yourself from Egypt? 24 †You have †established †Your people Israel for Yourself †as Your people †for the eon; and You Yourself, O Yahweh, have become their †Elohim.

25 And now, †my Lord Yahweh", †confirm †for the eon the word †that You have spoken †concerning Your servant and †concerning his house; †do just as You have spoken. 26 †May Your Name be magnified †for the eon, †saying", Yahweh of hosts is Elohim over Israel; and the house of Your servant David, may it become established before You. 27 For You, O Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, You have revealed †to the ear of Your servant, †saying", I shall build a house for you; therefore Your servant has found courage †in his heart to pray to You †with this †prayer. 28 And now, my Lord Yahweh, You are He Who is the One, Elohim; †as for Your words, they †are trustworthy; and You are speaking to Your servant †of this †goodness. 29 †Be disposed now and bless †the house of Your servant †that it may come to be †before You for the eon; for You, my Lord Yahweh, You have spoken. †So †by Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed †for the eon.

The events of the seventh chapter occur during a peaceful interval in David's reign. They are not likely to have taken place immediately after the events of chapter six, but the events of both chapters are tied together by a common theme. 1 Chronicles 16 fits well between these chapters, and it records the establishment of music and praise as part of the regular worship of Israel at the taber-
nacle and places of sacrifice. That was a significant change. 1 Chronicles 17 is parallel to 2 Samuel 7.

David took time to reflect on his success when he “was settled in his palace” (2 Sam.7:1) and found himself dissatisfied that he should be enjoying the comfort of a permanent palace “while the coffer of the One, Elohim, is dwelling inside a sheet-tent” (v. 2). Perhaps David was thinking of Yahweh’s instruction to Moses that a central place would be established for worship and the abiding of Yahweh’s Name when the nation was settled in peace (Deut.12:10-14).

David shared his desire to build a temple for Yahweh with the prophet Nathan, but before any action could be taken, God revealed to Nathan that David was not to build a temple. In Yahweh’s gentle reprimand of David He said, “you will not build a permanent house for Me, but I will build a permanent house for you.” The permanent house for David would be a dynasty in which David’s descendants would rule Israel when God’s promises to that nation would be fulfilled. And David’s Seed would indeed build a house for God.

SETTLED IN GRATITUDE

David was humbled and filled with gratitude by God’s message. There is an interesting repetition of words in this chapter. The word “settled” in verse one is the same verb as “sat” in verse eighteen. Sitting in a palace of cedar, David’s heart was yearning for God. But sitting in a tent, praying before God, David was praising and giving thanks, overwhelmed with God’s provision for him.

The revelation that God would bless all nations through Abraham (Gen.12:1-3), the revelation that Judah would be chosen to rule, even over his elder brethren (Gen.49:10; Num.24:17), the passing by of the judges and the rejection of Saul’s house all showed that God had chosen and

God will Provide His Temple’s Builder

directed a channel through which all the promised blessings would flow. (These thoughts are present in David’s psalm in 1 Chronicles 16.) And David was a key turning point in that channel. David’s house would build a House for Yahweh, but not until Yahweh had built David’s house. Herein lies a tremendous truth. God’s glory shines brightest through His blessing of those who will be honoring Him. Humanity is dependent upon God for everything, even the revelation necessary to recognize the truth and to honor God. God blesses us first, before we can bless Him.

This chapter does not tell why David was not allowed to build the temple. Other passages give the reason that David was a man of war, and thus unsuited to build God’s house of peace (1 Chron.28:3; 1 Kings 5:3). But in 2 Samuel 7 this thought is unmentioned, leaving the reader with the thoughts that the God Who went to Israel and brought them out of Egypt and brought them through the wilderness and raised up leaders for them will also raise up the builder of His temple. God is doing all these things from start to finish. And so David fittingly basks in the assurance that God is performing all.

THE TRUE TEMPLE

David’s son, Solomon, would build a temple. But God’s message to David went far beyond Solomon to the Son of David, Who is more than Solomon (Matt.12:42; Luke 11:31), and Greater than the sanctuary (Matt.12:6). Christ will fulfill this prophecy completely. The book of Hebrews verifies this when it quotes the fourteenth verse, “For to whom of the messengers said He at any time, . . . I shall be to Him for a Father and He shall be to Me for a Son?” (Heb.1:5).

In the study of 2 Samuel 6 it was noted that the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem was typical of the coming of God to man in peace, and establishing that Jerusalem, or pos-
session of peace. Chapter seven amplifies that thought. In order that the place of worship and communion with God be established in peace, the promised Seed must come.

The theme of God's dwelling place is expressed in a variety of ways in the later prophets, and in the Greek scriptures as well. Paul writes of "God's house, which is the ecclesia of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth" (1 Tim.3:15); "... the solid foundation of God stands ... a great house ..." (2 Tim.2:19-21); "... being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: in Whom you, also, are being built together for God's dwelling place, in spirit" (Eph.2:20-22).

Whether the context speaks of Israel or the body of Christ, the use of the terms build, building, house, and temple are used throughout with the common thought that God's chosen ones have the spirit of God within them—they are the dwelling of God. And when God is All in all, the unbelieving will have been "built together" as well.

Since the ultimate fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7 is realized with God dwelling in people, it is readily seen that even the building of Solomon's temple was only an interim fulfillment, serving as a type of that to come. The true fulfillment is dependent on the homing of God's spirit in believers. Therefore the fulfillment could not precede the sacrifice of Christ, the approval of Christ's sacrifice, and the coming of God's spirit on that basis (Acts 2:32,33; John 7:37-39; 14:16-20,26; Rom.1:1-6; 8:1-11).

The dedication of Solomon's temple was a most outstanding celebration of the festival of Tabernacles (1 Kings 5-8; 2 Chron.4-7). Typically it celebrated the chosen ones being finally home in God's promises, and God being home in His people.

J. Philip Scranton
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MARCH, 2003

Volume XCIV   Number 2
EDITORIAL

The counsel of God's will! God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will!

This is a message from Paul that is especially vital to us these days. Not that there have been any days since the apostle wrote it that it was not important, but this word definitely resounds to the needs of believers today. Unrest and war, insubjection and irreverence are all with us and multiply along with schemes for security and stability that directly lead away from reliance on God and real happiness and peace. So also, many are clinging to religious deceptions without knowing God at all as He reveals Himself in Christ Jesus.

But that is in accord with the counsel of God's will. God intends to get what He wants, and all that is and all that happens ultimately contributes to that goal.

That is the astounding claim of Ephesians 1:11.

The apostle had just written about the blessedness of God. We think and speak highly of God in that He blesses us in our Lord Jesus Christ. He chooses us in Him, and God sees us as we will be: holy and flawless. God loves us by designating us beforehand for the place of a son, through the blood of His beloved Son. Grace, deliverance, “forgiveness” (used here figuratively to express God's personal love in the work of justification and conciliation through the death of Christ), these all enter in the lives of believers today, in accord with the counsel of God's will.

Then Paul writes of the glory of God which God wills to manifest. It is expressed in terms of the secret of God's will, to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ. With this in view the apostle tells of the place God has purposed for us in these completing operations which are all centered in Christ. And
he continues through Ephesians chapter three to expound on these blessings God is giving us in Christ. All of these are in accord with the counsel of God’s will.

But our present experiences, both pleasant and hard, must also come under this heading. For Paul, there was prison and the need to conduct an embassy in a chain (Eph. 4:1; 6:20). For us there is need for a worthy walk in humility and meekness and love. There are fiery arrows of the wicked one directed specifically our way. They come against us in the midst of the general dangers and troubles mentioned above. But they are pointed at the believer to weaken faith and growth in the realization of God.

Are these also in accord with the counsel of God’s will? Indeed they are. God has intended that our present lives be blessed with faith and assurance while all the time external opposition comes against us. This is so that His goodness and love and grace and glory be realized in full against the background of present evils. He has counseled these evils and provided the protection of truth, of righteousness reckoned to us, of the evangel of peace, of faith and salvation and of His written Word, to extinguish these fiery arrows of doubt and fear and discouragement.

As for us in preparing this magazine, in working at the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, in hearing of the struggles of fellow believers with whom we come in contact, and in dealing with our own personal frustrations, we encounter many things that are not our will. Nor would we have ever counseled them, not knowing the value that God has purposed to gain from them later.

But that does not matter. All that matters is that our experiences are part of God’s operations and that they are in accord with the counsel of His will.

God is operating. He is operating all. And He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will.

D.H.H.
AFTER THE DELUGE

The present wicked eon began with a portrayal of its most important and most dastardly deed, the sacrifice of the Son of God. Noah offered up ascent offerings of every kind of clean animal.

THE ASCENT OFFERING

Such a sacrifice had not even been alluded to before this time. It was not a sin offering such as would have restored Cain to fellowship with Yahweh. Neither was it a present offering, such as Abel offered to gain access into the presence of Yahweh, for Noah already walked with Elohim. It was the response to the great deliverance God has wrought. It was entirely and only an act of worship, the odor of which rose and affected the heart of God, so that He was most favorably inclined toward humanity when this eon began.

Genesis 8:20-22

20 ‘Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh ‘Elohim’; + he took some of every clean domestic beast and some of every clean flier and offered up ascent offerings on the altar. 21 ‘Yahweh ‘Elohim’ smelled the fragrant smell, and Yahweh ‘Elohim’ said in His heart: Not anymore will I maledict the ground ‘on’ account of humanity, for the bent of the human heart is evil from its youth. And not anymore will I smite ‘again’ every living flesh’, just as I have done. 22 In the future, for all the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, + cold and warmth, + summer and winter, + day and night shall not cease.
A Type of Christ’s Death

NOAH BUILT AN ALTAR

The first altar of which we read in God’s Word immediately followed the first great catastrophe which drowned almost all of mankind in destruction. Perhaps most of us would have looked for the earliest symbol of worship amidst the luxurious lodges of Eden, where there was no lack of soulish satisfaction. Later, Abel did offer a present offering, but now Noah offers up ascent offerings in recognition of the great salvation which he had experienced. This shows that soulish blessings, without a background of evil, do not lead to worship, but deliverance through disaster is the best incentive to thankful adoration. This shows the need and value of the evil eons to prepare men’s hearts to worship their Deliverer. Other sacrifices may have been offered before the deluge, but this is not revealed, so is not the basis of truth.

The ascent offering, usually known as the “burnt” offering in our versions, was wholly for the Subjector’s delection. Noah’s offerings were a type and fore-shadowing of that future Sacrifice which will remove every barrier between humanity and the heart of God, so He begins to take away some of the obstructions which sin had raised. When Adam sinned, the ground was cursed. The effect of that was the growth of thorns and weeds (Gen.3:18).

Even as the sacrifice of the Son altered God’s attitude toward the whole race in the spiritual sphere, so His heart was touched by Noah’s ascent offering, which resulted in blessing in the physical domain. We already have a foretaste of the conciliation in the realm of nature. The ground is beneficent to all alike. The rain and the rainbow appear to the unjust as well as the just. One fact had been established in the previous eon, and needed no further proof. The heart of humanity is evil from its youth. There would be no further slighting of the ground than that which fol-

for a Fragrant Odor to God

owed Adam’s transgression (3:17-19). Neither would God wipe out all flesh by another deluge.

The Scriptures know no artificial seasons, such as Spring and Autumn. In them we have more useful divisions, such as seedtime and harvest, cold and warmth, summer and winter. It has been suggested that these periods divided the year as follows: Seedtime lasted, roughly speaking, from late October to early December, after the early rain had softened the ground, while harvest lasted from Passover in April to the feast of Ingathering, or Pentecost, fifty days later in May or June. Cold came about February and March, and heat followed harvest, and lasted till August. Summer was from August to October, when fruit was gathered. Winter came about December and January. These were self-evident, and practical divisions, much more apt and helpful than our somewhat arbitrary seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. In the Greek Scriptures the word for Winter does not imply cold, as with us, but means tempest also (Acts 27:20), and a winter brook. The Hebrew watercourse seldom has much water except in winter. It is called the wet season in southern California.

Not only is the curse not to increase, but the deluge is not to be repeated. Not only had all living flesh been smitten, but, for a whole year, no seed was sown or harvest reaped. These are to continue so long as this earth lasts. After that heaven and earth shall be passing by (Matt.24:35). There will be no night in the new earth (Rev.22:5), so this promise is evidently limited to the present world.

GENESIS CHAPTER NINE

9 + Elohim blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fruitful and increase, * fill the earth * and subdue it*.

2 + The fear of you and the dismay due to you shall *come on every wild animal of the earth and on every flyer of the heavens, * on everything * that is moving on the ground, and
4 Every moving animal ‘that is alive, shall you yours for food; as with the green herbage. I give to you ‘everything.

6 + However I shall require your blood for your souls; from the hand of every wild animal I shall require it, and from the hand of humanity. From the hand of each man, as regards his fellow man, I shall require ‘the soul of a human. 6 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.

7 + As for you, be fruitful and increase, swarm in the earth and ‘hold sway’ over it.

8 Then Elohim ‘said to Noah and to his sons ‘with him, 9 saying: ‘And as for Me, behold now I am setting up ‘My covenant ‘with you and ‘with your seed after you, 10 ‘with every living soul ‘that was ‘with you, ‘flier, ‘domestic beast and ‘every wild animal of the earth that was ‘with you, all that came forth ‘from the ark, ‘every animal of the earth. 11 And I will confirm ‘My covenant ‘with you:

+ Never ‘again shall all flesh be cut off ‘by the waters of a deluge, and never ‘again shall there ‘be a deluge to wreak the ‘entire earth.

12 Elohim ‘further ‘said: This is the sign of ‘the covenant ‘that I am giving, between Me and ‘by you and ‘by every living soul ‘that was ‘with you, for eonian generations. 13 ‘My bow I have set in a cloud, and it will ‘be for a sign of the covenant between Me and ‘by the earth. 14 And it will ‘occur ‘when I make the sky cloudy ‘over the earth with clouds and ‘My bow appears in a cloud, 15 ‘then I will remember ‘My covenant ‘between Me and ‘by you and ‘by every living soul ‘among all flesh, so ‘that never ‘again shall the waters become ‘a deluge to wreak all flesh. 16 ‘When ‘My bow comes to be in the cloud, ‘I will see it to remember the eonian covenant

between Elohim and ‘by every living soul ‘among all flesh which is on the earth.

17 + So Elohim ‘said to Noah: This is the sign of the covenant ‘that I have set up between Me and ‘by all flesh which is on the earth.

18 + The sons of Noah ‘who came forth ‘from the ark ‘were Shem, ‘+ Ham and Japheth (‘As for Ham, he became the father of Canaan.) 19 These three were Noah’s sons, and from these the entire earth became ‘inhabited.

20 + Noah, a man of the ground, started ‘to ‘plant a vineyard. 21 + When he ‘drank ‘some ‘of the wine, ‘he became ‘drunk and ‘exposed himself inside his tent. 22 + When Ham, the father of Canaan, ‘saw ‘the nakedness of his father, ‘he came ‘forth ‘and ‘told ‘his two brothers ‘outside. 23 + Then Shem and Japheth ‘took ‘raiment ‘and ‘placed it ‘against both their backs, and ‘walking in ‘backward, ‘they ‘covered their father’s nakedness. ‘While their faces were turned ‘away, ‘they did not see their father’s nakedness.

24 + When Noah ‘awoke from his wine and ‘realized ‘what his ‘youngest son had done to him, 25 + he ‘said: Cursed ‘be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he become for his brothers. 26 And he ‘waved: Blessed ‘be Yahweh, the Elohim of Shem, and let Canaan become a slave for him. 27 May Elohim ‘make ‘room for Japheth; ‘he may he tabernacle in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan become a slave for him.

28 + Noah ‘lived after the deluge 350 years. 29 + So all the days of Noah came to ‘be 950 years; ‘then he ‘died.

TERRESTRIAL FEAR

Noah and his sons received a charge similar to that given to Adam (1:28; 9:1-7). They were to be fruitful, and increase and fill the earth and subdue it. But, to Adam, nothing is said of fear. The animals came fearlessly before him in order to be named. Yet, after the deluge, there is a change,
so that they are dismayed by man's presence (9:2). There is an estrangement between the animals and their subjec-
tor, humanity, even as there is between humanity and its
Subjector. One is the sign and symptom of the other. It is
not fitting that all the beasts should be friendly and obey
their subjector, the human race, when it is itself estranged
and hostile to its Subjector.

FLESH FOOD

There seems to be no definite indication that flesh food
was eaten before the flood. After Adam sinned, seed food
of trees and herbs were given to humanity, and green herba-
ge to the animals (Gen.1:30). After the deluge, every mov-
ing animal was added to human diet, even as the green herbage
was before (Gen.9:3). But there was one restriction
because animals have blood, which is their source of con-
sciousness, sensation and feeling. The sap of plants
does not seem to circulate, and has no sensation. Neither
has flesh without the blood. But, so long as an animal has
blood in its veins, it can feel, it can suffer, and should not
be eaten. The blood should be drained off as soon as pos-
able, as was done with the sacrifices in Israel.

When Cain killed his brother, the Subjector said, “The
voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the
ground” (Gen.4:10). Literally, Abel's blood probably did go
into the ground, but it made no audible sound. Rather the
suffering he endured appealed to the Subjector for judg-
ment. As a recompense, Cain was sentenced to prolonged
hardship in providing himself with food. The ground had
already been cursed because of Adam's transgression, so
Cain probably had a prolonged struggle to provide him-
self with sustenance. He realized that he deserved to die,
and feared that someone would kill him. So he received a
sign so that his blood should not be shed (Gen.4:8-16). The
significance of this phrase is usually overlooked. To shed

blood does not merely denote death, but implies inability
to suffer. Cain was to remain in a state in which he could
feel the effect of his judgment.

In this eon, however, Cain would not have received
the protecting sign. On the contrary, someone would be
appointed to shed his blood. Now the Subjector requires
blood for the souls of those whose blood is shed. “The
shedder of the blood of a human, by a human is his blood
to be shed for in the image of the Subjector has He made
humanity” (Gen.9:6). The animals were not made in the
likeness of the Subjector, so they may be killed if the blood
is drained from them to prevent suffering. In this eon
the judgment of a murderer should be left to the proper authori-
ties where these exist.

It should be noted that this requirement does not read
he who takes a life, his life shall be taken, or that the mur-
derer shall be murdered, or hanged, or electrocuted, but
his blood is to be shed or soul shall be taken for soul (AV
life, Deut.19:21). There is no indication of painful pun-
ishment. As with other animals which are killed, especially
the sacrifices offered on the altars in Israel, there is no
torture or torment. As to sacrificial animals, indeed, there
is no call to punish them, for they surely do not deserve
to suffer. But it is the same with humans. Even if they do
deserve to suffer, it is not man's place to inflict it, for such
a penalty belongs to God alone. Who will deal justly with
such cases after their trial before the great white throne.
All that was delegated to human hands was to painlessly
let out their blood. But, as in almost everything com-
mitted to humanity, it has become inhuman in our hands.

If every animal slain for food suffered prolonged agony
in order to be an exact type of our great Sacrifice, what
an awful shadow that would cast on the character of the
Subjector! As it is not absolutely essential to the type, so
it is also used to teach another side, that is, God's pity and
compassion. He requires the blood to be poured out when animals are killed.

Let us note carefully that Christ's death was due to the absence of spirit, yet brings us life. His suffering, however, is connected with soul, and brings us blessing. They are closely associated, yet each has its own special sphere in God's great plan, and we should carefully keep them apart, when referring to these, the principal features of our salvation.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not named or described, but may be identified further by the effects produced by eating its fruit. Instead of prolonging life indefinitely, its fatal fruit reversed the vital process, so that the life lessened and led to suffering and ultimate dissolution. The immediate effect seems to have been very marked outwardly in the appearance of Adam and Eve's bodies, but the process lasted nearly a thousand years in some cases before the flood. Now, life needs to be continually prolonged by killing and assimilating the vital force of other living forms. Since then the human race survives only by robbing the lower forms of life of their animation. They must die that we may live a little longer.

Many have objected to the death penalty, on various grounds, but seldom is its true basis understood. The divine sentence is usually ignored, especially the manner in which it should be carried out. The foundation of human government in this con is found in this basic regulation, or else there would be no security for human life, as is the case when there is no governmental restraint.

The reason given for this rule is the fact that the human is the Image of the Subjector, Elohim. Subjection is now put into the hands of humanity as a whole, by being given the right to shed the blood of one who, like Cain, is guilty of this same crime. This seems to be the basis of human government in this present world. It is in contrast to the

Faith Looks Ahead

patriarchal rule exercised by Adam and his firstborn sons, who were delegated no such means of enforcing their authority. Consequently they lost all control of their subjects. Now man-slayers are severed from their fellows by death, but their real judgment awaits their appearance before the great white throne, where the great Judge of all will deal out corrective judgment.

GENESIS 9:7

The popular version of Gen. 9:7 reads, And you, be ye fruitful and multiply: bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply therein. The attentive reader will note that the word multiply is repeated. There are times when a repetition is helpful, especially when a thought needs to be emphasized. But here it seems weak. There is an evident parallelism, as follows:

Be ye fruitful and multiply.

Bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply.

In such doubled statements, the second line usually varies the thought much more than this. Here all of the words express nearly the same idea. The AV often renders bring forth abundantly, by creep. It denotes motion. We translate it uniformly roam. Noah and his sons were not to settle in one spot, as Cain did, and as was done a little later, at Babel, but to spread out over the surface of the earth.

One of the early Greek versions has the equivalent of sway over instead of the last multiply, making this a confirmation of the charge given to humanity in the beginning (1:28). The differences between the Hebrew stems (rd or rb) is very small. In this way this charge to Noah and his sons agrees closely with the parallel passage, and should read:

“And you, be fruitful and increase,
And roam in the earth and sway in it.”

The subjection of humanity by Adam and his successors
was an utter failure. The form was ideal, for the Subjec-
tor, as Father, will finally succeed in bringing all beneath
His beneficent sway (1 Cor.15:28). But it was evidently
too lenient, for even the murders were not adjudicated.
So, after the deluge, a different system of government was
instituted, in which murderers are executed, and those rule
who have the inherent or delegated authority to restrain
evil. Instead of one man at the head of the whole fam-
ily, it was grouped into smaller units, which were scattered
over the earth.

Humans, before the flood, under independent, lawless
conditions, became so wicked that they were better off
dead than alive, so God, in mercy, destroyed nearly all.
In order to prevent a repetition, government was insti-
tuted, so that such wicked creatures would be killed off,
to deter others of like inclination. But rule involves in-
equalities, the superior and the subordinate, the sovereign
and the subject, and demands subjection of all but a few
of Adam’s descendants.

Many attempts have been made to avoid subjection, or
at least to give no appearance of being under restraint. But
believers in the Bible are favored with a foretaste of the
future, and already know that man’s day will culminate in
the most absolute of despotisms, under the man of sin.

Only the man of faith possesses the key to this problem.
He looks to the far future and sees that the ideal is not
self-determination, which may degenerate into libertinism.
Rather, it demands subjection to El, the Subjector. The grand
and glorious goal, not only of mankind but of its Head, is
subjection to God. This reveals to us the reason why we
are called upon to be subject to others. God has created
the inequalities in the world, in our social and ecclesias-
tical order, that we may be taught, by many examples and
experiences, the holy and wholesome truth that He is the
Supreme Subjector, and there is no lasting bliss possible so
long as we are not subject to Him. This is the great lesson
the present social disorder should teach us. In the next eon
the world will be taught the positive complement of this,
by the blessings enjoyed under the iron club of Messiah.

In these last days the insubordination everywhere, even
under the restraint of human rule, is fast creating a condi-
tion like that before the deluge, so God is about to merci-
fully interfere by means of the sore judgments of the great
indignation, and once more wipe off a fifth of humanity
from the face of the earth. Among other things, humans
are incontrollable. Even children are stubborn to parents
as never before (2 Tim.3:2,3). Far worse than that, in the
ecclesia novices defy their elders, even when the Scriptures
demand that they be accorded double honor (1 Tim.5:17).
The saints surely should excel all others in being subject
to the superior authorities (Rom.13:1), wives to husbands
(Eph.5:22), slaves to owners (Titus 2:9), and, in general,
to one another (Eph.5:21).

LESSON OF THE COVENANTS

Seven principal covenants are used to teach mankind
its own sinfulness and helplessness, and its need of God’s
power and grace. The first one was made with Noah, to
preserve earth’s living souls through the deluge. The sec-
ond is with humanity and all soul life, not to repeat the
flood, and is signified by the rainbow. The third was with
Abram, and leased him the land; the fourth, with Abraham,
assured him a seed, signified by circumcision. The fifth,
with Israel in the wilderness, gave them the law, which
they could not keep. The sixth will be a “new” covenant
with them, to be fulfilled in the future, in the presence
of their Messiah. The seventh is our spiritual “covenant,”
today. The lesson they teach is this: God alone is able to
keep a covenant. When it is left to human efforts, it fails
utterly. This long lesson of human impotence is one of
the main means of preparing mankind for subjection at the consummation.

The dictionary defines a covenant as an agreement between two or more persons or parties. In theology it seems to refer to the promises of God, with conditions to be fulfilled by man, such as obedience, repentance, faith, etc. According to this, the first covenant God made can hardly be called a covenant at all, for there were no stipulations whatever, simply instructions. I am convinced that it is intentionally called a “Covenant” in order to reveal the vital feature of all covenants made, with Deity, in contrast to human covenants. God can, and does fulfill His side, but, that which depends on man, he cannot and does not fulfill, unless empowered by God’s holy spirit. This is further illustrated by the other early covenants, in which the human element is given its true place. Not so was the covenant under the law which Israel was supposed to keep, for they failed utterly.

A COVENANT OF PRESERVATION

Before Noah or the animals entered the ark, God made a one-sided covenant with him alone (Gen.6:18). No particulars are given. Simply that he was to go into the ark with his family and the animals, with the implication that they would be preserved alive through the flood. As this is the very first “covenant” mentioned in divine revelation, it deserves exceptional consideration, especially as it concerns the preservation of all soul life. There are no stipulations, no if’s or shall’s. That Noah and the animals should enter the ark is taken for granted. Is not this a precious foreshadowing of the final preservation of all humanity (1 Tim.4:10)? The fact that all later life, in this one and beyond, was saved then, in the ark, is an intimation of the eventual salvation of God, Who wills that all mankind be saved (1 Tim.2:4). The ark is a marvelous type of Christ and

The Sign Gives Assurance

salvation in Him. All covenants made by Elohim alone are really one-sided, like this. When stipulations are added for others to fulfill, there is temporary failure, but God eventually carries it out through the power of His spirit.

THE RAINBOW COVENANT

No rain fell on the earth before the deluge. We read that “Yahweh Elohim does not bring rain in the earth . . . yet humidity is ascending from the earth and irrigates all the surface of the ground” (Gen.2:5,6). The conditions which cause rain and storms are abnormal, and are due largely to changes in the atmosphere, of which there is no record before the flood. The second time rain is mentioned, and the first time it occurs, it is used to produce the deluge. Yahweh Elohim said, I (emphatic) will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights (7:4). Since then, ever after the deluge, this condition remains, so that we continue to have rain, and even local floods. So the question arises, Is there not continual danger of another deluge? There is not, for God alone has taken the responsibility that it shall not occur.

SIGN OF THE RAINBOW

The visible evidence of the first covenant with Noah is the presence of soul life on the earth at the present time. Each one of us is a token of God’s preservation in the past and an intimation of His salvation in the future. But God has given humanity much more than that. He has made a covenant, not only with Noah, but all flesh, his descendants, as well as all forms of soul life. This salvation is not confined to those who believe, but includes all mankind. Therefore God condescends to give a visible token of this covenant, where all can see, and continues it throughout two eons, until such an assurance will no longer be needed. It is a sign, therefore has significance. But how few know
An Eonian Covenant

its marvelous meaning, or worship in its presence! Every rain should remind us of the gradual disintegration of the earth. Yet the rainbow, which often accompanies it, assures us that this will never reach the proportions of a deluge. The very agent of destruction has now been made the bearer of the good tidings that it will never occur again!

As the rainbow is due to the refraction of sunlight by myriads of globules of water in the atmosphere, it is closely connected with clouds and rain. The water, during the previous eon, was above and beneath the atmosphere, not in it as at present. So they probably had a very dry climate with no excess of moisture in the air. The AV says that a “mist” went up and watered the face of the ground (Gen.2:6). But that would have been impossible. It was moisture from below which was drawn up to the surface by capillary attraction. As there were no clouds or rain, there could have been no rainbow. But, at the deluge, the crevices of the heavens were opened (7:11), so that the waters above the atmosphere came down through them, and caused the forty days’ rain. So long as the water is stored in the atmosphere, and not above it, there seems to be no possibility of another deluge. The rainbow assures us that the moisture is suspended in the air.

Who has not admired the beautiful colored arch that God has given us as a sign of His covenant with all flesh on the earth! But who fully realizes and responds in his heart to the grand and glorious assurance which it conveys? It transforms the very element once used in man’s destruction, into a glorious promise of future preservation! Earth-dwellers have been threatened with many calamities, mostly from the hands of man. They have suffered from wars and famines and even from minor local floods, but never has there been the fear of another deluge. On the contrary, rain is usually a great blessing to many areas of the earth. In the coming kingdom it will be a boon which

God’s Spirit Guides

will be withheld from those nations who do not send up their quota to worship at Jerusalem (Zech.14:17).

The rainbow is said to be an “everlasting” covenant between God and every living soul of all flesh which is on the earth, in our popular versions. But this implies the need of such an assurance forever. When the eons are past, there will be no possibility of another deluge, so such a covenant will have lost all significance. It is only during the eons that it can apply. Therefore it is more correctly called an eonian covenant.

NOAH AND CANAAN

In the beginning of the human race, all sinned in Adam, so his sentence extended impartially to everyone. At the commencement of this eon, however, Noah was not sentenced at all, not even for his drunkenness. What a contrast with Adam! He and his posterity were severely condemned. Noah himself was not. Only a small fraction of his family was cursed. Yet he was not affected! And he is the first man to be called righteous! (Gen.6:9).

Indeed, he is reckoned with the three most righteous men of the Hebrew Scriptures, Noah, Daniel and Job (Ezek.14:14). Why was he not cursed, only a young man who merely saw him and was not drunk? Because Noah’s failure was needed by God in His eonian operations, and will result in great good to Israel and the race. He was not tolerated, or forgiven, but justified. Those who have God’s spirit and act in harmony with God’s purpose, as revealed in His Word, are justified because it results in great good. They do not take advantage of it like those who lack God’s spirit would do. We never read of Noah being drunk again.

God foretold the future of four divisions of the race, to accord with their behavior when Noah himself sinned. To put it briefly but very broadly, his sons who covered him will be blessed. The son of the son who exposed him
The Curse of Canaan

will be cursed. The other sons of Ham are ignored (Gen. 9:25). Canaan is thrice cursed, while Shem and Japheth are blessed. In this eon, in dealing with the earth, Yahweh is blessed as the Elohim of Shem, which includes the nation of Israel. In this way we are gradually prepared for the bulk of revelation which concerns the chosen nation, which comes from Adam, Noah and Shem, through Abram, Isaac and Jacob.

There is no record of the curse of Canaan being carried out personally, but it is often referred to in the history of his descendents.

It seems that, when the lands were distributed in the days of Peleg, Canaan settled in the land called by his name. They were there in the days of the patriarchs and still remained when Israel entered the land under Joshua. Thus even this decadent stock was used, in the plan of Yahweh, in training the chosen nation for their future part in subjecting the nations to Elohim. The rest of Ham's descendents settled further south. It seems that their thrust to the north was contrary to God's ultimate plan, so they were destroyed by Israel.

In view of Abraham's place in God's plan, that, through him and his seed, the nations would be subjected, it is helpful to see that he was consulted when Sodom and Gomorrah were judged. These were Canaanite cities which had followed the immorality of Canaan too far to be allowed to continue. So the matter was left to Abram to decide in such a way as to win his approval of their destruction, and to teach him the ways of the Subjector in this eon. In line with this, Abram is told that the depravity of the Amorites would not be repaid until the return of Israel from Egypt (Gen.15:16). Then it was that Israel was used to judge the Canaanites. Such will be Israel's function in dealing with the nations throughout the next eon also.

A. E. Knoch
YAHWEH SETS UP COVENANTS

The first two covenants set up by Yahweh speak of His deliverance and protection of the human race at a point of its extreme degradation and corruption. When humanity’s course was decisively downward Yahweh raised these covenants, the first before the deluge, and the second afterwards.

The deluge was clearly deserved; there is no question of its justice. It is the preservation of the race through Noah and the pledge not to repeat a flood of that sort again that seem contrary to strict demands of right judgment. Yet these actions cannot be evidence of divine weakness or ignorance or unrighteousness. It must be that God knows a way in which the demands of righteousness are upheld, but still the race can be saved and fulfill its purpose in the image and likeness of God (Gen.1:27,28).

And so He does, as we are learning. In the death of His beloved Son on behalf of sinful humanity, God deals righteously with all sin toward the realization of His will to save all mankind.

YAHWEH’S ACTIONS IN GENESIS SIX

The grace which Noah found in the eyes of Yahweh (Gen.6:8) distinguished him radically from the rest of mankind. Yahweh saw humanity and said He would wipe them out (Gen.6:5-7). He saw that the earth was ruined and said He would ruin all human beings who were on the earth (Gen.6:11-13). He would bring a deluge of water on the earth to wreck all flesh under the heavens which had the spirit of life in it (Gen.6:17).
The conspicuous acts of God in Genesis 6 are wiping out and ruining and bringing a deluge and wrecking. These affected everyone on the earth . . . except Noah (and his immediate family), and every living thing except those which were in the ark. Instead of wiping out these few along with all the rest, Yahweh set up His covenant with them (Gen.6:18-20).

RAISING A COVENANT

The root meaning of the verb translated “set up” in Genesis 6:18 is rise, or raise. It is used first in Genesis 4:8 where we read that Cain “rose [up]” against his brother. God’s acts of ruin stand in contrast to His act of raising up a covenant. (The particular grammatical form of the verb used here signifies: cause-rise; Yahweh caused a covenant to rise.) The very visible acts involving the entire earth and its inhabitants were downward, but this one private word of promise, given, in God’s grace, to one chosen individual, was upward.

One word of promised good from God is more far reaching in significance than all His proclamations of condemnation. He causes it to rise above all the declarations of ruin, and ultimately it will be appreciated to the glory of God by all who deceased in the deluge. This is because the covenant of deliverance which Yahweh set up with Noah concerned Christ.

A PLACE OF LIFE

As we find the cause of this upward establishment of the covenant in God, so also we find the cause of deliverance into life in the operations of God. Noah and his family and the animals with them were to come into the ark in order, as the Hebrew expresses it, to be “caused to live” (CV: “stay alive,” or “preserve alive”) through the deluge (Gen.6:18-20). But this coming into the ark, and the human acts of building it and gathering the animals, rested entirely on Yahweh holding to His word. Noah exhibited extraodinary faith-obedience, but it all must be traced to that grace from Yahweh which he found. In the end the preservation of these few human beings would be meaningless apart from their eventual vivification in Christ, Who was to die for their sins (cf 1 Cor.15:3,22).

Consequently, the ark was a type of Christ, in Whom there is deliverance and vivification. This first covenant of the Scriptures foreshadows that upwardly-directed word of the glory of the happy God which declares that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim.1:11,15).

“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” (1 Tim.2:5,6).

God carried out His words of condemnation, but not completely. He carried them out along with an act of grace that not only revealed there was an “escape clause” in the divine sentence of ruin but also would lead to the condemnation of all condemnation. God carried out His word of condemnation, but He also carried out His word of deliverance and life. That word of life shines out today in the evangel concerning Jesus Christ which it pictured. It still does not dominate the scene; but in the midst of present evil and violence it dominates the hearts of the believer. And it will be realized by all in God’s own time.

A COVENANT WITH ALL LIVING SOULS

After the deluge Yahweh raised up a second covenant (Gen.9:8-17). Unlike the first, it directly and continually becomes a blessing to all humanity and all living souls during the present wicked eons. But it would never have been set up at all had it not been for the first covenant that directly involved only a chosen few. First God gives prominence to His promise of deliverance for an “elect”
The Covenants will be Justified

remnant, and then He gives prominence to His promise of protection for all. The Scriptures have much to say about the chosen few, but they are not silent about the all.

However, as with the first covenant, this second one cannot have any lasting significance apart from Christ. In themselves these covenants do not reflect the true glory of God’s goodness. We must see them in relation to the evangel concerning Jesus Christ if we are fully to understand why Yahweh raises them high above His other works. The salvation of the chosen could never be justified or made permanent without the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which it is a type. So also, the relatively narrow and confined blessing for all in protecting them from destruction by a worldwide deluge is dependant for ultimate meaning on the cross.

All of God’s operations of mercy and patience in delay of condemnation, as well as the execution of judgment itself, are like His works of favor and rescue in this one major respect: They all depend fully on that greatest of all divine operations which is the key to all His other works, His giving of His Son for sinners.

When we who believe this evangel concerning Jesus Christ see a rainbow and recall the covenant God set up in Genesis 9, we should see more than an eonian act of kindness toward humanity. We should see, in faith, that this leniency is related to that grace of God for salvation to all humanity that Paul speaks of in Titus 2:11.

Consequently, we see that God set up a covenant with Noah that preserved certain ones during the deluge, and in doing so pointed ahead to the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus. Furthermore, we see that when He also set up a covenant with all mankind and all soul life that protects them from a repetition of the deluge, He did so in view of His operations of deliverance and salvation in Jesus Christ.

D.H.H.
THE EXTENSION OF DAVID’S KINGDOM
(2 Samuel 8)

8 + It occurred afterward that David smote the Philistines and made them submissive. David also took Metheg-ammah from the hand of the Philistines.

2 + Then he smote Moab and measured them off with a line, making them lie down on the earth. He measured out two lines for putting to death and a full line for preserving alive. Thus the Moabite became David’s servants carrying tributary presents.

3 + David also smote Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he was going to restore his hand at the stream Euphrates. + David seized from him 7,100 chariots and 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 men on foot. + David hamstrung all chariot steeds, yet he reserved from them enough for one hundred chariots. + When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, + David smote of the Syrians 22,000 men. + Then David placed garrisons in Syrian Damascus; thus the Syrians became David’s servants carrying tributary presents. + So Yahweh saved David everywhere he went. + David took the golden arrow-cases which were carried by Hadadezer’s servants, and brought them to Jerusalem.

4 + And from Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took a very great amount of copper.

5 + When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten the entire army of Hadadezer, + Toi sent his son Hadoram to king David to ask him about his well-being and to congratulate him because he fought against
Hadadezer and he smote him; (for Hadadezer had been a man engaged in warfare against Toi). * In his hand were articles of silver, * articles of gold and articles of copper. 11 King David sanctified them to Yahweh, * along with the silver and the gold that he had sanctified from all the nations * he had subdued: 12 from Syria and from Moab, * from the sons of Ammon and from the Philistines, * from Amalek and from the loot of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah. 13 * David made a name for himself at his return /after he had smitten * Edom * in the Salt Ravine, 18,000 in all. 14 Then he placed garrisons in Edom. In all of Edom he placed garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. * So Yahweh saved David everywhere he went. 15 * David reigned over all Israel; and it came to be that David was dealing out right judgment and justice to all his people. 16 * Joab son of Zeruiah was over the military host; and Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the recorder. 17 * Zadok son of Ahitub and * Abiathar son of Ahimelech were priests; and Seraiah was the scribe. 18 * Benaiyah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethite and the Pelethite; * as for David’s sons, they were royal stewards.  

This chapter summarizes the military campaigns of David, showing how Yahweh gave him victory in extending the boundaries and influence of Israel, in accord with His promise to Abraham (cf Gen.15:18-21). The conquering of the Philistines and the peaceful alliance David had with Hiram, king of Tyre, secured the western front. The alliance with Hamath to the north lent control of trade routes for countries toward the Black and Caspian seas. The conquest of Syria took in the northeast area, gaining Damascus, a significant stop for the caravans from the fertile crescent. Israel's possession of these commontrade

in Giving him Victory

routes was not only beneficial to David's kingdom, but also to Tyre's maritime commerce. Ammon and Moab finished the eastern border, and the conquest of Edom secured the south. Israel was seated to have great control of commerce, and the spoils of war and tribute allowed David to amass great sums of wealth in preparation for the building of the temple.

In verse one the term “Meteg-ammah” has also been translated “the bridle bit of the mother:” From the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 18:1 it is clear that this refers to Gath and its surrounding cities. In the days of the judges there were five principal cities of the Philistines. Apparently they consolidated their government over the years, and Gath became the chief city. It was a common figure of speech for a metropolis to be referred to as a mother, and the surrounding cities as her daughters (cf Psa. 48:11; 97:8). Holding the bridle or bit refers to control. So Gath, the mother city, held the bridle of control for the rest of the Philistine cities. But David took the bridle, or control of all the cities.

NO BOAST IN HORSES

The kings of Israel had been instructed not to increase horses (Deut. 17:16) because it would be easy to depend upon the strength and speed of these animals, rather than depending upon God (Psa.20:7; Isa.31:1). God instructed Joshua to hamstring the horses and burn the chariots of the armies they defeated (Josh.11:6,9).

David followed this instruction, but not fully, as indicated in verse 4. The hamstring is a tendon of the leg muscles. When horses were hamstringed, that tendon was cut. This crippled the horse to the extent that it could not run and thus could not pull the speeding chariots of warfare. It seems that God intended Israel not to copy the nation’s means of warfare. Israel was to depend upon God in bat-
tle. This supplied a motivation for faithfulness in peacetime. It is similar to Paul’s exhortation that we “crucify the flesh” (Rom.6:12,13; Gal.5:24; 6:14).

CIVIL CHANGES IN ISRAEL

When Saul first became king, Israel was governed primarily by tribal heads. Military forces were not continually maintained, but had to be gathered in times of need (cf 1 Sam.11:6-8). Eventually Saul formed a standing army with Abner as commander in chief and some others under him. But Israel did not have a thoroughly organized governmental system with permanent heads of departments. And, after the death of Samuel and the slaughter of the priests by Doeg, worship was cowering in the shadows.

David changed this situation dramatically. With the expansion of Israel’s kingdom, and the increased revenue of tribute, it was possible to fund a more elaborate system. Yet David did not abolish tribal headship. Tribal counsels were still called, and national problems were discussed and policies formed (cf 1 Chron.27:16-22).

The last three verses of this chapter give a brief summary of leadership, which actually represents extensive civil and political changes. The record of these changes here in 2 Samuel is quite abbreviated in comparison to 1 Chronicles 18. David’s re-organization enabled the kingdom to function more effectively, and it also prepared the way for Solomon’s reign, the building of the temple and the building of Solomon’s house. Courses were set, both for the priesthood (1 Chron.23-26), and for military service (1 Chron.27:1-15), so that these positions were filled throughout the year. By serving one month a year, the Israelites were free to maintain their domestic responsibilities through the rest of the year, and the country was served by a full complement of servants all year.

J. Philip Scranton
FAITH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

The evangel joins the theme of righteousness with that of faith. It speaks of righteousness and justification, but the righteousness of which it speaks is sourced in the faith of Jesus Christ, and it is directed to us today on the basis of faith imparted to us by God.

As for Christ, He faithfully carried out what His God and Father had given Him to do for the revealing of God and justification of sinners. And He did so with perfect faith in what His God and Father had set before Him.

As for ourselves, we cannot verify the truth of the evangel by our senses, such as was demanded by Thomas regarding the resurrection of the Lord (cf John 20:24-29). Rather, by faith alone (staunch or faltering as the case may be), without perceiving, we accept and retain (cf 1 Cor. 15:1,2) the welcome message of justification and all that it says about God.

PREPOSITIONAL PARTNERS

It is not unusual for Paul to employ two or more prepositions with the same object, within a single statement, as he does in Romans 1:17. “For in [the evangel] God’s righteousness is being revealed, out of faith for faith . . .” Here he uses “out of” (Greek, ek) and “for” (Greek, eis, literally, “into”), each with the object, “faith.” Again, in Romans 3:22, we find the prepositions “for” and “on,” each with the object “all.” We also note 2 Corinthians 3:18 where Paul writes of the progress of revelation from glory to glory.

This latter example causes the English reader little prob-
lem; both “from” (Greek, _apo_) and “to” (Greek, _eis_, as in Rom. 1:17) make distinctive and easily discernible contributions to the thought. This is also clear in Romans 11:36 where the three prepositions, _out, through_ and _for_, all with the object, _Him_, inform us that God is the Source, Channel and Goal of all that happens.

But the apostle’s purpose in using two prepositions with the object, _faith_, in Romans 1:17 is more puzzling. Some have suggested the “out of” and the “for” in Romans 1:17 convey a sense of a continuing or growing faith, much as indicated by the “from” and the “to” of 2 Corinthians 3:18. Others claim that the two prepositions are used simply to emphasize one idea, such as “by [our] faith.”

But taking the Greek preposition _ek_ in the sense of “out [of],” pointing to faith as a source of the revelation of God’s righteousness in His work of justification, and the preposition _eis_ in the sense of “for,” pointing to faith as a means of reception, is both warranted and edifying. To be sure, the English words, “by faith,” appearing later in this very verse represent the same Greek words rendered “out of faith” here in the center of the verse. But this is only a matter of English idiom, for the thought of faith as a _source_ (of living) still pertains. The point is that faith is both a source for the revelation of God’s righteous operation of justification and a blessing given for the reception and appreciation of that revelation.

**A DOUBLE RELATIONSHIP**

Hence Paul is speaking of a double relationship between this revelation of righteousness and faith. There is a faith that brings about this revelation. And there is a faith that receives this revelation and its effects.

Yet it is not the same faith. In the former instance it is Christ’s faith. In the latter it is our faith. This was suggested by A. E. Knoch when he wrote that “the only clear expla-

and For our Faith

nation” of our phrase in Romans 1:17 “seems to be out of [Christ’s] faith for [our] faith.” The development of Paul’s presentation of the evangel in Romans bears this out.

There is wordplay here with the word “faith” having two distinct relationships with the revelation of God’s righteousness. There is action or movement with this revelation coming out of [Christ’s] faith and going into [our] faith. In all, even though the statement is not fully explicit, there is a dramatic expression of truth.

But indeed Paul does state the distinction more explicitly in Romans 3:21,22, which parallels 1:17 at several points. His thought is not exactly the same in the two passages, but there are important similarities. In the later passage the apostle uses three prepositions, the first one (“through”) corresponding in position to the “out of” in our passage, and the second and third (“for” and “on”) corresponding with the “for” in our passage:

1. God’s righteousness
2. is being revealed
3. _out_ of faith
4. _for_ faith

1. a righteousness of God
2. is manifest . . .
3. _through_ Jesus Christ’s faith
   _4a._ _for_ all
   _4b._ and _on_ all who are believing

**OUT OF FAITH**

Our faith could never be the source of a revelation of divine righteousness. The righteousness of God is made known by means of Christ’s perfect faith and His unparalleled faithfulness in dying for our sake, for the sake of

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Jesus Christ was Faithful

unrighteous enemies and irreverent sinners. What Christ has done in faithful obedience is the source of this revelation of God’s supreme righteousness.

“Thus the manifestation of divine righteousness was made possible by the faith of Christ, and our faith in God is now rooted and grounded in His faith, a faith brought to its highest and fullest expression at the cross . . . . God’s righteousness is being revealed out of Christ’s faith into our faith.”

Again, our believing that Christ died for our sins is not the cause of justification. Rather it is Christ faithfully dying for our sins that is the source of justification. In believing that Jesus Christ died for our sins we are believing that in His death, He is the source of justification. And in believing, the righteousness that Christ has gained is reckoned to us (Rom.4:11).

THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST

There is no evangel apart from Christ and His faithfulness. The apostle makes this clear starting from the very beginning of the epistle, when he writes that the evangel concerns God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom.1:3,4). Besides the important parallel in Romans 3:22, noted above, we learn that gratuitous justification is through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). God purposed Christ Jesus as the Antitype of the offering and place of propitiation, and He is such, not through the channel of our faith in His blood, but, as it surely must be, His faith in the shedding of His blood, for a display of God’s righteousness (Rom.3:25,26).

The message revealing the righteousness of God in His work of justification is centered in the faithfulness of Jesus our Lord, that is, in His being given up to death.


to the Death of the Cross

He was given up because of our offenses, and then He was roused because the work of our justifying had been achieved (Rom.4:25).

In Romans 5:1, also, the words “out of faith” (translated: “by faith”), have a special application to Christ’s faith.3 Just as peace toward God comes through our Lord, Jesus Christ, so also justification comes out of His faith. Further on, Paul makes it evident what he means by Jesus Christ’s faith, when he writes that “while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes” (Rom.5:8). Hence, he expresses the evangel of justification by the plain words “being now justified in His blood” (Rom.5:9).

And beyond the grace of justification reckoned to the believer, Paul heralds the ultimate application of the righteous results of Christ’s death for all mankind. Life’s justifying is for all mankind, and so all will be constituted righteous through the righteous effects of the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ (Rom.5:18,19).

All of these passages testify to the truth that the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners is the basis for our justification and the revelation of God as the righteous Justifier.

FOR FAITH

The apostle does not say this is “for those who are believing” (although that is also true; cp “on all who are believing” in 3:22), but that the evangel and the revelation of God’s righteousness in it are “for faith.” He referred to “everyone who is believing” in verse 16, and will soon speak of “the just one,” but he is now concentrating on the man-

3. The believer’s faith must not be excluded from Paul’s thought here. But as indicated above on the basis of Romans 4, we see that our faith is the means by which justification is being reckoned to us, not the means by which justification is achieved.
ner in which the revelation is received rather than on the people who receive it. The revelation, in the evangel, of God’s righteousness and the blessings of which the evangel speaks are gained by Christ and received by us on the basis of faith.

**Faith Apart from Perception**

The fact that I have faith is not indicative of any achievement on my part but of incredible grace on God’s part. Indeed, what a marvelous gift is faith apart from the evidence of sight!

The risen Jesus said to Thomas, “Happy are those who are not perceiving and believe” (John 20:29).

Paul wrote, “Jews signs are requesting, and Greeks wisdom are seeking, yet we are heralding Christ crucified” (1 Cor.1:22). To us it is graciously granted to be believing on Christ (Phil.1:29).

It is not that Thomas did not believe when he perceived the nailprints, nor that signs are never effective in the support of faith. But at present it is graciously granted to us that we walk by faith and not by perception (2 Cor.5:7). God parts to us a measure of faith (Rom.12:2) concerning matters unaccompanied by visible evidence or even the support of signs.

What God says concerning the meaning of Christ’s death is altogether good news. It is exactly that which solves all the puzzles of His character and our existence.

**As It Is Written**

This aspect of the evangel, that it is enjoyed in the realm of faith at present, not of perception, is part of what was in Paul’s mind when he declared he was not ashamed of the evangel. From the human standpoint it would seem to be an incredibly weak link in the message Paul was heralding to say that its truth cannot be verified or even supported by the witness of our sense organs.

Nevertheless, as our Lord said, this kind of faith brings happiness to us while we live in perilous and stressful times.

As he does so often, the apostle uses the language of the Hebrew Scriptures to bring out special values of his subject. This time he adapts some words from the prophet Habakkuk who wrote: “Yet the just one by his faith shall live” (Hab.2:4). This is a translation of the passage as it appears in the Masoretic Hebrew Text. In the ancient Greek translation, the Septuagint, the passage speaks of “My faith,” referring to Yahweh’s faithfulness, rather than “his faith,” in reference to the just one. Paul, however, does not use a pronoun at all. He speaks simply of faith, but the context indicates that both our Lord’s faith and the faith given to us are in view.

Whether it is the faith of Jesus Christ as He faced the horror of Golgotha and the shedding of His blood on behalf of sinners, or whether it is the faith given us today in our own sorrows and hurts, it is a gracious provision of God for our living.

**Shall Be Living**

Habakkuk lived in a time of great troubles, in which he cried out, “How long O Yahweh, must I implore, and You are not hearkening? I am crying out to You of violence, and You are not saving!” (Hab.1:2). It was a time when the law was “torpid,” and “the wicked one [was] compassing about the righteous one” (Hab.1:4). But Yahweh gave the prophet a vision of the defeat of the enemy and of salvation: “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of Yahweh’s glory, as the waters are covering the sea” (Hab.2:14).

Nevertheless, even though the fulfillment of this vision “shall come, yea come, and it shall not be late,” it had not yet come. Consequently, Yahweh spoke the words that still
Those who are Believing

reverberated in Paul’s heart, “Yet the just one by . . . faith shall live.”

In the message God brings to us, the enemy is not Babylon but sin and irreverence, yet, like Babylon, these enemies multiply pain and sorrow and insecurity in our lives. The vision of the evangel is of God’s glory encompassing the entire creation, involving the revelation of God’s righteousness in such a justification that all those who are constituted sinners because of Adam, will be constituted righteous because of Christ. And this shall come. Even as the vision given to Habakkuk was “for an appointed time” (Hab.2:3), so also the evangel given to Paul will be realized and experienced in its own era (cf 1 Tim.2:6).

LIVING OUT OF FAITH

Nevertheless, it is given to us who are believing, who have been reckoned righteous and are already blessed in spirit with what Jesus Christ has gained for us—it is given to us to be living out of faith.

Again, there is a double meaning here. The words speak of the life to come which comes out of Christ’s faith for us who are believing. But they also speak of a quality of present living, which also is sourced in the faith of Jesus Christ and takes place in us who are believing. Even as we have died together with Christ, “we believe that we shall be living together with Him also” (Rom.6:8; cf Rom.5:10).

In view of such an evangel, Paul entreats us to be reckoning ourselves now “to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.6:11; cp Rom.12:1).

It is a great blessing to be believing God as we live in surroundings which not only provide no evidence that what He says is so but in fact continue to indicate the contrary. By God’s grace, we find ourselves living by faith in His righteous work of salvation sourced in the faith of Jesus Christ.

D.H.H.
“WHAT MUST OCCUR SWIFTLY”
+
“EVEN WHILE IN BONDS”

Question:

I have read some of your articles in which you teach that the coming “eon” will continue for one thousand years, and that Christ will reign on the earth during such a future period. However, the Bible plainly teaches that during the lifetime of the apostle John, the events of the book of Revelation were those which “must shortly come to pass” (Rev.1:1).

Rather than pointing out your related errors as well in favor of “millennialism,” for now I wish simply to challenge you on this one point: the Bible says that, in the first century, these prophecies “must shortly come to pass”; you say, “Oh, no, that is not necessary; they will not occur until after at least two thousand years have gone by first.”

Answer:

IN ORDER for our approach to be truly “spiritual” (and so, truly helpful) as we seek to attune others concerning the faith, it is necessary that we address our fellow believers in a spirit of meekness (Gal.6:1). Even if many, as a matter of tactics, should advocate and commend the practice of “challenging one another,” such activities are actually an exhibition of “vainglory” (cf Gal.5:26); that is, they are a pompous show of pride.

Now, to address the actual issue which you have raised concerning the words of Revelation 1:1:
The Era of the End was “Near”

Many have been perplexed over the words in Revelation 1:1 as translated in the Authorized Version which represents John as saying that these events are “things which must shortly come to pass.” For this reason, some have believed that the prophecies of the book of Revelation were fulfilled within the first century A.D., it being claimed accordingly that the second advent of Christ occurred at that time along with all related events.

John’s words in Revelation 1:3 that “the era is near,” were certainly true. However, one must judge correctly in what sense it was so that the era was then “near.” The question is, Was it near in time, or was it near in a realized prophetic sense in relation to Hebrew prophecy concerning “that era” (cf Dan.12:1). To claim that since it was “near,” it was therefore near in time, does nothing to prove the validity of this claim; it merely assumes what is at issue.

In fact, the era for the fulfillment of the Unveiling was not then actually near in time (though many early believers may have supposed this was so). As a matter of world history, the fearful, august judgments of the day of the Lord simply did not occur in our first century. Every eye did not then witness His second advent (Rev.1:7); much less did the kingdoms of this world then become those of the Lord God and His Christ (Rev.11:15). Decidedly, the nations did not then beat their swords into plowshares, nor their spears into pruninghooks, so as not to learn war any more (Isa.2:4).

It must be, then, that the sense in which the era termed “the conclusion of the enion” (cp Matt.24:3) was then near, was not that of historical nearness (i.e., nearness in time), but was instead that of nearness of prophetic fulfillment within the purview of Hebrew prophecy.

In a similar way, the kingdom of the heavens was also “near” at that time (Matt.3:2; 4:17). Indeed, the kingdom had become near to them as well in the very person of Christ, due to His presence among them as the One Who “is” (i.e., represents) “life eternal” (1 John 5:20).

The “segregated” (CV) seventy sevens’ (i.e., 490 years’) fulfillment of Daniel 9:24 will indeed result in bringing “the righteousness of the enion” and the establishment of the kingdom under Messiah, the Governor. However, it is evident that God established a “pause” or interim period prior to the last seven years of the fulfillment of this prophecy, the length of which has not been revealed.† This must be the case, for the calamities written in the scroll we know as the book of Revelation have not occurred, and Christ is certainly not reigning over the nations of the earth, according as it is written.

This present era, is the result of Israel’s rejection of her Saviour and King. It exists as well because of God’s purpose to form the ecclesia which is Christ’s body at this time, with all its unique blessings, ones which transcend those of God’s saints who were chosen to be in Christ under the evangel of the Circumcision (Gal.2:7).

It was by no means requisite that the seventy sevens should all transpire in immediate succession. However, those things which clarify this entire question, are only revealed through the teachings of the apostle Paul; it is not likely that John was acquainted with them. In any event, his writings do not reflect any such pertinent Pauline revelations, and are concerned only with Israel’s expectation, according to the declarations of Israel’s prophets. Therefore, from John’s viewpoint (from what had been revealed...
Occurring “Swiftly,” not “Shortly” to him), in that sense, indeed the era was “near” when he first wrote these words; consequently, his writings unfold accordingly, from this perspective.

In Revelation 1:1, as in three other places, the Authorized Version has mistranslated tachos as “shortly,” even though the AV itself presents the actual sense of this Greek word correctly as “quickly” or “speedily” in its seven other occurrences. The adverbial form of this word, tacheion (swifterly), is used so strikingly in John 20:4 that we may be confident of its true significance. We may thereby become certain as well that the notion of “soon-to-occur-ness” (or “shortly”) is not the force of the word-stem tach-

"swiftly.” The length of time between Paul’s writing of his Roman epistle and the accomplishment of this act is not addressed.

**ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION**

The Concordant Version can be an invaluable tool to all who use it, in order to bring us closer to the Word of God in the Original. However, as with all tools, we must learn how to use it well. Concerning any passage of Scripture, we must always ask:

1) **What** is revealed? while distinguishing between the Scriptural declaration itself (even in an accurate translation) and any mere inferences of our own concerning it;

2) **Whom** does it concern? All Scripture is for us, and is beneficial to us in various ways, but it is not all about us (i.e., many of its warnings and promises are not made to ourselves, the members of the body of Christ);

3) **When** does it apply? (since certain matters are only applicable even to those whom they do concern during specific time periods); and

4) **In what sense is it true?** Is it a categorical statement or a provisional one? Is it a universal declaration, or a limited declaration confined to a specific subject? Is the word or phrase in question a literal expression or a figurative expression? If figurative, what figure is employed, of what does it consist, and what is the literal idea for which it stands? If literal, it is still necessary to determine from the context or in some other way from the nature of the case whether a statement is made absolutely or only in some non-absolute way, only in relation to a particular matter.

Much grace is needed for us all if we are to make real progress in dealing with the Word of God in a faithful way. Though ideal for all, it is especially vital for those who would teach others to heed the words of 2 Timothy 2:15: “Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an
unashamed worker, *correctly* cutting the word of truth.” A. E. Knoch said it well, concerning the day when the work of each one of us will become apparent and be made evident: “Let all who teach this to heart: their work will be tested to see what kind it is. It is better to have a little after the fire than much before it.”

*Question:*

I have been incarcerated for nearly five years, and will not be eligible for parole until about five years from now.

I am so ashamed of my lawless and sinful past! Even so, I am so thankful to God for finally bringing me to settled faith in Christ, primarily through my reading of the Concordant Version and *Unsearchable Riches* magazine during the past three years. I can follow most of what you say just fine; sometimes I have to use my dictionary, but dictionaries are made to be used, and I don’t mind using mine.

At present, the main challenge to my faith comes from certain fellow Christians, ones who are locked up with me here in this same institution. I see them at least twice a week, at prayer meeting and chapel service. During times for testimony and discussion, I have spoken plainly to the group of my faith in the eventual salvation of all mankind, saying as well that for any of us who are truly in Christ today, our salvation is not a matter of our having chosen Christ, but of God having chosen us—before the disruption of the world, with grace given before times eternal (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:9).

Previously, the chaplain hadn’t really objected to anything I had said; he tries to take an ecumenical

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of damnation. But, having misunderstood me, they claimed that I was encouraging sinful behavior.

Anyway, any words of advice or encouragement you could share relevant to my situation here would be very much appreciated.

**Answer:**

We have all done untold things “of which [we] are now ashamed” (Rom.6:21). The apostle Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, had been the “chief” or “foremost” sinner (1 Tim. 1:16). With regard to his past career, he was “less than the least of all the saints” (Eph.3:8). “Yet,” he declared, “in the grace of God I am what I am [now]” (1 Cor.15:10).

In order to deal with our failings faithfully, whether ones of past years or of the past moment, Paul emphasizes that we need to give special attention to just “one thing”—forgetting, indeed those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus. Whoever, then, are mature, may be disposed to this, and if in anything you are differently disposed, this also shall God reveal to you” (Phil.3:13-15).

The main thought here (the “one thing” of which Paul speaks) is not about forgetting those things which are behind. Instead, the “one thing” is our becoming occupied in pursuing toward the goal. The goal is faithfulness to the Lord in our service to Him. This is the underlying theme of this entire epistle.

“The Philippian epistle is a divine commentary on the latter half of Ephesians, and, like it, is especially concerned with the deportment demanded by the transcendent doctrines developed in the first half of the Ephesian letter. This is the key to its contents. It does not deal with doctrines, but with deportment . . . . [The two themes of] suffering and service, pervade the whole epistle, from the introduction, where Paul and Timothy style themselves ‘slaves,’ rather than apostles, to the end where the grace of the Lord, or Master, rather than Christ, is invoked.”

Since the phrase, “—forgetting, indeed those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—” is interjery in nature, we have set it off by long dashes in the text. Hence, when we wish to center our thoughts upon the “one thing” which is here in view, Philippians 3:13, 14 should be read as follows, omitting this interjery phrase: “Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing . . . toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus.”

Even so, in order to be in a position to dedicate ourselves to the “one thing” contemplated by Paul, and thus be pursuing toward the goal for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus, it is necessary that we preface this singular activity, by “forgetting, indeed those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front.”

Many things lie ahead for us to do, simply in the area of our giving attention to necessary needs and meeting the practical obligations of our daily affairs. Most of them may not be very exciting, but they nonetheless call for our attentiveness and make their demands upon both our time and strength. If we are to attend to them properly, as we “stretch out” to what is “in front” (i.e., to what lies ahead), we simply cannot afford to be continually reflecting upon and rehearsing those negative things which are now “behind” us, namely, our past failures.

Rather than “remembering” our past sins, Paul says that we need to be “forgetting” them! Now of course “forgetting here is a figure of speech. It is not that we are somehow literally to lose all memory of our past doings, ones which we regret; indeed, if Paul’s entreaty here were lit-

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eral, it would be quite impossible for us either to regret them or to be ashamed of them, seeing that then we would have lost all ability even to call them to mind, whether vividly or vaguely.

It is not that we are somehow to lose all memory of our former sins, but that we, like someone who actually has no recollection of past events since he has forgotten them, are not to give attention to those things. Pondering them can only weigh us down; hence Paul counsels us thus to be “forgetting” about them so that we may instead, like a runner in preparation for a race, be “stretching out,” giving due attention to those things lying ahead, perceiving our course from the things about us (cp Phil.2:23).

We may not be able to do what Paul could do, but we can see that we will do well to follow his example. Regardless of the degree of our success, honoring the ideal and longing to follow what is faithful while seeking to live uprightly, is a great blessing in its own right. For myself, I often have to be content with such an experience, while praying for increased ability and self-control, and especially for patience to endure, should God decline to grant my requests as soon as I might wish for Him to do so.

I can appreciate something of the strain you are under from your fellow inmates, those who, though professing believers (and it may be so that they are truly believers), are nonetheless hostile to the teaching of God’s grace apart from acts and of salvation for all. Too often the adage, “The only thing worse than a sinner is a reformed sinner,” is proven true. This is certainly the case with many Christians in prison as well as with those outside.

It is proud and self-righteous for any man who perhaps has not sinned (or does not now sin) as frequently or in the same way as another, to think that it is thanks to himself that this is so. It is interesting to note that the Pharisee who externally and formally thanked God that he was

Our Competency is of God

“not even as the rest of men,” actually “prayed this toward himself” (Luke 18:11).

The truth is that—through one means or another—it is always the grace and power of God that makes the difference among men, whether believer or unbeliever. Ultimately speaking, God has all power; He is the Omnipotent; we are the impotent. We only have whatever we are given from heaven (John 3:27; cp 2 Cor.3:5). It is true that some make better choices or are more willing, exercise more self-control or try harder. But what do any of us have but what we have now obtained (i.e., come to have)? That being so, why, then, are we boasting in ourselves, imagining that it is due to us, instead of God, that we are as we are (1 Cor.4:7)?

In its present aspect, like the effort of “getting hold” of etonian life, “really” (cp 1 Tim.6:12,19). “God’s calling above in Christ Jesus,” is indeed a “prize” (Phil.3:14). This is to say that it is something that is the result of our own efforts, which is awarded to us accordingly in consideration thereof.

In its future aspect, God’s calling above in Christ Jesus, is a gratuity in grace, concerning which, Grace reigns, for life etonian. There, even where sin increases—even if one should be persisting in sin—grace superexceeds (cf Rom. 5:20-6:1). But here, in our present endeavors in faith, forgetting what is behind and stretching out to those in front, if we would gain the prize, that of a present involvement and experience in God’s calling above in Christ Jesus, we must be pursuing toward the goal. The goal is that of living a life of consecrated, truly faithful service to our Master: for the Lord Christ we are slaving (Col.3:24).

Even while in bonds, may it be that God will grant you endurance and patience with joy, in your “logical divine service” for Him (Rom.12:1). Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

J.R.C.
THROUGH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

We have considered how God has spoken to mankind in creation, to and through prophets, in His Son, and through the apostles. Now, for the time being, He no longer speaks directly to individuals such as prophets and apostles, or through visions and dreams. The reason? His written word is complete! It was given to Paul “to complete the word of God” (Col.1:25). His written word provides all we need to know about God, His Son, His purpose and how He will bring it about.

Indeed, there was a time before the Scriptures were completed when direct communication was required, but no longer. When we hear someone claiming to have a new revelation directly from God, or that God has appeared in a vision or dream, we do not need to consider the matter. It is false. We need to understand this clearly.

There are no more prophets and apostles about. The true ones are in the foundation of God’s family. The foundation is complete, for Christ Jesus Himself is the capstone of the corner. God is building His family on it, and it is growing into a holy temple for God’s dwelling place in spirit. As believers, we are a part of that temple (cf Eph.2:20-22).

INSPIRED BY GOD

“All scripture” is inspired by God” (2 Tim.3:16). The words “inspired by God” represent one Greek term, which means literally, GOD-BLOWN, or “God-breathed.” When He created the human, God “blew into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen.2:7). In a similar way, the scriptures are God’s creation, and are living, in a figurative sense. Knowledge about the physical creation is gained by intense observation, analyzing, using microscopes, cataloging. That is the way scripture should be studied.

There are no flaws in the original documents of the scriptures, but we who do not speak Hebrew and Greek must depend on translations, which often are seriously flawed. In fact, anything that human beings do will have mistakes, but they can be minimized by using methods which to a large degree bypass the translators’ limitations.

CORRECTLY CUTTING

The most common problem when a difficulty is encountered is that of failing to observe the “address on the envelope.” We should ask of any part of scripture, Is it addressed to us? Is it about us? Remember to “Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15). “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.” But it is not all about us or addressed to us. Paul is the apostle of the nations; his epistles are directed to us. The remainder of scripture is truth, is precious, and we learn much from it (cf Rom.15:4,5). But we will not find the evangel for today, the conduct that accords with our place in Christ, or our expectation there.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

Many times our difficulty may be with figures of speech. They are freely used in scripture. Consider this passage:

1. While it is evident Paul had Israel’s “sacred scriptures” (which we call the “Old Testament”) particularly in view here (cf v.15), what he says here also includes the “prophetic scriptures” of his own era, including especially his own writings (cf Rom.16:25-27; cp 2 Tim.1:13, 3:14).
“And taking bread, giving thanks, He breaks it and gives to
them, saying, ‘Take. This is My body, given for your sakes.
This do for a recollection of Me’” (Luke 22:19). It should
be obvious that the bread was not His literal body, but a
figure (metaphor) of His body. Nevertheless, misunderstanding of this elementary figure has caused conflict and
division. A study of figures of speech is invaluable.

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

We have previously noted that it was granted to Paul “to
complete the word of God” (Col.1:25). Colossians may not
have been the last to be written chronologically, but Paul
completed the scriptures in scope, going beyond the con-
fines of the earth.

Hence, the apostle reveals that Christ will head up all,
the heavens as well as the earth. In doing so, all on earth
and in the heavens will come into the enjoyment of the
reconciliation Christ has gained through His cross. He will
use us of the nations among the celestials. His operations
through Israel for the earth were well known; Paul revealed
a secret previously unknown: Christ among the nations, a
glorious expectation. The riddle of the universe is solved,
tracing God’s operations from creation to reconciliation.

“God’s word is mankind’s most precious possession. What
are all the treasures in the world compared with it? Do
they even begin to approach the riches which are brought
to us by the knowledge of His mind, the appreciation of
His love? Indeed, it is God Himself Who is revealed in
the Sacred Scrolls.”

In the scriptures, and there only, can be found the basis
for joy and peace in these troubling times.

Robert B. Killen

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EDITORIAL

The nations are the units of power and rule during the present eon. Their character of irreverence and injustice (see p.131), lying at the root of their inevitable failure, will be succeeded by the glory of Christ’s kingdom in the next eon (cf Gen.12:2,3; 18:18; Psa.22:27,28; 67:2-4).

The beginnings of the nations are traced by Brother A. E. Knoch in this issue (p.99). Most of those great city-states established in the early centuries after the deluge by Noah’s descendants continued, for many centuries, to play major roles in what we call “world history.” And once again they seem to be emerging as important centers of influence. Babylon, Egypt and Assyria, these are especially noteworthy because of their relationship to the promised land, which first was held by Canaan and his descendants.

God’s Word, especially in the books of Daniel, Matthew and Revelation, tells of the central place of these nations at the end of the present eon. So it is of great interest to us that these places and their politics occupy so much attention in the news today. Not just the modern states of Israel and Palestine (Philistia), but now Iraq, in which the ancient city of Babylon is still represented by the nearby and important center of Hillah, is brought to our attention almost daily, along with Syria and Egypt.

Yet the unveiling of the man of lawlessness in that very region is detained by the present operation of God spoken of by Paul most extensively in Romans 11:11-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17. What we see is not the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the Middle East but accords with them as preparations. And this is a reminder to us of the sureness of God’s promises as well as the grace of our calling. D.H.H.
THE MINDFULNESS OF GOD

God is aware of all things, but starting with the early chapters of Genesis, the Scriptures often speak of specific objects of His attention. They sometimes do so in Hebrew by a word generally denoting “remember.” When we remember something, it becomes prominent in our thinking. When God is said to remember something, we do not suppose He had forgotten, but we become aware of His mindfulness.

The Hebrew verb for “remember” is zkr, which is sometimes rendered “be mindful” in the CV. Its first occurrence is in Genesis 8:1 where we read: “Yet Elohim was mindful of Noah and of every animal and of every beast that was with him in the ark. So Elohim caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.”

Later, Elohim said to Noah that when He saw the rainbow, “then I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living soul among all flesh, so that never again shall the waters become a deluge to wreck all flesh. When My bow comes to be in the cloud, I will see it to remember the eonian covenant between Elohim and every living soul among all flesh which is on the earth” (Gen.9:15,16).

Here in these earliest scriptural references to God’s action of remembering we see that His mind was vigorously occupied, first of all, with creatures of His hand and then with His word directed to them in the form of a covenant.

His creatures and His word, these are deeply etched on the mind of God.

D.H.H.
THE SONS OF NOAH

(Genesis 10)

10 These are the genealogical records of Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth: + Sons were born to them after the deluge.

2 Japheth’s sons: Gomer, + Magog, + Madai, + Javan, + Tubal, + Meshech and Tiras. 3 + Gomer’s sons: Ashkenaz, + Riphath and Togarmah. 4 + Javan’s sons: Elishah, + Tarshish, Kittim and ‘Rodanim’.
5 From these the nations of the coastlands parted in their lands—each with its spoken language—by their families, in their nations.
6 + Ham’s sons: Cush, + Mizraim, + Put and Canaan.
7 + Cush’s sons: Seba, + Havilah, + Sabtah, + Raamah and Sabteca. + Raamah’s sons: Sheba and Dedan.
8 + Cush begot ‘Nimrod. He’ started to become a master in the earth; 9 he’ was a master hunter before Yahweh. Therefore it is said, Like Nimrod, the master hunter before Yahweh. 10 + The principal cities of his kingdom were Babylon, + Erech, + Akkad and Calneh in the land of Shinar. 11 From ‘this’ land Ashur came forth; and he built ‘Nineveh, + ‘Rehoboth-ir, + ‘Calah, 12 + ‘Resen between Nineveh and 13 ‘Calah, that is the great city.
13 + Mizraim begot ‘the Ludim, 14 + ‘Anamim, 15 + ‘Lehabim, 16 + ‘Naphtuhim, 17 + ‘Pathrusim, 18 + ‘Casluhim (from where the Philistines came forth) and ‘Caphtorim.
19 + Canaan begot ‘Sidon, his firstborn, and ‘Heth, 20 and ‘the Jebusite, 21 + ‘the Amorite, + ‘the Girgashite, 22 + ‘the Hivite, + ‘the Arkite, + ‘the Sinite, 23 + ‘the Arvadite, + ‘the
Zemarite, and 'the Hamathite. + Afterward the Canaanite families scattered; 19 ‘so the Canaanite boundary came to be from Sidon (as you come) toward Gerar as far as Gaza (as you come) toward Sodom, + Gomorrah, + Admah, and Zeboim as far as Lasha.

20 These are Ham’s sons, ‘by their families, ‘by their spoken languages, in their lands, in their nations.

21 + As for Shem (father of all the sons of Eber and the oldest brother of Japhet), to him also sons were born.


24 + Arphaxad begot ‘Kenan, ‘Kenan begot 9 ‘Shelah, and Shelah begot ‘Eber. 25 + To Eber were born two sons; the name of the one was Peleg; for in his days the land was distributed.

+ His brother’s name was Joktan. 26 + Joktan begot ‘Almodad, ‘Sheleph, ‘Hazarmaveth, + Jerah, 27 + Hadoram, + ‘Uzal, + ‘Diklah, 28 + ‘Obal, + ‘Abimael, + ‘Sheba,

29 + ‘Ophir, + ‘Havilah, and ‘Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan. 30 + Their dwelling place came to be from Mesha ‘as far as ‘you come’ toward Sephar, the hill country of the East.

31 These are Shem’s sons ‘by their families, ‘by their spoken languages, in their lands, ‘by their nations.

32 These are the families of Noah’s sons ‘by their genealogical records, in their nations; and from these the nations parted ‘over the earth after the deluge.

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NOAH DISAPPEARS

A NOTABLE FACT about Noah is his almost total disappearance from the record after the flood. He was then six hundred years old (Gen.7:6), and he lived three hundred and fifty years in the new order of things (Gen.9:29), but we hear nothing about him ruling in this period. Like all

Mastership Taken by Others

the firstborn sons of Adam he had been the subjector of the race, but, like many later in the royal lineage, such as Abraham and Jacob, Boaz and Obed, up to David, he did not reign as king. We do not read that he interfered when they built Babel, or when Nimrod founded his kingdom. But there seems to have been a spiritual succession, for eight hundred years after he died Abram was born, and Abraham’s place was filled by Jacob, Joseph and Moses, who was born long years after Joseph died. With Moses began the theocracy, over a single nation, the highest form of government in this con, but which doomed a whole generation to death in the desert.

No doubt Noah was master as father, over his own family, after the deluge, for this form of subjection was never abrogated, seeing that it is the final and perfect form. But even in this his convivial drinking made him a failure and he lost the mastership to more energetic characters, like Nimrod and Ashur.

GEOGRAPHICALLY

The race started afresh on a high elevation. There is nothing to show that the ark stopped on Mount Ararat itself, although it could have, as this is the highest peak, at the western end of the mountains of Ararat. These form a long range, with another, but lower peak at the eastern end. Somewhere from this elevation Noah and his family descended. Their southward course was probably determined by two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, whose headwaters were found in the Ararat range. It was natural for them to follow one of these downward, for they not only provided water to drink, but went through well watered and fruitful country, which provided them with food.

If they came down the Euphrates, which seems most likely, then we have Eden, the first home of mankind at one end, and the second commencement, beginning on a
much higher level, at the other. But their course was always a descent, and this became apparent at Babel, even before they came to erstwhile Eden.

There is no intimation, however, that Noah, the just man, descended as far as Babel. He was not like the previous sons of Adam, and did not rule as they had done. That is why he is ignored in the record.

The Hebrew revelation is chiefly concerned with Israel and their eastern neighbors, who were also Semites. But they were also in touch with the Hamites, to the south. But they had little to do with the northern peoples, the Japhethites, until the writings of the apostle Paul. Physically, on the earth, they are the last and the least. Spiritually, among the celestials, many of them will be first and foremost. So will flesh be exalted and spirit exalted.

THE MEANING OF THE NAMES

As some of the names given in this genealogy are Hebrew before Babel, we may be able to find their probable and appropriate meaning. But, after the confusion introduced at Babel, there is not much trustworthy material to go by, so most of them will not be considered. Yet it is not easy to draw the line, as no ages are given. Those born before Babel will be Hebrew and those after will be confused, except in the line of Shem. References are given to their recurrence, when helpful.

GENEALOGICAL LINKS

As in the line from Adam to Noah (Gen.5:3-32), little detail is given us except the links in the genealogy, so, once again, we are carried quickly over the interval from Noah to Abram (Gen.10:11). These two are key characters, and indicate a change in the dealings of Yahweh Elohim with humanity. Noah and his line introduced the present form of government by nations. This continues in the succeed-

Japheth’s Seven Sons

ing administrations, to the present day. We are still ruled as nations. This will have its climax in the next administration of government, under the man of sin. It will be changed to government under one nation in the nexteon, under the righteous rule of the Son of Mankind. Even it will vanish when all sovereignty and authority and power is abolished and God, the Father, becomes All in all (1 Cor.15:20-28).

THE LINE OF JAPHE

Japheth had seven sons (Gen.10:2). The first was named Gomer (Gmr lapse, Ezek.38:6; Hosea 1:3). Of his three sons, Ashkenaz (Ash-k-nz fire-as-spatter, Jer.51:27) was the oldest, the second Rephath (Riphth lnx), and the third Togarmah (Thugrme pick-clean, rib, Ezek.27:14; 38:6). So far is Gomer’s line.

The second son of Japheth, Magog (Mgug top, Ezek. 38:2; 39:6) has no line. Also no line is given for Madai (Md-i measure-ite), the third son of Japheth, but he seems to have the name later given to the Medes, a great nation east of the upper reaches of the Tigris river (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11; Esther 1:3, 14, 18, 19; 10:2; Isa.13:17; 21:2; Jer.25:25; 51:11, 28; Dan.8:20; 9:1).

The fourth son of Japheth was Javan (Iunn, perhaps denoting “dove,” Isa.66:19; Ezek.27:13, 19; Zech.9:13). He is supposed to be the ancestor of the Ionians, or Greeks. He had four sons (Gen.10:4), the first being Elishah (Al-ishe, sub-jector-is-equalizing, Ezek.27:7) who may have been the ancestor of the Aeolian Greeks. The second son was Tarshish (Tarsheh topaz). The name occurs quite often (e.g., 1 Kings 10:22; Jonah 1:3) and seems to belong to a seafaring people found chiefly in the western Mediterranean. The third son of Javan was named Kittim (Kth-im pound-ers) which was a seafaring folk of the eastern Mediterranean (Isa.23:1, 12, etc.). 1 Chronicles 1:7, the Septuagint, Samaritan and a few Hebrew manuscripts identify
the fourth son of Javen as Rodanim ("Dodanim" in the Masoretic text, the letters R and D being much alike in Hebrew). If "Rodanin" is the correct spelling, this son may have been the forefather of the people of Rhodes.

No lines are given for Japheth's fifth and sixth sons. But Tubal (disintegrate) and Meshech (draw) are the names given to peoples who probably lived in central and eastern Anatolia, the Tabali and Mushki (cf. Isa.66:19; Ezek.27:13; 32:26; 38:2,3). The seventh son of Japheth, Tiras (Thirs), is not mentioned elsewhere except in 1 Chronicles 1:5, but his name may indicate he was the founder of "Thrace" (northeastern Greece).

THE SONS OF HAM

Ham had four sons (Gen.10:6). Their names occur often in later Scripture, Cush being termed "Ethiopia" in Greek (not modern Ethiopia, but apparently areas of the upper Nile), Mizraim referring to Egypt, Put referring to Libya, and Canaan to the promised land. They formed a solid front of nations south of the central Shemites, corresponding to the sons of Japheth, on the north.

Cush (Kush burly) spread out most extensively in the south, below Egypt. Mizraim (Mtzrim Constricts), Egypt, is well named, for it consists of two long narrow stretches along the Nile river. Put (Plut) is part of the names Putiel (Ex.6: 25), Potipher (Gen.37:36; 39:1), and Potiphera (Gen.41:45,50; 46:20). It occurs in Jeremiah 46:9; Ezekiel 27:10; 30:5 and Nahum 3:9.

Canaan (Submit, usually used in the sense of "Trafficker") had an important place in Yahweh's plan with Israel. He alone of Noah's grandchildren had a part to play in the first act of the tragedy of this eon, and was cursed because of it. He took land that was being prepared for Israel, and his descendants were exterminated because of it. The word family Submit suits them well, for the Subjector will force them to submit to His plans. So with the variant, Trafficker, for they were the medium of trade between the chief centers of population, Egypt and Syria, that is, between the sons of Shem and Ham. The great trade routes went through their land.

THE SONS OF CUSH

Cush, the oldest son of Ham, seems to have had six sons (Gen.10:7,8), and the sixth of such importance that he is given a whole paragraph, more than any other man in this list, because he founded the first kingdom among men. First, however, Cush had five sons of lesser note, of which four are merely mentioned by name: Seba (Sba, cf. 1 Chron.1:9; Psa.72:10; Isa.43:3), Havilah (Chuile, cf. Gen.2:11; 10:29; 25:18; 1 Sam.15:7; 1 Chron.1:9,23), Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca. One of these sons, Raamah, had two sons, Sheba (Sheba, cf. Gen.10:28; 25:3; 1 Chron.1:9,22,32; 2 Chron.9:1,3,9,12) and Dedan (Ddn, cf Gen.25:3; Jer.25:23; 49:8; Ezek.27:15,20; 38:13).

NIMROD

The most famous of the descendants of Ham was his grandson, son of Cush, whose name was Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-12, Nimrd, perhaps meaning Revolver). He is the first one in this eon to be called a master. This was the title given in the previous eon to all firstborn successors of Adam, "masterful ones, who were from the eon, mortals of renown" (Gen.6:4). So here is the beginning of rule in this eon. It started with a grandson of Ham, and is applied to certain descendants of each son of Noah, and to a mixture of them all, at various times in this eon. Each one must be given an opportunity to show that no mortal is capable of wielding a scepter ideally over his fellow men. Only the One Who died for all of them and is alive again can rule so that all will be subjected to Elohim at the consummation.
Kingdoms Commence

The important point for us to ponder is the fact that here we have the first mention of a kingdom (Gen. 10:10). Nimrod was the first king in this era of human government. Here first the authority given through Noah is crystallized into an organized unit, with a royal head. This is the system which, with modifications, has been used ever since, and which will be perfected under the To-subjector, the Anointed Son, in the next era. In this era, however, it began with a city, Babel (B-bl IN-DISINTEGRATION), and will end with that same great city, which will have a kingdom over the kings of the earth (Rev. 18).

This first kingdom seems to have been based principally on Nimrod’s individual prowess, so that his name became a proverb in his day (Gen. 10:9), even as the masters before the flood (Gen. 6:4). His first subjects, so to speak, were wild animals. He was a master hunter before Yahweh Elohim. He began by mastering one city, Babel, and then added others to it. This is the first example of how great nations are usually formed. Some masterful man seizes power on a small scale and enlarges it to become a great kingdom.

As the influence of Babel, in those days, was limited, Nimrod seems to have built three other centers, probably along or near the Euphrates, and controlled the whole land of Shinar Shnr. This seems to have been changed to Babylonia later, from the name of its principal city. These cities were named Erech (Ark) and Akkad (Akd) and Calneh (Khe). This seems to be as far north as the rule of the sons of Ham ever went.

ASHUR’S KINGDOM

At this point a parenthesis is introduced, for the next kingdom was founded by Ashur (Gen. 10:11, 12), who was a son of Shem (10:22). This shows that the real subject is rule, not only the names in Noah’s family tree.

Ashur (Ashur PROGRESSING), a grandson of Noah through Shem, seems to have retraced his steps northward along the Tigris. There he, like Nimrod, built cities, for a great capital is characteristic of the kingdom eons. Jerusalem will be the center of rule under the coming King. So it was from the days of David. Babylon is its opposite. To begin with, however, the Shemite sovereignty was centered in the land of Ashur, or Assyria.

The first city was Nineveh (Ninve PROPAGATRESS), a very suitable name for the beginning, for it is immediately followed by three more. This seems to have been an attempt to concentrate the sons of Shem in one district, out of which Abram was called to go to the real spiritual center of rule in Jerusalem in the promised land.

The second city was Rehoboth-ir (WIDES-city, Gen. 26:22; 36:37), the third Calah (Klech MATURE). The last city was called Resen (Rsn, bridle), indicating the general idea of restraint, which is quite fitting for a large city.

The way the passage reads, one might think that Resen or Calah is the great city, instead of Nineveh. The statement that Resen is between Nineveh and Calah seems to indicate that these cities grew together, and thus formed the truly great metropolis and capital of the Assyrian (Ashur) empire.

CITIES

Cain built the first city, in opposition to Elohim’s command (Gen. 4:17). Adam and Noah built none. Nimrod built the first city in this era at Babel, the very spot whence God had dispersed mankind. What is wrong with cities? They display the highest achievements of mortals and glorify mankind. The name “city” (NAKED) indicates that the ground has been denuded of vegetation. But living, growing plant life is God’s achievement.

Nevertheless, God also has made buildings and temples, and will make a city, New Jerusalem, in which His
glories are manifested. These alone will remain. All the rest will perish, and all glory will be given to God, not to the achievements of mortals.

MIZRAIM
Ham’s second son seems to have separated from his brother Cush after Babel, and migrated into the Nile valley. It was quite natural for these early pioneers to settle near fresh water, for that is as essential as land. We have already seen the basis of two empires, one on the Euphrates and one on the Tigris. Now we have the third, on the Nile. The name Mizraim (Mizrim CONSTRUCT-S, Narrows) is exceedingly apt, for the land is so dependent on the river for moisture that only a narrow strip on each side can sustain life for many people.

As the name Mizraim and the names of his sons (Gen. 10:13,14) are all given in the plural (-im), they serve in pointing to the peoples who descended from them. The Ludim are the Lydians, mentioned in Jeremiah 46:9. The Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim and Casluhim probably remained in Egypt. The Philistines come before us often in the history of Israel, and the Caphtorim are mentioned in relation to Gaza and the Philistines (cf Deut. 2:23; Jer.47:4 and Amos 9:7).

PUT-PHUT-LIBYA
The AV has these three renderings for the Hebrew Pht: Put (1 Chron.1:8; Nahum 3:9); Phut (Gen.10:6; Ezek. 27:10); Libya (Ezek.30:5; 38:5; cp Acts 2:10); Libyans (Jer.46:9; Dan.11:43). As the occurrence in Acts is from the inspired Greek, it identifies the ancient Put with later Libya. As it is mentioned with Ethiopia on four occasions it must be in Africa, and we may be quite sure that the descendants of Put, the third son of Ham, settled on the Mediterranean coastline west of Egypt.

A Land of Trade

CANAAN AND HIS DESCENDANTS
A curse had been pronounced on Canaan (Gen.9:25), so the fate of the Canaanite is of special interest. It is a remarkable fact that, at first, they settled in the land of promise. Later, they were destroyed by Israel. This seems to be anticipated in the list given in Genesis 10:15-19, for most of the names are not those of the sons, but the nations which later sprang from them. We do not read of Jebus, but of the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, etc. These names are those of the dwellers in the land, whom the sons of Israel were charged to exterminate.

The name Canaan should not be confused with Cain, which means Acquired, for it denotes one who Submits, or Trafficks. Canaan seems to have been under the authority of Egypt much of the time, until Israel came and replaced them. Meanwhile they were on the main roads between the sons of Ham, in the south and the sons of Shem in the east, and also traded by sea with the sons of Japheth on the north shores of the Mediterranean, especially the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

Sidon (Tzida, side, Provision) founded a city on the seacoast which, at times, controlled the northern part of the promised land, and, with Tyre, carried much of the commerce on the Mediterranean.

Heth (Chth CRACK, Dismay), the second son of Canaan, was the ancestor of the Hittites, with whom the patriarchs came into contact during their sojourn in the southern part of Palestine. We will come across them often in our studies in the life of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is well to note how they kept aloof from them because of the curse upon Canaan (Gen.23:3-20; 27:46; 49:32). They were in the south, especially in Hebron.

Now (Gen.10:16) the form of the names change from
the patronymic to the -ite form preceded by the article, the. These seem to be located mostly between Sidon and Heth. The first one is near the center, the Jebusite 1-bus-i TRAMPLE-ITE). They dwelt in the region where Jerusalem now is and maintained their independence until the time of David (2 Sam.5:6).

The Amorites (Amr-i SAY-ITE) come before us very often, for they had two kingdoms east of the Jordan when Israel entered the land, and later spread to the other side. Abraham dwelt with them (Gen.14:13), and Jacob took land from them (Gen.48:22).

The Girgasites (Grgrsh-i STIR-CLOSE-ITE, close-sojourner) do not seem to have had much to do with Israel. They are not named after the time of Nehemiah (9:8).

The Hivite (Chui LIVE-ITE) seems to have been in Shechem, but later is found near Mount Hermon (Josh. 11:3) and Lebanon (Judges 3:3).

The Arkite (Orq-i GNAW-ITE), and the Sinite (Sin-i THORN-BUSH-ITE), and the Arvadite (Arud-i DOWNING-ITE), and the Zemarite (Tzmr-i WOOL-ITE), and the Hamathite (Chn'th-i WARM-ITE) are mentioned only here and in the genealogy in Chronicles.

BOUNDARIES OF CANAANITES

The west boundary of the Canaanites is very distinct, as it is the sea-shore from Sidon in the north to Gaza in the south, but thence eastward is indefinite, along the south-rim to Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah (Adm-e human) and Zeboiim (Tz'bm-stations) and Lasha (Lsho TO-SAVE), supposed to be a medicinal spring east of the Dead Sea (Gen.10:19). As the eastern border was desert it was necessarily indefinite. The north may have reached to Hamath, between the Lebanons, as one of the sons of Canaan had this name.

Hence the sons of Ham are divided by families, by lan-

Line of Shem

Lineages, in their lands, and each was a nation for itself (Gen.10:20).

THE SONS OF THE HEBREW

Shem, in our versions, is said to be the father of all the sons of Eber, his great-great-great-grandson (Gen.10:21,24). Shem was the forefather of all in this list, so there must be some special reason for bringing in this name. Eber (Obr, PASS), with the ending -i (Obri PASS-ITE) is transliterated “Hebrew,” and is used of Abram (Gen.14:13), and of the Hebrew nation (Ex.1:15). As these are the principal objects in view in the rest of this book, it seems more likely that Shem is pointed out as the progenitor of the Hebrew people, who are not indicated otherwise in the annals of Noah. Later on it is also used of the Hebrew language so may imply that these alone passed on the original speech of Adam in the confusion of tongues, which followed.

SHEM’S DESCENDANTS

Shem had five sons, as follows (Gen.10:22-31):

Elam (Olm OBScurity) is mentioned first, later applied to a province of Persia (Dan.8:2), of which Chedorlaomer was king (Gen.14:1,9).

Ashur (Ashur PROGRESSING) is second in this list. This seems to be the one who left Shinar and built Nineveh (10:11,12).

Then we have Arphaxad (Arphkszd), the first son, who is in the line of promise, so is repeated in 11:10-13.

Lud (Lud GENERATING) is next. His descendants are mentioned in Isaiah 66:1 and Ezekiel 27:10, to be distinguished from the Ludim, descendants of Mizraim, in verse 13.

Aram (Arm HIGH) is generally rendered Syria, the high country north of the promised land.

Aram had four sons (Gen.10:23): Uz (Outz FIXING), later
used for the land where Job lived; Hul (Chul PERFORATING, sand); Gether (Gkhr); and Mash (Msh REMOVE).

Arphaxad generated Kenan (Qinn NEST) according to the Septuagint (given as “Caim” in Luke 3:36), who begot Shelah, who in turn begot Eber (Obr PASS). Eber, as noted above, is an important and significant link in the line of our Lord’s genealogy. His first son was Peleg, and Joktan was his brother (Gen.10:24,25).

LAND DISTRIBUTED

The name Peleg (Phlg) finds its nearest equivalent in our distribute. As a noun it is usually rendered “river” in the AV, but rillet in the CV. The tree in the first psalm was not planted by a river, for rivers are scarce in the holy land. Almost all the water-courses are steep and carry water only occasionally. A tree planted near one of them is in double danger. It may be washed away by a winter flood or dried out in a summer drought. How much more comforting if we picture it as planted in a garden by an irrigation ditch! Then the water comes when needed most, in the heat of summer.

The phlg was a distributor of water, a rillet (Psa.119:136; Prov.5:16; Isa.30:25; 32:2; Lam.3:48), which could be turned where needed (Prov.21:1), or it might be oil (Job 29:6). Peleg, however, was the distributor of the land. Hitherto there was so much land that probably no one thought of claiming any special part as their own. Now that Noah introduced government, the need for some regulation in this regard seems to have been met by Peleg, so that he was called the Distributor, something like a modern land agent. A few verses further on (Gen.10:32), the subject is again broached, for there we read, “from these the nations parted over the earth after the deluge.” A rillet of water parts a garden into plots. While its function is not to separate, but distribute, yet in effect it makes a division. So

The First Hebrew

with the nations. At first, the boundaries were natural features, especially water, so, like the rivulets in a garden, the nations were separated by streams. Nations, today, find this a good boundary. But this distribution has probably led to more strife and bloody warfare than anything else in man’s day. The rivers east of the Jordan and the Dead sea were often used as boundaries. The Euphrates is the future north and east border of the promised land.

Peleg’s father was Eber, PASSER, the first “Hebrew.” Like Abram, he probably left his birthplace and passed elsewhere (Gen.14:13). The sons of Israel were called Hebrews in Egypt, for they were a foreign element in the population. It is well to remember that, with his surname, he was Peleg Hebrew. The Israelites were emigrants, Hebrews in the land of promise, and so they are today, once more. That is the cause of the war with the Arabs. In Peleg’s day, men were beginning to scatter over the surface of the entire earth. That is what led to the building of Babel (Gen.11:4).

As Yahweh Elohim’s plan for this eon and the next calls for one nation to rule and bless many nations, so His early efforts all tend to divide humanity, first into three divisions, Semites, Japhethites, and Hamites, and these into many nations. In Deuteronomy (32:8) we read:

When the Supreme gave the nations allotments,
When He parted the sons of Adam,
He stationed the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the sons of El.

Yet the promised land was first given to the descendants of Canaan, who is specially mentioned along with Noah’s three sons. They received the land from Sidon through Sodom, to Lasha. It looked as if no land had been reserved for the chosen nation.

The land was not reserved for Israel in the days of Peleg. Even the small portion they have hitherto occupied had
been given to seven other nations (Acts 13:19), and remnants were left in order to test them. The slavery of Egypt afforded Yahweh an opportunity to be their Saviour, and the trials of the wilderness taught them His provision. The conquest of the land not only revealed His power, but the inviolability of His promises. He had promised the land to Abram, to Isaac and to Jacob, yet they never occupied any of it, except a burial place, as theirs. After they had developed into a nation, in Egypt and the wilderness, then they immediately began to exercise their function as the head of the nations, by judging the descendants of Canaan and taking over their land.

**THE SONS OF JOKTAN**

Joktan had a large family, including thirteen sons (Gen. 10:26-29). As most of these do not play any further part in divine revelation, we will merely mention the names with probable meanings where possible: Almodad (COMPRESS-FOND); Sheleph (PULL); Hazarmaveth (ENVIRON-DYING); Jerah (Spiritied); Hadoram (OBTRUDE-HIGH); Uzal (DEPARTING); Diklah; Obal; Abimael (FATHER-FROM-SUBJECTOR); Sheba (RETURN); Ophir (ASH); Havilah (PERFORATE, travail) and Jobab (Interior).

Why are these given? Could it be that they represent Arabian tribes near the border of Israel and others which settled on the shores with whom Solomon had dealings? But the following note (v.30) as to the location of these families is very vague in our versions, and in the Hebrew. The Septuagint has *as far as*, for the Hebrew “as,” so gives Mesha as the western boundary and Sephar as the eastern hill country border, which probably refers to the short chain of hills on the Persian gulf.

Thus the nations were distributed over the central part of Eurasian Africa after the deluge and Babel.

A. E. Knoch
David's Unusual Kindness
(2 Samuel 9)

9 * David inquired, * Is there anyone * still + left of the house of Saul, + that I may + show kindness unto him for the sake of Jonathan? + Now there was a servant of the house of Saul, and his name was Ziba. + When they called him to David, + the king asked him, Are you Ziba? + He replied, I am your servant. + The king continued, Is there nobody, + even one man, left of the house of Saul, + that I may + show unto him the kindness of Elohim? + Ziba answered the king, There is still a son of Jonathan, smitten on both feet. + Then the king asked him, Where is he? + Ziba replied to the king, Behold, he is in the house of Machir son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar. + So king David sent out + to take him from the house of Machir son of Ammiel at Lo-debar. + When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, + he fell on his face and prostrated himself. + David said, Mephibosheth! And he replied, Behold, I am your servant. + David told him, Do not fear, for I shall show, yea show kindness unto you for the sake of your father Jonathan. + I will restore to you all the field of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat bread regularly at my table. + He prostrated himself again and said, What is your servant, that you turn around to a dying cur such as me? + Then the king called Ziba, Saul's lad, and said to him, I give to your lord's grandson all + that belonged to
Saul and to all his household. 10. You will cultivate the ground for him, you and your sons and your slaves. You will bring in the yield, "that there will be bread for your lord's household, and they can eat." As for your lord's grandson Mephibosheth, he shall eat bread regularly at my table. (v. Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty slaves.) 11. Ziba replied to the king, According to all "that my lord the king has instructed his servant, so shall your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. 12. Mephibosheth had a young son, and his name was Mica. All those dwelling in Ziba's household became Mephibosheth's servants. 13. Yet Mephibosheth was dwelling in Jerusalem, for he ate regularly at the king's table. He was lame in both his feet.

Mephibosheth

The ninth chapter of 2 Samuel provides a wonderful foreshadowing of God's grace. David inquired of the whereabouts of any descendants of Jonathan, that he might show them "the kindness of Elohim" (v.3). And truly the kindness that David showed went far beyond the human norm. Twice he mentions that it was for the sake of his beloved Jonathan (2 Sam.9:1,7).

Ziba had been a servant of Saul, and had taken control and possession of Saul's property since Saul had fallen before the Philistines. Ziba had become quite wealthy by this time, having a large household and a number of servants (v.10).

Mephibosheth, fearing that the king might massacre Saul's house, was living in self-exile. Mephibosheth's lameness was due to an accident that occurred when the Israelites were fleeing from the Philistines at the time of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam.4:4).

There is some difference of opinion on the meaning of Mephibosheth's name, but, clearly, the meaning is related to shame. This may be a name, like Ichabod (1 Sam.4:21), that is related to a national catastrophe, or perhaps to the laming accident. Mephibosheth was dwelling in Lo-debar (v.4), which may mean, a place of "no pasture," or even a place of "nothing." In either case, the name harmonizes with Mephibosheth's own testimony in verse 8 that he was desolate.

When David had Mephibosheth brought to him, Mephibosheth prostrated himself before him. David was the first to speak, and he told Mephibosheth that he would receive kindness for the sake of another. David restored all of Saul's holdings to him and made him part of the royal household. This was a great financial loss to Ziba.

A striking parallel

All of this is like God's approach to us. We are alienated and distant from Him. He seeks us out and draws us to Himself. He speaks first, blessing with blessings greater than all our losses. Making us part of His household, He even gracises that we may share in the allotment of Christ, for Whose sake we are blest.

"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" (Rom.5:6,8). "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, being rich, because of you He became poor, that you, by His poverty, should be rich" (2 Cor.8:9). "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" (Eph.2:8,9).

Effects of grace

But the story of Mephibosheth does not end here with
its foreshadowings of God’s grace. We see also, through testing, that David’s gracious kindness also bore good fruit in Mephibosheth’s life.

During Absalom’s rebellion, when David was forced to flee Jerusalem, Ziba provided David with donkeys and food supplies. David asked Ziba where Mephibosheth was, and Ziba replied that he was staying in Jerusalem hoping to be made king when the dust settled after Absalom’s attempted coup. At this reply, David returned all of Saul’s property to Ziba, from whom he had taken it to give to Mephibosheth (2 Sam.16:1-4).

However, when David was finally able to return to Jerusalem, he was met by Mephibosheth, who had not cared for himself, or shaved or changed clothing since David had left Jerusalem—thus he waited for the king to return in peace (2 Sam.19:24).

At this point we have a glimpse of the wisdom that was passed on to Solomon (cp 1 Kings 3:16-28). David asked Mephibosheth why he had not gone with him. Mephibosheth replied that he had intended to but was left behind and had been vilified by Ziba. David, seemingly in frustration, replied that his decree was for Ziba and Mephibosheth to divide all Saul’s property between them. This is quite similar to Solomon’s command to divide the living child and give half to each one claiming to be its mother. Mephibosheth’s answer rang true with his loyalty to David when he said, “Just let him take the whole, inasmuch as my lord the king has come to his home in peace” (2 Sam.19:25-30).

We are told of David’s kindness to Mephibosheth again in 2 Samuel 21:5-9, when he spared him from the claims of the Gibeonites. Apparently David realized Mephibosheth’s loyalty and Ziba’s cunning. The story began with grace, and so it ends.

J. Philip Scranton
“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

JUSTIFICATION OUT OF FAITH

Question:
I would like to know what I actually have to do to be saved. I have been taught that if I will accept Jesus as my Saviour, then I will be saved. Even so, at church, the pastor often asks backslidden members truly to accept Christ for the first time. He thinks that they must not have done so to begin with, since they continued to be quite sinful for years afterward, following their first profession of faith. He always says, “You can’t be walking in the spirit until you’re in possession of the spirit”; and, “The mark of the true Christian is self-control.”

*When he gets angry, he says that his anger (which he calls, “indignation”) is “of a righteous spirit and is a righteous indignation against wrongdoing,” even though it seems to me that he is not always right and that the way he acts in such cases is the same as the way I act when I lose self-control. I wonder: Is it all right to be angry sometimes, at least when it is in response to wrongdoing?

Another thing: our denomination teaches that “the sinner is justified through Christ on the condition of his or her confession of faith and repentance.” Yet you seem to say that no conditions are required. Regardless, I do desire to please the Lord, even though sometimes I have a stronger desire simply for my own pleasure.

In any case, I wonder what it means to be really
“walking in spirit,” and to be having self-control therein (Gal.5:16,23). It seems to me that your teaching about “all-sufficient grace” doesn’t leave any room for free will; yet everyone I know (not just my pastor) says that it is by our own free choice that we will be saved or lost, so as to be responsible for our own destiny.

Answer:

I will try to address your various questions concerning walking in spirit, issues of anger and self-control, as well as about grace, choice, and conditions of salvation.

Israel, in the coming eon, provides an ideal illustration of walking in spirit. Yahweh had said to Moses concerning Israel, “O that their heart might become this way with them: to fear Me and to observe all My instructions all the days, that it might be well with them and with their sons for the eon” (Deut.5:29).

Under the old covenant, however, Yahweh had not given them a disposition subject to His law; one which was able to keep it (Rom.8:7; cp Deut.29:4).

Even so, under the new covenant, all of this will be gloriously different. Then, rather than merely commanding them from without to obey His law (especially since they were unable to do so of themselves), Yahweh will bestow His law within them, writing it on their hearts (Jer.31:33). Accordingly, He will give them a new heart, and bestow a new spirit within them. He will take away the heart of stone from their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh (Ezek.36:26).¹

Then He will become Elohim to them indeed; and they will become His people, worthy of the name (Jer.31:33). Thus He will cause them to observe and do His judgments, and make it that they go in His statutes (Ezek.36:27).

Israel’s salvation under the new covenant, in principle, is the only scriptural kind of salvation. Indeed, whatever their form, in essence, there are only two possible concepts of salvation: (1) human; (2) divine. The one effectually affirms that man must save himself, even if it is cleverly claimed that this saving of oneself is merely from disqualification God’s reciprocal, further deliverance. The other affirms that “if he is to be saved at all, he must be saved by a power outside himself, that in the strict sense of the word there is no such thing as a self-saved man, that the saved man is ever one who says with Paul, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am.’ The contrast between these two [views of salvation] is clear and unmistakable. The one calls upon man to save himself; the other brings him into contact with a Power that saves him.”²

Paul has made it plain that the only sphere in which one may be walking if one would avoid consummating the lusts of the flesh, is that of spirit (Gal.5:16). The fruit of the spirit is all good; the works of the flesh are all bad. No flesh at all shall be justified by works of law, because no flesh at all is able to obey law. In instances where man does obey law, it is not of his own flesh—his own self—that he does so. It is rather that he does so as a fruit of the spirit; that is, as a consequence of the operations of the imperceptible power of God, in Whom all move, live, and are (Acts 17:28), the One Who gives to all life and breath and all (Acts 17:25; cp John 3:27). Hence, Paul makes it plain that one must not only undertake in spirit, but complete in spirit as well (cp Gal.3:3,5).

¹. Here the sense of the figure is that He will take away from their flesh its former unyieldingness toward obedience (i.e., its “heart of stone”), and, in its place give them a new center and core of spiritual being (a “new heart”), one which is soft and malleable, receptive to the influence of His spirit (a “heart of flesh”).

LOVE IS NOT INCENSED

You mentioned that when your pastor gets angry, he says that his anger is “righteous indignation against wrongdoing,” even though it appears to you that his anger is really no different than your own loss of self-control when you become angry. Undoubtedly you are correct that when your pastor becomes angry, he too does so as the result of his own loss of self-control, the same as anyone else whenever he or she becomes angry. Your pastor is simply deceiving himself in thinking that his anger is a “righteous” indignation, unlike that of so many others whose anger, clearly, is an unrighteous indignation.

Practically all anger is against (perceived) wrongdoing. Your pastor’s practice of terming his anger “indignation” (which is a close synonym for “anger”) and claiming that since it is somehow of a “righteous spirit” and stands against wrongdoing that it is therefore justified, is delusional.

The only “righteous indignation” in the universe is the indignation of God; it is manifested through Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God. God’s indignation is expressed against human irreverence and injustice. It is not reflective of the depth of His heart, which is love; instead, it is an expedient manifestation which He assumes in accord with His purpose, through His Son, Who is the Emblem of His assumption (Heb. 1:3). In the depth of His Being, God is love (1 John 4:8); and, love is not incensed, neither is it taking account of evil (1 Cor. 13:5).

Paul asks rhetorically, “Are you indignant [ὁργίζοντας], and not sinning? Do not let the sun be sinking on your vexation, nor yet be giving place to the Adversary” (Eph. 4:26, 27). And, “Let all bitterness and fury and anger [ὁργή] and clamor and calumny be taken away from you, together with all malice, yet become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, dealing graciously among your-

Grace dissipates anger.}

...
erative choice, in one's struggles of self-discipline in the pursuit of righteousness. Consequently, wherever virtue is present, boasting in self is debarred.

PREVAILING DESIRES

The main thing that prevents believers from grasping the true message of Galatians, is their belief in freewill responsibility. The notion of categorical contrary choice, commonly termed “free will,” is the foundation stone of worldly ethics even as of traditional morality. Free will is the ultimate sacred cow. It must be given leave to roam where it will; all who deny its sanctity are either evil, delusional, or both. To most, it is simply unthinkable that it should be a mistaken belief. Here, the church is in hearty accord with the world, and does much to promulgate and sustain this moral ethic, wherever its influence is felt.

A power of categorical contrary choice, however, is a power that no man has, or can have. No one can choose contrary to his own present disposition; not even God, for He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim.2:13).

Whatever we may choose, we choose it because of who we are and the way that we are. That is, “from their fruits you shall be recognizing them” (Matt.7:16a). Each tree is known by its fruit. It is ever true that grapes are not culled from thorns, nor figs from star thistles. Thus every good tree is producing ideal fruit, yet the rotten tree is producing noxious fruit. A good tree cannot bear noxious fruit; neither is a rotten tree producing ideal fruit (Luke 6:43,44; Matt.7:16b,17).

Just as one cannot desire what one does not desire, one cannot choose what one does not find choice, else choice is no longer choice. We enjoy the practical freedom to do what we want, according to our own pleasure, as opposed to being compelled to act, contrary to our own choice. Though we may do as we please, this is not to say that we according to the Way one Is may have whatever pleasure we may wish to have, but only whatever pleasure we do have.

Neither our past or present desires, according to which we choose as we do, are a matter of choice, but rather of nature, or developed state of mind. Desires are not something that one chooses, but something that one possesses. One either has a certain desire or else he does not. And, any certain desire, in relation to some conflicting desire, is either the greater desire of the two or else it is not. In time, one may well cultivate new desires; but if so, it is as a consequence of one's previous desires that one does so.

We may do many things that, considered in themselves, we do not find choice. But whenever we do something that we do not actually choose, per se, this is because of the inextricable connection which exists between what we do and something else, something that we do find choice and actually choose. A nursing mother may subject herself to much that is most wearisome and undesirable in the care of her infant child. But if so, it is because of her strong desire to nourish and care for the child that she does so. Therefore, the fact that we often do things that, considered in themselves, we do not find desirable or choice, has no bearing on the issue of free will.

We act voluntarily; that is, we choose according to our greatest desire, in the moment of decision. This is so, even in the case of choices made in favor of immediate gratification, ones which may preclude our realization of cherished goals. Considered in the abstract, we may well love righteousness more than the pleasures of sin. However, if our greatest desire with respect to our present behavior is to gain the gratification of a certain desire, albeit a certain desire with adverse consequences, we will nevertheless choose to act according to our greatest present desire (cp James 1:14,15). It is because of this fact, that we need a real Saviour, One Who will change our desires. Admin-
istered by the flesh, good advice and useful techniques simply will not suffice (cf Rom.7:12,14b-25).

Over the years, various ones have asked me this same question which you have asked me now in your present letter: “What must I do to be saved?” to which my earnest response has always been thus: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved [cf Acts 16:30,31]. This is the simplest answer I can give you. While there is much more to say here, this much, itself, is true and vital to know. When you want to know more about this question, please ask me further. In the meantime, be careful not to infer anything concerning it, since inferences are not of faith and may be mistaken.”

DECEPTIONS OF LEGALISM

The teaching that affirms, or simply entails it being so, that a man is justified because of his obedience to law, nullifies the truth that justification is in Christ, not in law. This is so whether the law, thus conceived, should be that of circumcision, or of simply “accepting Christ.” The principal error is that of legalism itself, not the particular form of legalism that is presently being championed. It is because of their failure to see this main point that most today do not realize that, in principle, the teachings of salvation which they themselves embrace are just as legalistic and false as those once accepted by the Galatians, in their apostasy from the apostle Paul.

It is not at issue that none are justified apart from faith. The question, rather, is whether one’s acceptance of Christ and faith in His sacrificial death, constitutes the fulfilling of a requirement or lawful obligation. If it does, then we are justified by something that we do, not by what Christ has done.

To say that we are justified by what Christ has done, but on the “condition” of something that we do, does not change the case, in respect to legalism. In such a usage, “condition” is the equivalent of “requirement”; and requirement is the equivalent of rule of law. Legalism disguised, is still legalism.

The usual artful claim is that the sinner’s faith does not justify him, but rather qualifies him for justification in Christ. The word “qualification,” however, like “condition,” speaks of the fulfilling of requirement.

When one fulfills a requirement, he does what is right. And one who does what is right is one who is declared righteous, or justified, in respect of what he has done. Therefore, the claim that in meeting a supposed requirement to believe, the sinner’s faith still does not justify him, is an inconsistent statement. Obviously, if there is a requirement that must be met and one meets that requirement, one is, ipso facto, declared righteous or justified in respect of having met that requirement.

To say that Paul in his teaching of the sinner’s justification through Christ is to be understood as speaking solely of the sinner’s further and primary justification, and that this—once one qualifies oneself for it—is solely through Christ, is truly an artful invention. It is one of the many artful notions in support of autosoterism (i.e., self-salvation) and free will which Luther termed “tropes” (Greek, tropos, a turning).

A trope is “the use of a word or [phrase] in a different sense than that which properly belongs to it, for giving life or emphasis to an idea.” When used pejoratively, a trope refers not to a legitimate, figurative turn of expression, but to an unnatural sense or forced interpretation imposed upon a particular word or phrase, in the interests of the defense or justification of some wider subject.3

It is contrary to a straightforward and unforced reading of the word of the evangel to say, where Paul affirms that we are justified solely through Christ and not by our own works, that while this is so, this may only be understood to be true on the condition of our confession of faith and repentance. How can it be that the sinner is justified solely through Christ and not because of anything of himself, if the ultimate reason for his justification is solely that of his own obedience, and that by means of his own free will?

Besides, Paul nowhere teaches, whether explicitly or by corollary, that we are only justified through Christ on the condition of our confession of faith and repentance. But he explicitly teaches that it is in the grace of God that we are justified through Christ, and that this debars boasting in self in consideration of our possession of the blessing of justification (Rom.3:27). Justification through Christ’s obedience on the condition of our own obedience, is the equivalent of the salesman’s “buy one, get one free,” or “free with every purchase.” The “free” item is not really free at all, but is gained as a reward in consideration of satisfied obligation. It is not a gracious gift, but an incentive to buy. In the case of the usual teaching concerning heaven and hell, it is an incentive to buy on pains of eternal burnings for failure to comply with the demands of the so-called “free gift.” What extreme inventions or tropes to which men are driven in seeking to justify their false claims, contrary to the plain teaching of the evangel itself!

An illustration of what I have in mind here concerning law, flesh, and spirit, is afforded us in the case of those who come under the proclamation of the evangel. However graphic and frightening the preacher’s imagery may be of the wrath to come which will befall all who fail to make their decision for Christ, those to whom Christ remains veiled, cannot even “see” Him; much less can they find Him choice and so choose Him accordingly. Yet, in an instant, should Christ be unveiled by God’s spirit (cf Gal.1:15,16) and the former unbeliever be given eyes with which to see Him according as He is—as the Chosen One of God (Luke 9:35)—and so be graciously granted to be believing in Him accordingly (ep Phil.1:29), the former unbeliever will no longer be an unbeliever.

Such is the nature of the phenomenon termed “fruit of the spirit.” The fruit of the spirit is not only love, joy, peace, kindness, and goodness, but it is also patience, meekness, faithfulness, and self-control, these latter four virtues being especially important to the preservation of the former five. Even so, every one of these virtues, Paul insists, are the fruit of the spirit.

* 

**Question:**

Since we are not justified apart from faith, but rather, are justified by faith (Rom.5:1), how can you say that we are not required to believe?

**Answer:**

It is a mistake to take Paul’s words “justified by faith” (Rom.5:1), as if justification were an acquisition instead of a gracious gift—an attainment which God, in reciprocity, grants to the sinner only in response to his having fulfilled a divine requirement by believing. Nothing could be more false! We are God’s chosen ones (Rom.8:33), not, with respect to our justification, God’s qualifying ones. Justification is granted to us gratuitously and in grace (Rom. 3:24), not reciprocally or as a reward.

Traditional Christian authors write as if the only way that “by” (in “justified by faith”) could possibly be employed is in a transactional sense, as in, “By doing what is required, you will qualify for your reward.” It never seems to dawn
on them that any such sense must be an erroneous sense, for it is contrary to the gratuitous and gracious nature of the evangel.

Besides, the Greek is not some English transactional “by,” but simply ek, meaning “out [of].” Our justification, intermediately speaking (for ultimately our justification is out of God), is sourced in “faith.” But Paul declares not that it is out of our faith but that it is out of the faith of Jesus Christ. It is “through Jesus Christ’s faith” (Rom. 3:22); and, in this relative sense, it is “out [of] the faith of Christ” (Gal.2:16). The saint’s own faith only gains for him a knowledge of the justification which God has already achieved for him through Christ (cf Rom.4:25,5:1; 5:9).

It is not that God requires us to believe. What a terrible error is such a claim! The Scriptures nowhere declare nor entail any such thing. Rather, since we are chosen in grace and justified gratuitously, it becomes evident that all such claims are wholly unscriptural. Instead of requiring us to believe if we would be chosen, God graciously grants a measure of faith to each of His chosen ones (Phil.1:29; Rom. 12:3). Our faith, whether in the grace which first granted it to us, or in its present sustenance, is a blessing in grace (cp 1 Cor.15:10,11). Besides, long before we first believed, according to His grace (Eph. 1:6), God chose us in Christ before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4). He did not, as a Rewarded and only at a much later time, choose us in reciprocity in response to our having accepted Christ.

The entire notion which in fact represents salvation as a transaction, is completely mistaken. Our salvation is not a matter of our “meeting the conditions,” whether we suppose the conditions to be specific deeds of law or simply a spirit of non-resistance which results in faith. Anyone who supposes that, in the last analysis, salvation is granted to us because of something of ourselves, is thoroughly deceived as to the very nature of the evangel.

J.R.C.
GOD’S RIGHTEOUS SALVATION
AND HIS INDIGNATION

God’s evangel of justification, conciliation and glorification through the death of Christ brings God’s power for salvation into our lives, and it reveals God’s righteousness to our hearts. But immediately after this welcome word in Romans 1:16,17, we read of God’s indignation because of human irreverence and unrighteousness (Rom.1:18). This, in itself, is not such a welcome piece of information. Yet Paul connects it clearly with what he wants to say about the evangel and with his zeal in bringing the evangel.

What is said about human activity in Romans 1:16,17 is confined to the matter of believing. The emphasis there is on God, and what is said about God is welcome and glorious. But in Romans 1:18-3:20 a great deal is said about human beings (much to our discredit), and what is said about God throughout this long section of scripture is sometimes disturbing in itself even though it speaks of His power and righteousness and faithfulness.

It is, therefore, quite striking that the three themes, (1) God’s power for salvation, (2) the revelation of God’s righteousness in the evangel, and (3) the revelation of God’s indignation against the irreverence and unrighteousness of human beings, are tightly bound together. There is a certain and significant connection between Romans 1:16,17 and Romans 1:18-3:20. Yet we can misunderstand, and often have misunderstood, the connection. Romans 1:18-3:20 is not good news, nor is it “the dark side of the gospel,” but it is of great consequence to Paul in his enthusiasm for
the evangel, and to all believers in our appreciation of the
evangel. Even more so, it plays an important role in the
revelation of the glory of God. God’s indignation is not
a part of the evangel, but it contributes critically to the
value of the evangel.

THE LITTLE WORD “FOR”

The apostle has already explained that, in feeling an
indebtedness to all kinds of people, he was eager to bring
the evangel (Rom.1:14,15). And he has gone on to explain
this enthusiasm for the evangel:

For not ashamed am I of the evangel,
for it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who
is believing . . .
For in it God’s righteousness is being revealed,
out of faith for faith . . .
For God’s indignation is being revealed from heaven
on all the irreverence and injustice of men . . .

At the beginning of Romans 1:16, the Greek connect-
itive word, gar, rendered “for” in the CV, introduces Paul’s
evidence for his eagerness to bring the evangel. He is not
ashamed of the evangel, that is, he rejoices with pride in
what it has to say.

But this is only to enlarge the expression of his enthu-
siasm. The specific reasons for Paul’s eagerness and lack
of shame are three in number, all of which are introduced
to us by this same little connective, “for,” in verses 16b, 17
and 18. These draw attention to God’s power, righteous-
ness and indignation.

We are especially concerned, in this article, with the
third reason for Paul’s pride in the evangel.

It is well to place this third reason for Paul’s pride in the
evangel at the beginning of a new paragraph. The first two
reasons for Paul’s lack of shame in the message center on

The Need is Established

features of the evangel itself, while this third reason cen-
ters on the dark background which brings out the good-
ness of the evangel. The first two reasons are positive in
every way; this third reason, which Paul develops through
sixty-four verses, makes the glory of the first two stand out
by the dismaying features it discusses.

Nevertheless, as we have noted, the apostle connects
Romans 1:18-3:20 solidly with his enthusiasm for the evan-
gel. He does so by the same connective he used to join his
thoughts in 1:14-17. The connective, “for,” is a coordinat-
ing conjunction. There is a contrast in thought between
Romans 1:16,17 and Romans 1:18-3:20, but the whole of
Romans 1:14-3:20 (and beyond) is coordinated in expos-
ing the evangel as a genuinely and supremely welcome
message from God.

A CRITICAL CONNECTION

The connection between Romans 1:14-17 and Romans
1:18-3:20, therefore, is that the latter establishes the great
need of the evangel in no uncertain terms. In doing so, this
long passage of scripture greatly enhances the goodness of
the evangel, which meets this need and ultimately is real-
ized in the justification of all mankind (Rom.5:15,19).

The need is twofold. In relation to humanity there is
the dire necessity of the righteous salvation God pro-
vides. But more important than this, in relation to God
there is the critical need of the fulfillment of His purpose
for humanity and all creation. This involves the incorpo-
ration of all God’s dealings with humanity—His placings
and choosings and His indignation, His mercy, His grace,
His patience, His forbearance, His judgments and call-
ings—into our considerations of the evangel.

It is imperative that we relate the problem of human
unrighteousness set before us in Romans 1:18-3:20 with
the solution of the faith of Christ, set before us in much
of the remainder of the epistle. Romans 1:18-3:20 is not a sermon exhorting us to do our part in God's work of salvation. It tells us the honest truth. We cannot do anything to make us right before God. It tells us our only hope is in that grace of God which is announced in the evangel of God revealing the righteousness of God in His powerful work of salvation. If Romans 1:18-3:20 is treated apart from the evangel, or is treated as a call for us to get back to the work of reforming ourselves, it comes to speak against the evangel.

GOD'S INDIGNATION BEING REVEALED

From heaven God views the vast race of humanity that He has brought into existence. And viewing them as they are in themselves, He displays His indignation.

Of course He has counseled that humanity would be this way during the present eons; He planned it to be so, and indeed planned for the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus. But that does not mean He is not indignant or that He will not judge. He intended that which He knew would call for the expression of indignation and the execution of a judgment leading to condemnation.

This displeasure of God takes different forms. At present it consists of God giving humanity over to uncleanness, dishonor and disqualification (Rom.1:24-32). At times in the past and still to come in the future God appoints a distinct but limited period of indignation in which He pours out great fury, affliction and distress (Rom.2:5-10).

The indignation of God is righteous. The day of indignation reveals the righteous judgment of God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts (Rom.2:5,6). But it does not reveal God's righteousness in justifying the irreverent or lead to the achievement of God's objective in creating humanity in His image and likeness (Gen.1:27). God's indignation is justified in the short run; it restrains the progress of evil and deals fairly with wicked acts (cf. Rom.3:6). But in the long run, in relation to God's will for humanity, it only seems to add another obstacle that must be overcome. There are many puzzles about God's indignation that can only be solved by the evangel.

It is an essential part of the goodness of the evangel that it shows us God's indignation is not actually an obstacle to the achievement of God's purpose. Rather the evangel shows us that God's indignation is a limited and temporary operation that calls for that achievement and makes its glory known. God's indignation educates, but it does not save. It is a necessary part of the process toward the goal, but it is not the goal and does not achieve the goal. Only the faith of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners, only that which is spoken of by the evangel of God, can finally justify all the steps of the process, both the experience of human unrighteousness and the divine indignation against that unrighteousness.

THE VAST NEED

God's indignation is directed against all the irreverence and injustice of human beings. No wicked act against God or man is excepted. Apart from the obedience of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners (i.e., apart from what is announced in the evangel), not one is righteous, not even one.

But if the evangel speaks of a solution to the problem of human unrighteousness and God's indignation against this unrighteousness, with respect to the believer, does it have anything good to say, anything evangelistic, with respect to the problem of all human irreverence and injustice?

What a mass of failure and offense! The apostle spares no details. In line after line he lists the record of human wickedness and its consequences.

At the head of the list is the failure to acknowledge and appreciate God as He is and has made Himself known to
be. This is expressed by three specific charges: (1) Human beings retain the truth concerning God in unrighteousness. (2) They do not glorify or thank God as God. (3) They change His glory into the likeness of corruptible beings. These are elaborated as follows:

[Human beings] are retaining the truth in injustice, because that is which known of God is apparent among them, for God manifests it to them. For His invisible attributes are descried from the creation of the world, being apprehended by His achievements, besides His imperceptible power and divinity, for them to be defenseless because, knowing God, not as God do they glorify or thank Him, but vain were they made in their reasonings, and darkened is their unintelligent heart. Alleging themselves to be wise they are made stupid, and they change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible human being and flying creatures and quadrupeds and reptiles.

THAT WHICH IS KNOWN OF GOD

The first charge against humanity is that we retain the truth in injustice. The “truth” spoken of here is truth about God. It is “that which is known of God.” To be more specific, Paul tells us he is referring to God’s “invisibles,” which, fortunately for us who may find the term a bit obscure, he further associates with God’s achievements and His imperceptible power. Life and energy, intelligence and emotions, patterns and order, and all the phenomena that science investigates and we all give some thought to, these are all of God and tell us of Him.

We come to know a person best by what that person does. Just to see what someone looks like is seldom much help. So also with God (Who is invisible). In another series of articles I have been focusing on the actions of God as recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis to see what they may say about God and what He is like. A brief review of these considerations might be relevant here:

In the first chapter of Genesis, what God says comes to be so, and this is seen to be good, even very good.

Taking these acts of God, His speaking and His seeing, as definitive of the truth about Him, we must conclude that God is One Who powerfully brings about what He says as an achievement that is good. When we read in subsequent chapters of Genesis and later Scriptures of God saying things that do not immediately become so or do not directly appear as achievements of good, we relate these matters to the definitive divine actions of Genesis 1:1-2:3. We affirm that they eventually will be seen as important contributions to His glorious goal. Similarly, in our lives, we find God bringing experiences and situations which cannot yet be seen as good. And for those familiar with God’s Word, there is continually the experience that much good that God has spoken is not yet so, for God calls that which is not [yet so] as though it were (Rom.4:17). Nevertheless, we hold firmly to the conviction that God is One Who surely and successfully brings about the good of which He speaks.

In holding to this conviction we are retaining the truth about God in righteousness. But this is only because God has given us a measure of faith. Otherwise, human beings retain this truth in unrighteousness.

People may, for instance, deny that God exists. This is unjust. Or they may outwardly recognize God mostly on occasions of great anger or dismay and speak of Him as One Who ought to damn the cause of our anger. As human beings, we know of His power but retain that knowledge unrighteously, distorting it. Or we may be hypocritical
about what we know of God, or contradictory, saying, for example, that He is wholly in charge but has given mankind a libertarian, free will to which He must submit.

These are serious sins of irreverence and unrighteousness. But their very seriousness and prevalence makes the proclamation of God’s work of power for salvation in righteousness such good news. How good that message of salvation is depends on how true and extensive the salvation is. The death of Christ must deal with every human expression of irreverence in holding the truth about God in unrighteousness.

GLORIFYING AND THANKING GOD

In human beings, as we are, irreverent reasonings about God replace the good and healthful activity of glorifying and thanking Him (Rom.1:21). But it is the evangel that gets us back on track. The indignation of God may lead to a measure of outward praise for God’s just judgments, as long as it is someone else who is experiencing it. But it is the evangel that leads to genuinely full reverence where praise and thanksgiving arise freely and unfailingly. This will be so for everyone when they recognize that Jesus, the Saviour, is their Lord (Phil.2:10,11).

Paul is not dealing here with lying and stealing and murder but with irreverent and unrighteous thinking and speaking about God. To be sure, what we think affects how we act and what we do. But Paul is speaking here of the root problem which is centered in our thought processes, for the heart is used figuratively of the mind. At the very bottom of the vast cesspool of human wickedness is the sin, the failure which we exhibit with respect to honoring God.

For one thing, we seem unable to fit the fact of God in with the fact of evil. I am not suggesting that this is avoidable; it is very understandable for descendants of Adam, apart from the gift of faith. Nevertheless, the history of

human thought about suffering and death is filled with unintelligent conclusions about God. Where there is the recognition that God exists there is often a denial that God has the qualities of Deity. It is often reasoned from the fact of evil that God is somehow not fully divine in power and wisdom and love. Of course we can find exceptions (Job was a notable one), but, like Noah, they are only exceptions to the rule (and even then not fully so) because they have found the grace to believe God knows what He is doing and that His way is right. The very message of the evangel, which Noah and Job could know only in the form of types and foreshadowings, verifies that this is so. Evil is not eternal, and it will serve God’s purpose of good.

But that purpose of God is not yet attained in realization. There is still a great amount of irreverent and unjustified reasoning about God around, which calls for divine judgment. Nevertheless, according to the evangel, this irreverence is finally dealt with, not by God’s indignation, but by God’s power for salvation. “For Christ, while we are still infirm, still in accord with the era, for the sake of the irreverent, died” (Rom.5:6).

The evangel explains the whole process of the experience of human irreverence followed by the operation of divine indignation and judgment. Apart from the faith, the obedience, the humiliation and the extraordinary love of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners, there can be no salvation from the irreverence and uselessness being described in Romans 1:18-23. But when the evangel is known and believed, human irreverence and unrighteousness, and God’s indignation against these evils are put in such a happy perspective that we are led toward the true glorifying and thanking of God.

Apart from believing the evangel it is not reasonable, indeed it is hardly possible, to thank God in every situation (1 Thess.5:18) and certainly not to give Him thanks
for everything (Eph. 5:20), as Paul entreats us. Even then, we who believe still may become so overwhelmed by evils
that we fail to remember the message God has given us of
grace and righteousness and certain glory. We fall from the
grace, the joy of God’s welcome word of gratuitous deliver-
ance in Christ Jesus. A corollary of the evangel that Christ
died for us while we are still sinners (Rom. 5:8) is the fact
that whatever God gives us is for our good (Rom. 8:28), and
thus a matter that will ultimately bring Him glory (Rom.

CHANGING THE GLORY OF GOD

It is humiliating to see how we still keep holding onto
this kind of irreverence and unrighteousness even after we
have believed the evangel of our salvation. (I use the pro-
noun “we” in order to include myself, although I should not
presume to speak for every other believer. Yet it is at least
rare for even a believer to be fully delivered from wrong
concepts of God.) If we limit God as to His power or wis-
dom or righteousness or love we make Him less than He
is. We change His glory into the likeness of things we see.
Not only in ability, but in character and motivation, God
is unique and always good. The Creator is greater than His
creation. He is not arbitrary, not absorbed by the present,
not impatient or unfeeling. He is certainly not like rep-
tiles or quadrupeds or flying creatures, and He is not like
human beings, but rather His goal is to bring them into
His image and likeness.

DEFENSELESS

Human beings are defenseless against these charges
listed in Romans 1:18-23. It is only as the believer is, in
Christ, that these charges cannot be made, and even that
is not so as we are in the flesh. True reverence and true
righteousness are presently reckoned to us, in God’s grace.

He Deals with All Sin

This has a powerful and saving effect on us. And we shall
indeed know and glorify God as He truly is.

The fact that we are blessed in Christ with reverence and
righteousness (presently with the earnest of the spirit, and
fully in the eons to come) is exactly the point. The evangel
is God’s power for salvation to everyone who is believing.
In the evangel God’s righteousness is being revealed, out
of the faith of Jesus Christ, for our faith.

For us who are believing, there is this connection between
Romans 1:16,17 and Romans 1:18, that because of the faith
of Jesus Christ, God has saved us righteously from His indig-
nation against all our irreverence and unrighteousness.

Yet having said that, have we seen the whole of the con-
nection between Romans 1:16,17 and Romans 1:18?

No we have not. For Romans 1:18 speaks of every act
of irreverence and unrighteousness of human beings. All
human sin is in view. This is not disposed of by divine
indignation. Furthermore, apart from the evangel, no pro-
vision is made for profit to all concerned from the lessons
learned by judgment. Only the righteousness of God which
is being revealed can meet the problem of every human
sin and result in life’s justifying for all mankind.

IMPASS

The necessity of relating Romans 1:18-3:20 with the
evangel is made more and more evident as we go through
the rest of this portion of Romans. Apart from the evan-
gel what is said, especially in chapter two, is an insolv-
able impasse.

Every time Paul seems to open a way of solution to the
human dilemma, other than the evangel, it is blocked by
the realities of human sin. He speaks of those “who by
endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honor and
incorruption,” and says that they will receive “life eonian”
(Rom. 2:7). He asserts that “the doers of law shall be justi-
The Superabounding Solution

fied” (Rom.2:13), and mentions those of the nations who “by nature may be doing that which the law demands” (2:14), and the Uncircumcision “who, by nature, are discharging the law’s demands” (2:27).

But who are these people who will be justified by their own works? They do not exist! “Not one is just—not even one. Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out God” (Rom.3:10,11). By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God’s sight (Rom.3:20). This is true of Job and Noah and Abraham and Joseph and Daniel. This is true of you and me.

There is only one solution to this impasse. “Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest . . . . through Jesus Christ’s faith” (Rom.3:21,22). Absolute, literal justification is gratuitous as far as the human is concerned, gained for us in God’s grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). It is in God’s righteousness as revealed in the death of His beloved Son for sinners that human unrighteousness is disposed of and replaced by life apart from all sin.

THE VAST SOLUTION

Therefore, all of Romans 1:18-3:20 must be related to the evangel. Paul writes with the evangel in view. The death of Christ for sinners must deal with all the irreverence and unrighteousness of all human beings. We are not being faced with a problem that is larger than the saving righteousness of God can solve. If God’s indignation is on all the irreverence and injustice of human beings, God’s righteousness is also to be related in its saving operation to every sin of every individual. The need is vast, but it is not greater than the solution.

To the powerful and wise and righteous God be all the glory and unceasing thanks.

D.H.H.
Things of Consequence

RIGHTEOUSNESS

MANKIND faces a dead-end in its quest for righteousness. "Not one is just—not even one. Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out God" (Rom.3:10,11). How can God save an unrighteous person?

There is nothing in a human, that is, in his flesh, that is righteous (Rom.7:18-20). We got into this situation because of our inheritance from Adam; we had nothing to do with Adam’s sin or the inheritance of death from him (Rom. 5:12), nor did Adam invent his conduct. Our efforts to effect righteousness are vain. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom.8:20).

Man’s only recourse against sin is to “pass a law.” Each nation has vast libraries full of laws and regulations, yet we are seeing more lawlessness, apparently, than ever. The world has a gigantic demonstration of a nation under a perfect law, and of its ineffectiveness, culminating in the murder of God’s own Son. We are not advocating abolition of law among the nations; without them we would have anarchy. But we are pointing out the failure of law to make mankind righteous. The same is true of the law of Moses, a perfect law, even God’s law given to Israel.

The law cannot provide a human with righteousness (Gal.3:11). It is impossible for the law because of the flesh (Rom.8:3). By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God’s sight, for through law is the recognition of sin (Rom.3:20).
God’s Glorious Goal

So where are we to turn? The act which provides the answer for all was foreknown by God “before the disruption of the world” (1 Peter 1:20). It is a precious fact that the experience of humanity has been in the purpose of God, and in His planning He provided the solution for the dilemma of mankind before they became involved in it! The solution was established when the Son of God was crucified, the greatest sin in the annals of mankind.

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 (Rom.3:21-23).

Humans are unable to establish their own righteousness. God brought about the circumstances which made them that way. He wants to be All in all, to supply all their needs, and most important, to provide their righteousness. The words, “Yet now,” in Romans 3:21, speak of a great turning point. A righteousness of God is manifest through Jesus Christ’s faith, and it is for all, and it is on all who are believing.

Robert B. Killen

GOD’S EONIAN OPERATIONS

To comprehend God’s eonian operations, involving the creation of evil (Isa.45:7), 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 that He has brought about, 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.

A. E. Knoch
“The Kingdom in the ‘Old Testament’”
Vladimir Gelesnoff

“The Kingdom in the ‘Old Testament,’” was among the first publications of the Concordant Publishing Concern. From the San Diego address for Unsearchable Riches magazine included on the original copy of this study, kept in our archives, we conclude that it must have been issued in 1909 or 1910, before the mailing address was changed to Los Angeles.

In introducing the revised edition of this exposition in 1938, upon which this reprint is based, A. E. Knoch stated: “[This writing] was first published many years ago, and has long been out of print. As nothing equal to it seems to have appeared in the meantime, we welcome the opportunity of reissuing it . . . . The careful consideration demanded by the work of revision has once more impressed me with the extraordinary excellence and value of this exposition. The great need for clarity on this elementary theme is evident on all sides, and grows as the apostasy proceeds apace. Hence I take this opportunity of commending it to all who wish to aid their fellow saints to gain an insight into God’s grand purpose through the nation of His choice and their Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Unsearchable Riches, vol.29, p.210).

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BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-FOUR

EDITORIAL

We live in this world and cannot come out of it (1 Cor. 5:10) even though our realm is inherent in the heavens (Phil.3:20). While thus living, the believer sees the wisdom and fittingness of Paul’s advice: “Be observing accurately, then, brethren, how you are walking, not as unwise, but as wise, reclaiming the era” (Eph.5:15; cf Col.4:5).

At the very root of such a pattern of living is the recognition of God in all our experiences and the events of our times. It is set forth in Romans as the ideal for all humanity that they know and recognize God as God and glorify and thank Him (Rom.1:19-21; 28), but they do not do so apart from God’s grace, and they change God’s glory and alter His truth (Rom.1:23,25; cf p.183).

It is God’s great goal that all mankind will recognize Him as God and glorify and thank Him for all things. With joyous conviction and sincerity we will all praise Him in terms such as Paul uses in Romans 11:33-36. For indeed all is out of God and through Him and for Him (cf p.171).

In the meantime it is God’s grace to us that we can have this transcendent view of His will and intention. The evangel of God’s grace and peace which we are believing not only fills our present lives with expectation and thanksgiving in relation to our calling, but it also creates in us a better perspective of the present course of the world as God works out His purpose. Along with our focus on God’s revelations for us given through the apostle Paul, we are much interested in what the Scriptures as a whole have to say about the future of the nations and Israel and changes that will occur in the arrangement of things on this earth. In fact, we are given a broader outlook of God’s
The Believer's Outlook

plans through Paul's writings which center so consistently on the cross of Christ and His resurrection and exaltation. Thus we are learning to look at current events in view of the truth of the evangel and the verity of God as the God of all goodness and glory.

The articles by Brother A. E. Knoch in this issue of Unsearchable Riches concerning Babylon seem particularly timely. Many readers will feel, as I do, that his studies from Daniel and Revelation, written as early as 1916 and continuing into the 1950's are astoundingly fresh and meaningful today. But our perspective on these matters is shaped by our appreciation of the evangel and God's purposed delight to reconcile all to Himself.

Hence we see events in the Middle East as possible preparations for developments described in Scripture concerning Israel and the nations. But we also see these prophecies as dealing with temporary steps in God's overall purpose to head up all in the Christ. We understand that, in the present era, God is holding back the full execution of these events (2 Thess.2:6). But we also are given peace in knowing that, when they come, they will occur swiftly (Rev.1:1). They exhibit human failure. But the evangel which has been given to us speaks of God's triumph of righteousness, life and peace which will embrace all His creation.

Consequently, we rejoice with reliance on the righteous and living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind as we continue to watch His hand at work in these present, eventful days.

D.H.H.

1. The first article appeared originally in Unsearchable Riches, volume 48, beginning on page 65; the second is combined from studies in volumes 8 (p.223) and 18 (p.361). Both are edited for present use, but these and other studies about Babylon, as originally written, are still available in bound volumes of our magazine. (An index to volumes 1-90 is also available from our office.)
THE DISINTEGRATION OF LANGUAGE AT BABEL

11 +Now the entire earth +continued to have one language and the same words for all of them. 2 + It came to pass +when they journeyed+ from the east, +that they found a valley in the land of Shinar, and they dwell there. 3 + They +said, each man to his associate: Grant attention! Let us mold bricks, and let us burn them +with a burning process. +So the brick +served +as stone for them, and asphalt +served +as mortar for them. 4 +Then they +said: Grant attention! Let us build +ourselves a city, and a tower +with its top in the heavens. + Let us +make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over the surface of the entire earth.

5 +Then Yahweh +descended to see +the city and +the tower +that the sons of humanity had built. 6 + Yahweh +said: Behold, they are a single people +with the same language for all of them; and this is what they start +to do. + Now anything +they +plan to do will not be restricted +for them. 7 +Grant attention! let us descend and let us disintegrate their language there, so +that each man may not hearken to the language of his associate.

8 +Then Yahweh +scattered +them from there over the surface of the entire earth, and they +left off +building +the city +and the tower+. 9 Therefore one called its name Babel, +because there Yahweh disintegrated the language of the entire earth, and Yahweh scattered them from there over the surface of the entire earth.
IN GOD'S GRAND PURPOSE to reveal Himself, He needs contrasts. In the eon before the flood, He parted mankind into only two divisions, the line of Cain and the line of Seth. After the deluge, in the present eon, He uses many divisions. First, there were three, based on Noah's sons. But these were not enough to engender the confusion and strife which His plans demand. The strongest tie holding mankind together was the use of the same language. They could all communicate with one another, and probably employed the natural language with which, like the lower animals, mankind had been endowed at creation, as we find it recorded in the inspired oracles. Many attempts have been made to return to this ideal condition, in the hope that it would diminish strife among the peoples. But they do not succeed, because this is contrary to the divine counsels for this eon.

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

What language did Adam and the antediluvian use? All living souls seem to have some means of communicating with one another, and the higher ones use sound to some extent. Adam was the head and highest of them all. There was no one to teach him a human tongue. Yet he was endowed with the organs of speech and hearing. He did not use English when he said: “The sound-of-Thee I-hear” (Gen.3:10). Probably he made sounds like the Hebrew Anthropos or “human body,” for there is no reason to suppose that he used any other language when he wrote his annals. So we are quite sure that he was endowed with an ideal, natural language, and understood that of the animals (Gen.3.1,2). The latter can be learned by us to a limited extent, and so can Hebrew, although it has come to us only with an impure “lip,” or pronunciation, and will be purified in later generations.

Early Human Migrations

We do not read of any change in this language during the eon before the deluge. Indeed, until Babel, the entire earth was of one lip, one speech (Gen.11:1). This is ideal, and it is possible that, in the new earth, when all is restored, this same language will again prevail. It is a terrestrial language, suited to the earth, so it may not be used by us among the celestials, but it may be necessary for us to speak it in our contacts with terrestrial souls. As divine revelation has come to us in two distinct forms of speech, we may suppose that both Hebrew and Greek will be used in that eon, without the need of translations.

FROM THE EAST

The first migration of mankind was “from the east” to the west. Mount Ararat was considered to be east. Indeed, so it is, from the divine center of operations, which is the land of promise. This is the center of the surrounding continents, Eurasia and Africa. But they do not seem to have gone very far west at first, for they wished to establish the center at Babel, in the land of Shinar. In fact, Mount Ararat is almost due north of Shinar, and near the sources of the two rivers which bound that land. Their movement was down, for, in traversing the high country which lies between, they probably followed the course of the Euphrates, which flows almost due west at first, then east, and could not do otherwise than descend.

Lower down their journey westward was stopped by the desert between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. I crossed it by automobile, and found only one place, Rutha Wells (Ar-Ruthab), where there was any amount of water. Even though it took only a day and a night to go clear to Baghdad, on the Tigris, it was so trying that I did not want to return that way, but found no other route except along the upper course of the Euphrates, to come into Palestine from the north. But there was no transportation at that
time. So it was of old. The westward march of mankind was stopped by the hardships of the desert and the allure of the Mesopotamian plain. Here was level land with a stream of water on both sides, the most favorable conditions for luxurious living. It is possible that most of them migrated to the east, for there we find the densest centers of population today.

THE LAND OF SHINAR
The name Shinar has two stems which may denote Double-city. Hitherto we do not read of any city after the deluge, so Babel probably was the first. If it was built on both sides of the Euphrates, as it was in later times, under Nebuchadnezzar, then the idea of double was well warranted. Indeed, they did not want a land, but a city, yet they needed land to feed the people. It may be translated the land of, or belonging to Double-city. What a contrast to Jerusalem (Tenancy-of-Well-Being)! It needs no tower to reach the heavens, and no stream to furnish it with water. Babel is low; Jerusalem is high, and its liquid refreshment comes from the heavens above. Shinar was the most fertile, well watered land they had come to in their migration from the ark. It seemed useless to search further, although they had been expressly told to roam in the earth (Gen.9:7).

PLANNING, HUMAN AND DIVINE
Yahweh has marvelous plans for the blessing of humanity, and for His own glory. Men, however, are concerned about their own name and ambitious designs. His charge to them had been very plain: “Fill the earth and subdue it” (9:1). Instead of doing this, they propose to settle in one spot. Then they followed the lead of Cain, in the previous eon, who built a city instead of becoming a rover and wanderer in the earth (Gen.4:12-17). So now they not only build a city, but a tower (a “great”, in Hebrew), in order to elevate themselves rather than God. To this day such a motive is deemed laudable, and has a large place even in the service of the Subjector.

The exclamation, Grant attention! (Gen.11:7) stands for the Hebrew word meaning GRANT (cf Zech.11:12). The AV “go to,” means nothing to us today. They are seeking each other’s support in a very popular measure. This seems to have occurred before Nimrod established several cities in the land of Shinar, so there was no central power or leading spirit, but only spontaneous, common consent. They all wanted to share in their mutual magnification. They would build a big city and live together, and erect a permanent memorial of their greatness by means of a high tower, which all of them could see from their residences. This would keep them together. By cooperation they could get along without God. This was the first cooperative. All creation is for God’s glory, but they seek to make a name for themselves. But it came no nearer to His, than their tower reached into the heavens.

THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES
In those days houses were mostly built of clay. Such buildings were surprisingly comfortable and permanent. They were much used in the early settlement of the southwestern portion of the United States which has a climate similar to Shinar. They probably used this for their homes, but it would not support a high tower. This should be built of stone. But there is none in Shinar. So they made imitations by burning the bricks and using asphalt for mortar. Hence they built a tower, and made a name for themselves, lest they be scattered over the surface of the entire earth and thus fulfill the will of the Subjector. But He did not allow them to have their way, as He did Cain. If He had used compulsion, it would probably not have been perma-
ment, and His plans required a prolonged cause of division. So He simply confused their “lip,” as the Hebrew has it, so that they could not understand one another. This has continued to the present, and is still the cause of much misunderstanding and strife.

THE MEANING OF BABEL
The name Babel (B-bl) is composed of two Hebrew stems, the common connective B, which means IN, and bl which means DISINTEGRATE, or, idiomatically, confuse. This main stem bl is used in several words which may help us to see its significance, such as decay, carcass, deluge, fail. These suggest that the languages were not only different from the original one which had been spoken by all heretofore, but are decadent, changing for the worse. So are most of earth’s languages to this day. Not only do they differ from one another, but each one is deteriorating with time. The original language, Hebrew, was not so. Even if, at present, it is so fearfully spoiled, outside of the Scriptures, it will be restored in the future (Zeph.3:9).

The stem bl, DISINTEGRATE, denotes more than merely different languages. Each of these, like the mortals who speak them, are dying, and some of them are dead. In most countries we can see the process going on. They deteriorate into dialects. English is so pronounced in some regions that most of my readers might not be able to understand it. So in Germany. In France they have the patois pa tva in the provinces. So it is in the Orient also. The dying race speaks different and decaying dialects.

TRANSLATION
The lack of a pure natural language is a very serious hindrance today, especially in making translations of the Scriptures, and in international diplomacy. Such words as “democracy” have very different significations in the East
classical and modern Greek, and even between ancient Hebrew and the way it is spoken and written today. American slang is evolution in reverse.

The very name, Babylon, is a sample of this confusion. In the pure lip, used before this time, the name was Bbl, and it remains so throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. But in the Greek, one of the other early languages, they have altered the involuntary vowel between b and l to u, and have added -on. Moreover, though we are distinctly told that its name is called B-bl, because there Yahweh disintegrates (bl) the lip of the entire earth (Gen.11:9), nevertheless in the Encyclopedia Britannica we read that Babylon is “the Greek form of Babel or Bab-ili, ‘the gate of God’”! This is found in the German Meyer’s Conversations-Lexikon also. Moreover, Davidson’s English translation of Fuerst’s Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, by many considered the most scholarly and weighty (over five pounds!) of them all, says “it is not impossible that the name was originally formed from bb bl court (gate) of Bel, or from br-bl bir Belus-town, or the like.” (!) Just a lot of babble!

INSPIRED HEBREW

But this is only a very simple example of what the scholars do with the whole Hebrew vocabulary, so that they force the confusion into God’s inspired revelation. Not only this name, but most Hebrew words they seek to trace back to the languages which were the result of the confusion introduced at Babel! Unless a name is Hebrew, and so a part of divine revelation, its significance is not important. If it is Hebrew and especially where the context expresses its force, then we should not seek elsewhere for its meaning.

But why and how was Hebrew preserved? In order to reveal Himself to the inhabitants of the earth, it is absolutely essential that God employ a natural, unalterable, terrestrial language. He gave an appropriate medium of

expression to all the animals at creation, which they have retained to this day. They have obeyed His primeval law to fill the earth, so they still retain the tongue imparted to them at their creation. Only humanity refused to obey His eonian mandate, and it has suffered for it ever since, as we do today. But, during this wicked eon, God still speaks to mankind, so He selected and segregated the line of Shem-Abraham-Israel, and revealed Himself to them by means of the records written before the deluge, and continued to use the same language in further revelations. These were in the tongue inherent in Adam at his creation. He could also speak and understand the languages of the animals, which have not changed.

Hebrew (obr-i) denotes pass-ite. As a descriptive term it is first used of Abram (Gen.14:13). It cannot refer to the descendants of Eber (Gen.10:24) for that would include Joktanites and others. It is used only of Israelites in contrast to others. Later is was used for the language, as in Luke (23:38), John (5:2; 19:13, 17, 20), Acts (21:40; 22:2, 26:14), and the Unveiling (Rev.9:11; 16:16). It was used of those who were true to the traditions and the language, in contrast to Hellenists, who no longer used Hebrew in common conversation. It was not used in later revelation or in reaching the Uncircumcision while Israel is stubborn and cut out of the olive tree, and time stands still, so the name Yahweh (Ieue) cannot be used in them, for it is an earthly language, and not adapted to a celestial revelation. To prepare for this the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek. When Israel no longer was true to Yahweh, their Elohim, He no longer spoke to them in Hebrew, as Isaiah had foretold (Isa.28:11), but in a tongue adjusted to it by the Septuagint, and to the celestial revelations which have come through the Anointed, Who came from above and Who will reveal the Father to the whole universe.

Even Hebrew has sadly disintegrated. When Judah was
deported they passed back to Babel from Yahweh and His land, they took up the language spoken by the descendants of Shem who had not passed on to the promised land, and used what is later called the “vernacular” dialektos in the Greek Scriptures. But when the Jews later did much worse than this, by rejecting their Messiah, and were deported among the nations, then they corrupted the pronunciation so fearfully that they could not even converse with one another when they met. They tried to remedy this by adding the points, but these only preserved and perpetuated their fearful fallacies. There were two clashing schools, one at Tiberias and one at Babylon, the latter working on the spot where the, confusion first began. But they introduced it into the one language which had escaped before. So Hebrew today needs to be purified, and rid of all the false ideas and additions and pronunciation derived from the nations where they are deported.

MAKING A NAME

God, the Subjector, Who Will-be-ing-was, is making a name for Himself by means of His creation and His creatures, especially mankind on the earth. The heavenly hosts are learning of His might and majesty, His wisdom and His love, by His dealings with the sons of Adam. Now when they oppose His plans and seek to make a name for themselves, and to live together in one place, He could have once more drowned them as He had done, and so put an end to their self-adulation. But He had promised not to repeat that adjudication. His further plans called for mortals scattered over the entire earth, at enmity with one another, to form a foil for the future kingdom of His Christ. We are all witnesses of the success of His plan. But when men manage to rebuild Babylon and unite mankind under a single ruler, then He will use the terrible judgments of the Apocalypse to put a full end to their opposition.

The End of Babylon

BABEL’S LATER HISTORY

Peter, the principal apostle of the kingdom, should have occupied his throne in Jerusalem and ruled one of the tribes of Israel (Matt.19:28). But where do we find him? In Babylon! And there, instead of living for the eon and reigning, he became decrepit and was executed against his will (1 Peter 5:13).

Such is also the fate of the erstwhile “Hebrews”! In the language of symbols, which was not affected at Babel, it indicates that Israel, the nation through whom Yahweh will rule the nations is in confusion, especially as to the kingdom ecclesia, of which Peter was the foundation. This is signified also by its present plight. It has become a nation in the land once more, but it lacks the great King-Priest Who alone can establish them in the land in accord with the promises.

True Israel is figuratively called the wife of Yahweh, but the false nation, the rejectors of their Messiah, after the present secret administration, when the body of Christ has been called to Him in the air, it will be figured by the false woman brought before us in His unveiling (Rev.17:1). This woman, Babylon the Great, in the time of the end, before the advent of their Messiah, will have a kingdom over the kingdoms of the earth, a false imitation of the Messiah’s millennial reign. It will be headed by Hebrews (Passers), but in the opposite direction from that taken by Abram. They will be taken from the land back to Babylon. It will be a financial sovereignty, so they return to Babylon in an ephah, a commercial measure, borne on the wings of a stork (Zech.5:5-10). This is still future, but is partly fulfilled, for the Jews are back in the land of promise, from which they will fly back to Babylon, and set up a kingdom by their own strength, a financial might, before Christ comes, which will be doomed to utter destruction.

A. E. Knoch
BABYLON IN THE SCRIPTURES

The first kingdom among men was begun at Babel, in the land of Shinar, by Nimrod (Gen.10:9,10). The descendants of Noah congregated in this area after the flood. Here they built a city and a tower, with its head in the heavens, and made themselves a name in case they should disperse to other lands. Here we have the germ of all future world empires (Gen.11:1-4). Its essence is the concentration and exaltation and perpetuation of human power and achievement. God’s name and glory must be banished to give place to human self-adulation.

The early supremacy of Babylon does not seem to have lasted more than a few hundred years, for in Abraham’s day Anarachel, king of Shinar, is a subordinate to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam (Gen.14:1-5). From that time until Babylon reappears in the sacred records the Cushite character of the kingdom seems to have been completely banished by the inroads of the Arabians and Assyrians. The rise of Assyria between the land of promise and the plain of Shinar kept them from contact with each other, so that the sacred historians give us no account of Babylon in this interval.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S BABYLON

When, however, the God of heaven determines to punish the nation He has chosen for Himself, and to turn over the world empire which He purposes for them into the hands of the other nations while they are apostate, He chooses the king of Babylon as the first great head of world dominion (cf Jer.27:6; Dan.2:37,38). Thus, in Nebuchadnezzar, Bab-

The Seat of World Empire

ylon, the first of the kingdoms in order of time, becomes once more the first in rank. Not since its earlier days had there been a ruler whose sway extended over the whole earth, for Babylon, and Babylon alone, is the seat of world empire, under the nations.

It is remarkable to find how exactly the ancient inscriptions tally with the Scriptures in their account of this kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar’s boast, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built?” (Dan.4:30) is fully borne out by the immense preponderance of his bricks over all the other kings on the site of Babylon. He was the great builder, or founder or restorer of almost all the temples and public buildings in the country. His dominion extended over the whole known earth.

How much more trustworthy God’s history is than the works of secular historians and their modern followers is well illustrated by the account of the fall of Babylon as recorded by the prophet Daniel (5:30,31). Were it not for the discovery of a small fragment of stone on which we are informed that “Nabu-nahed, king of Babylon,” in his later years reigned conjointly with his eldest son, Bil-shar-uzar, we would still be gravely informed by modern “scholars” that Daniel cannot be taken as authentic, that it teems with “historical inaccuracies” and contradicts “trustworthy profane writers.” If modern destructive criticism ever received a rebuke, it was when that fragment of clay fell upon its blasphemous words against the God of Daniel. The account of Babylon’s fall was found to be far more accurate than they knew how to be, for Belshazzar offers Daniel, not the second place in the kingdom (which he assuredly would have done if he had occupied the first) but he says that whoever should read the writing...should be...the third ruler in the kingdom” (Dan.5:7). Nabonidus, his father, though not a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar himself, had probably married into his family so that Belshazzar looked upon
Nebuchadnezzar as his “father” (Dan.5:13). Nabonidus was probably in Arabia, away from Babylon, and probably lived some time longer, but Belshazzar was slain the night the city was taken, and the capital of the kingdom fell into the hands of Darius the Mede. Then Daniel, instead of being slain, as the third ruler in the Chaldean kingdom, is exalted to the second place in the conquered realm.

WORLD DOMINION

The image of world dominion seen by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan.2:31-35) and the vision of the ram and the he-goat (Dan.8:20-22) assure us that the Babylonian supremacy was succeeded by the Medo-Persian, and this by Javan, or the Grecian. Darius conquered Babylon and thus made himself master of the world. Alexander, in his turn, bore rule over all the earth by making Babylon his capital.

It is thus probable that each of the sons of Noah has had the helm of human government. The descendants of Ham first founded the kingdom. The Babylonians and Medo-Persians probably sprang from Shem. The Grecian, as Javan their Hebrew name indicates, came from Japheth (Gen.10:2). As each, in turn, enters Babylon in triumph and the banner of earth’s sovereignty is unfurled, so it will be in the coming conquest of the world. A city will have a “kingdom over the kings of the earth” (Rev.17:18), and the city is no other than Babylon, once more the Mistress of Kingdoms.

BABYLON NOT YET DESTROYED

Before enlarging upon the future dominion of Babylon it will be well to pause and consider the oft-repeated objection that Babylon has already been destroyed “like God’s overturning of Sodom and Gomorrah” never more to be inhabited nor dwelt in from generation to generation, and that the Arabian shall never again pitch his tent there, nor shepherds recline their flock there (Isa.13:20). It would be well for each one to turn to the Load of Babylon as detailed by Isaiah in his thirteenth chapter, and the humiliation of the city described in his forty-seventh chapter, as well as the judgments Yahweh pronounced upon Babylon through Jeremiah in his fiftieth and fifty-first chapters and note especially the suddenness of Babylon’s destruction and desolation. It is a matter of history that, until recent years the city gradually fell into decay so that only a portion has been continuously inhabited. It certainly was a city in the days of the apostles, for Peter sent his first epistle from Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). A half century later the Babylonian Talmud originated from the colony of Jews which still inhabited the place. Indeed, it has always been inhabited.1

From these few facts it is clear that the prophecies concerning it have not yet been fulfilled. Indeed its destruction is in the Day of Yahweh (Isa.13:6), when there are signs in the heavens (Isa.13:10; Matt.24:29; Rev.6:12,13). It has been tabernacled through all the years “for generation after generation,” the Arab does tent within the boundaries of the ancient city, and the shepherds have continued to recline their flocks there. Does this look as though the prophecy has been fulfilled? By no means. There is not a single item in these definite predictions which will fit the city at any time so far in her history.

No desolation has come upon Babylon suddenly (Isa. 47:11), but her decadence has been gradual hitherto, while her rejuvenation promises to be a speedy one.

YAHWEH’S WORD TO JEREMIAH

The word which Yahweh spoke to Jeremiah is that “In

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1. Its present successor, the city of al-Hillah, Iraq, has a population of more than a half million souls.
those days and at that era, averring is Yahweh, the sons of Israel shall come . . . and seek Yahweh their Elohim” (Jer. 50:4). Babylon’s doom and Israel’s restoration are to occur together. If one is future, so is the other (Jer.50:1-5). Jeremiah confirms Isaiah’s words that “she shall not be indwelt again permanently nor be tabernacled in for generation after generation” (Jer.50:39). He assures us that “the designs of Yahweh” against Babylon, are “to make the land of Babylon a desolation without a dweller” (Jer.51:29). In view of all these solemn words it is ours to bow before them and acknowledge that they have never yet found fulfillment but will find it in the day of Yahweh, even as it is described to us in the book of Revelation. Jeremiah tells Seraiah to tie a stone to the scroll which contained the evils which should come upon Babylon, and to fling it into the midst of the Euphrates. Thus will Babylon sink and not rise from the evil which shall destroy her (Jer.51:60-65). But now, she is rising from the dust, and no city in the world has such prospects of regaining its former greatness. If God be true, then Babylon must be rebuilt. Until recent years such an idea was likely to rouse ridicule, but now it is rapidly becoming a matter of course.

The Euphrates and Tigris valleys once supported a dense population and can easily do so again. By means of irrigation the desert may be made to blossom as the rose. The work of restoration is comparatively simple. The ancient canals, by which the water was distributed over the land, are in ruins but the levels still exist, making it an easy task to restore them. The intensely fertile soil and the tropical heat of summer combined with the life-giving stream of water will transform the barren waste into a veritable garden. And, indeed, a part of this land was once the garden of Eden itself.

It is a notable fact that great commercial cities are not usually built near the open sea, but at some protected point at a distance from the ocean, accessible by means of a river or inlet. London is on the Thames. New York harbor is surrounded by land, and is approached through a narrow sound. Hamburg is far from the shore line. Antwerp is many miles up the Scheldt. These examples make it evident that the greatest maritime cities prefer sheltered inland waterways to nearness to the open sea.

So will it be with Babylon. The Euphrates will once more be made navigable for ocean going craft. That this will be the case seems certain from the description of her doom found in Revelation:

“And every navigator, and every one who is sailing at the place, and mariners, and whoever are working on the sea, stand afar off, and, observing the smoke of her conflagration, they cried, saying, ‘Is there any like this great city?’ And they cast soil on their heads, and cried, lamenting and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, by which all who have ships on the sea are rich as a result of its preciousness, for in one hour it was desolated!’” (Rev.18:17-19).

Those whose hearts are stirred within them at the sound of His approaching footfalls will do well to mark the progress of events as they cluster around two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon.

BABYLON IN THE BOOK OF THE UNVEILING

Under the seventh bowl of Revelation sixteen Babylon the great is brought to remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His furious indignation (Rev. 16:19). The very wording of this sentence is cryptic. Babylon is a city, yet is presented under the figure of a woman (Rev.17:3-6). This suggests that there is something not seen on the surface which is so utterly detestable to God that He singles out this city for the supreme display of His fury. All of the cities of the nations fall, but one of them is reserved for a special doom. “The great city,” Jerusalem,
is spared, though trisected, but Babylon is so offensive to Yahweh that it is finally sunk out of sight.

This is not the first time that Babylon’s doom has come before us in this book. In the corresponding part of the previous temple section, immediately after the esonian evangel has been proclaimed, a second messenger declares, “It falls! It falls!—Babylon the great has made all nations drunk with the wine of the fury of her prostitution!” (Rev. 14:8). If Yahweh is to fulfill His covenant with faithful Israel, He must rid the earth of the demoralizing influence of this great city. If He vindicates His broken law, He must hurl it into oblivion.

We hardly need to press the importance of the part Babylon plays in the divine drama of the end time. More than two long chapters of Revelation are given to the elaboration of her career. About one-ninth of the whole book is devoted to a description of her doom. There must be a secret of great moment associated with the city, which the saints of that day should understand, that they may be saved from her sins, and from her destruction. It is only as we, in spirit, transport ourselves into that era that we have a clear conception of her crimes and will be able to discern, in the world movements of today, the dim outline of the scarlet woman, already possessed of much of the wealth and power which will drag her down to perdition.

CONFUSING INTERPRETATIONS

A summary of the babel of interpretations which have made the utmost confusion out of this section of Revelation would convince us of only one fact, that the expositors of Christendom have utterly missed the meaning of these unfoldings. With a few notable exceptions, all insist on interpreting the literal explanation, and insist that Babylon is symbolic of Rome or some other city or system. As a consequence the secret of the city is unknown. Hence we

Literal Babylon is in View

insist on certain fundamental principles of interpretation which will bring harmony out of the confusion, and initiate us into one of the most subtle and surprising secrets in all the realm of revelation.

If we had the trumpet of one of the messengers of this Revelation, and could reach the ears of all of its expositors, we would shout with a voice of thunder, “Do not explain God’s explanations!” There is no wrong in considering, comparing, or discussing them. But do not change them. When He says that the seven lampstands are seven ecclesiasties (Rev. 1:20) insist that they are actual called-out companies, not an epoch in the history of Christendom. When a place is “spiritually” called Sodom and Egypt (Rev. 11:8), on the other hand, insist that these places are not meant (for only one could be), but are figures for Jerusalem. But Babylon is not figuratively so called. It is not explained. It is the explanation.

The divine exposition is that the woman is a city (17:18). It is not a literal woman. It is a literal city. The people comprising the city are figured by a dissolute female. But they live in a real, not an ideal metropolis. The city is not in Egypt or Italy, England or the United States. It is on the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the Euphrates. Nothing could be more striking than to find this city, the first capital among the nations to rule the world at the beginning of the “times of the gentiles,” once more exalted to a supremacy over the kingdoms of the earth. It is the Babylon restored by Nebuchadnezzar, the conqueror of Israel, the place of their captivity in the long ago, which will emerge once more to resume a headship over the nations.

BABYLON IS NOT ROME

It is a striking fact that Babylon is the only city, which has even had universal sovereignty in the past. It was not only the capital of the Babylonian empire, the head of
gold of Nebuchadnezzar's image, but also of the succeeding empires. Alexander made it the seat of his government. These kingdoms practically ruled the known world. In contrast to them, the Roman empire had definite limits, in the north and in the east, which it was unable to pass. Rome never was able to subjugate parts of Europe. Under Trajan there was a brief possession of Assyria, but it never formed an integral part of Roman territory. Babylon was always beyond or at the very bounds of the empire. It never was its capital.

As much of the confusion among students of prophecy arises from the injection of Rome into the prophetic outlook, we feel it our duty to graciously urge them to reconsider their position. The deductions they themselves make should show the fallacy of this teaching. For years many have been looking for a revival of the Roman empire, for it is clear that the iron kingdom and the wild beast are present at the end time. But such a restoration would be far from sufficient. Rome's territory was but a small fraction of the earth's surface. The kingdom of the wild beast will include all the earth.

If we must reason, let us deduce our conclusions from acknowledged facts. We know that the iron kingdom of Daniel two appears at the close of the eras of the nations and that it includes all peoples on the face of the earth. Reviewing universal history, we will find many great empires, some of which attempted to establish a worldwide rule. Napoleon conquered territory which Rome could not subjugate. Great Britain more recently comprised far more territory than Rome could ever claim. Russia covered a vastly greater area. The difficulty with all of these is that they are not universal, hence are not the subjects of Daniel's prophecy. Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece were invincible. Their boundaries were never defined. Their authority was undisputed. Rome was surrounded by enemies that defied them. They built a wall across England to keep out the northern invaders.

The imperial Roman edict which ordered the entire inhabited earth to be registered (Luke 2:1) was one of those grandiloquent gestures which characterizes the arrogance of Rome. Caesar Augustus could easily vanquish the world on paper, but his legions could not conquer Ireland or Scotland or Germany or Syria or the Scandinavian or Russian territories. We may be assured that no one in these regions was enrolled. Contrary to this, we are certain that the iron kingdom of the end time includes all nations, all peoples.

The study of prophecy is continually discredited by those who follow false beacons. The prophetic waste basket is overflowing with discarded dates, and its calendar is full of days that will be thrown away. The revival of the Roman empire is another of these distracting diversions. It not only confuses, but makes it impossible to get a clear view of the prophetic outlook.

THE FUTURE BABYLON

Instead of reasoning that the kingdom of the future will be limited to the territory of the past, we should accept the divine declaration of its worldwide extent, and deduce from this that Rome was not the world empire foretold by Daniel. Then we are free to examine the prophecies afresh, with the result that they unroll before us with a seven-fold scope and magnificence. It is not a local Mediterranean conflict they present, but a tragedy embracing the east and the west, the Orient as well as the Occident, the heathen countries as well as Christendom.

Another disturbing fallacy is the assumption that the wild beasts of Daniel seven are the divine counterparts of the various divisions of the great image. The parts of the image are successive. They follow one another on the stage.
of history. The wild beasts are contemporaneous. They are all present at the end time. It is true that in Daniel, as in
Revelation, the beasts give us the religious aspect, while the image emphasizes the political history of the gentile
supremacy. But it does not follow that the two visions deal with the same empires or the same time. Indeed,
at the time Daniel received the vision of the wild beasts, Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, had passed into history.

**THE SECRET OF BABYLON**

There is something very remarkable and astounding in the secret of great Babylon and the wild beast. John cer-
tainly did not "admire" it. He marveled at it (Rev. 17:6). It seemed unbelievable. This, we submit, is the touchstone
which will test our understanding of this secret. Do we also feel dazed at it? Can we join with John in wide eyed
wonder at the possibility of such a thing? If we find our-

selfs in sympathy with his mood we are probably in pos-
session of the truth.

In the previous section of Revelation we have the same
characters, a wild beast and a woman. Throughout, how-
ever, there is the utmost enmity between the two. The
woman is Israel, the faithful remnant. She is the victim
of the world's religious powers, combined under the figure
of the wild beast. The federated faiths of the world, Christ-
ian, Buddhist, Brahman, and Mohammedan, merged in
one Godless, Christless, lifeless cult, to worship the human
head of the world empire, try to exterminate the handful of
Jews who remain faithful to the God of their fathers. John
does not marvel at this. In a lesser degree he had experi-
enced the hatred of the world himself.

But what is this? Here is a woman and the wild beast
again. But there is no enmity. They are on the best of
terms. In fact, the wild beast supports, instead of perse-
cutes her! Can it be that Israel—even apostate Israel—will

**Faithless Israel Involved**

be in league with the enemies of Yahweh? Will she be the
recipients of their favors? And, while thus allied with the
powers of evil, she is not smitten by the wrath of God, but
actually seems to enjoy the very favors which she should
forfeit. Instead of losing the right to rule the nations, she
seems to have put them into subjection and under tribute
without the help of Yahweh!

This is what astonished John. This is the secret of Bab-
ylon and the wild beast. It lies in the relation of the apos-
tate people to the godless religion of the end time. Instead
of suffering like the saints, these supreme sinners seem
to receive every token of divine approval. Without wait-
ing for the return of Messiah, they rule a rebellious earth.
The treasures of the nations are theirs without the inter-
vention of Yahweh. They have taken their own destiny
in hand, and have succeeded in gaining supreme control
of the earth. They have established a super-government
which dictates the policies of all cabinets and demands
tribute from all treasuries.

**THE UNFAITHFUL WOMAN**

The very name given to this woman should be suffi-
cient to identify her. Only those in covenant relationship
with God can be guilty of a breach such as is charged to
her. No one who enters into relationship with God in this
day of grace can possibly come under this condemnation.
We are not under a covenant. Apostate Christendom is
already accounted for. It is a part of the wild beast. God
entered into covenant with Israel in the flesh, but with no
other people. We have just seen how He remembers His
covenant. Now we are to see how He deals with the cov-
enant breakers, who are presented to us under the figure
of a woman who is not true to her marriage vows. Babylon
must have been married to Yahweh, otherwise she could
not be judged for faithlessness.
A Travesty of Messiah’s Kingdom

The evidence of her perfidy abound, and may best be appreciated by contrast with the faithful woman of the preceding section, who is presented in the midst of pain and persecution, depending upon divine intervention for succor and sustenance, hated and hounded by the dragon, the wild beasts and the nations. The purple woman is the antithesis of all this. She is riding the wild beast. She has every appearance of worldly wealth and regal opulence. Purple and scarlet, gold and gems and pearls are the sure signs of her royal magnificence. She consorts with kings. What higher place could be given to her on earth? Her picture could be painted in no brighter colors.

The full significance of the purple robe upon the scarlet beast may not dawn on us until we read that she has a kingdom over the kings of the earth (Rev.17:18). As these kings are incorporated in the scarlet wild beast, her sway is suggested by the fact she is sitting on it. It not only is her support, but is under her control. She is a suzerain. This is the place which Israel will possess during the thousand years. Hence she is enjoying a false and premature millennium. It is a satanic travesty of Yahweh’s kingdom, when His people will reign over the nations under the leadership of Messiah.

A. E. Knoch

EWALD DEGEN

Our good friend and brother, Ewald Degen, was put to rest May 20, 2003, in Medicine Hat, Alberta. He was born in the Ukraine on January 7, 1911, and had emigrated to Canada following the turmoil of World War II. Keenly interested in God’s Word, concordantly translated, he hosted a number of Scripture Conferences in his home, along with his late wife, Irma. He served as our agent for Canada for many years, distributing literature and giving support to missionary work.

We will miss his steadfast encouragement, but his firm testimony of faith continues to console and comfort those of us who knew him.

D.H.H.
DIVINE OPERATION AND CONTROL

Question:

I would like to know: Does God actually control everything? I know that this has always been the Concordant teaching, even if some of us have not been fully settled about this issue.

It would seem that this teaching is true, at least when certain of the things which it entails are not actively before the mind. But, when I think about the fact that this doctrine means that God is responsible for [i.e., is the source and final cause of] all of the sin and evil in the world, I become uneasy.

This also means that when He blames and punishes men for their wrongdoing, He is blaming and punishing them for what He Himself has caused them to do. It would seem that under these circumstances, they do not deserve the blame and punishment which they receive.

Similarly, concerning good behavior and virtue: Why should one be praised and rewarded for doing what it was appointed unto him to do?

And finally, likewise, if my love for my wife is something that “has to be,” how can my love for her be genuine? I have to confess that these things do not seem right, at least in the sense that they do not “sit well” with me.

Answer:

You asked, Does God control everything? Before addressing your question itself specifically, I would like, first of all, to say the following:
It has been my experience that we who are believers must first believe what God has truly spoken, subsequently coming to understand His intended sense correctly, according as He gives light. Only then, while retaining living faith concerning God’s deity, may we grow in understanding of why and how it is that what God, in His deity, actually does is right.

Most, however, never follow this course. Instead, they simply assume the validity of their own worldly ethics (specifically, the notion of free will), and then, albeit unwittingly, impose their own ethics upon the Scriptures.

It is not as if most folks have carefully investigated and analyzed this subject, astutely discerning the issues and scrupulously testing the competing theories, while only then objectively deciding in favor of libertarian freedom. To the contrary, it is merely, since they so intensely dislike and disapprove of the idea of God’s deity over all, that they simply reject it out of hand, opting for their cherished “free will” instead.

We like free will and want it to be true. This is because free will appeals to our pride, even as to our lust for vengeance (or “payback”), which we euphemistically term, “justice.” Free will seems to give us a measure of room even as warrant to embrace such attitudes, longings, and practices. Beyond this, allegiance to free will gains us the approval of our peers, simply by our indication of our acceptance of this popular belief.

Because of the strong opposition we receive from nearly all quarters to our findings on this subject, perhaps you can understand why we do not always speak as fully as we might concerning it, even though we regularly speak of it, though without greatly stressing it or considering it in detail. We wish to avoid needless controversy. When we speak, we would like to be helpful; this includes giving an adequate accounting and explanation of our views.

Yet many are either too prejudiced or have insufficient interest to give adequate time and effort to things of consequence, at least in cases where this may require careful reevaluation of received teaching.

**THE SCOPE OF THE “ALL”**

Perhaps your question, “Does God control everything?” can best be answered scripturally from a consideration of the words of Paul in Romans 11:34-36. Here, in this passage, each one of the apostle’s rhetorical questions require the obvious answer, “No one.”

**QUESTION 1:** “Who knew the mind of the Lord?”

**Answer 1:** No one ever already knew the mind of the Lord, apart from being informed thereof.

**QUESTION 2:** “Who became His adviser?”

**Answer 2:** No one ever became His adviser, affording Him needed counsel as a supplement to His own resources.

**QUESTION 3:** “Who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him?”

**Answer 3:** No one ever gives something to God first (something that God Himself had not already given to the human), and then is repaid for so doing.

Paul says that it is so that no one ever does any of these things, “seeing that all is out of, through, and for God, adding as well the ascription of praise, “to Him be the glory.”

Now, unless “all” in the universal sense (i.e., in reference to all that has come into existence), is Paul’s intended sense, his very rhetorical questions could not be answered according as he manifestly intends that they should be answered.

This is to say that if all that exists and all that occurs, ultimately, is not out of God, then perhaps (1) at least once, someone already knew the mind of the Lord; and (2) at least once, someone along the way became His adviser, having apprized the Deity of something of which He had been ignorant, or otherwise afforded Him some type of
outside help”; or (3) at least once, someone gave something to Him first, thus giving something to God that He had not first given to the human. But since Paul effectually declares that no one—not even once—did any of these things, and insists that this is so “seeing that” (i.e., according to the necessity of the consequence) all is out of, through, and for God, it becomes evident that the apostle here in speaking of “all” is not speaking within some limited sphere and saying only that all within that limited sphere is out of God, but is saying instead that all, universally, is out of, through, and for Him. Therefore, it must be true that God does indeed “control” all; or to express this thought in Paul’s own language, it must be that God is “operating all.”

We know what it means to operate something: it means to act, or work, in order to bring about a certain effect. That God, then, does indeed “control everything” is merely a corollary of the fact that He is operating all, doing so according to the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11).

JUST LIABILITY

The question then arises, “Why, then, is He still blaming? for who has withstood His intention?” (cp Rom.9:19). If the creature merely fulfills the Creator’s intention, it will be said that man, therefore, should not be held accountable (since he is ultimately not “responsible,” in the sense that he could have done otherwise, categorically speaking).

God’s “judgment” (i.e., that which He decides to do, here, in response to sin), however, is to do that which will glorify His own name through the salvation and blessing of His creatures. God does not consider men “responsible” in the sense as defined above; even so, He is mindful that those whose motives are wicked and whose deeds are evil—apart from any question of how they came to be as they are—are, for their own good, in need of “chasten-

ing [in the day of] judging” (cf 2 Peter 2:9). This He will grant in the day of His just judging.

Even though man is not responsible in the mistaken, libertarian-freewill sense, this is not to say that there is not a proper sense in which he is responsible. It is in consideration of God’s just judging, that we note that in the primary sense of “responsibility,” which is the judicial sense, man is indeed “responsible before God.” The judicial sense of responsibility is simply the idea of being duly accountable and justly liable.

Anyone who believes that each of us shall be giving account concerning himself to God (Rom.14:12), must acknowledge that we are duly accountable. Likewise, anyone who is aware that, whether as vessels of mercy or of indignation, God will bring every work of every man into judgment (cp Ecc.12:14), must acknowledge that we are—and justly so—liable for our own actions (i.e., subject to the consequences thereof, as opposed to being exempted from the consequences thereof). This is all that is properly meant when affirming that we are responsible for our actions, and that we will be held responsible accordingly.

Now of course many will say that the reason why we are responsible (i.e., justly liable) for our acts is because we did them “of our own free will.” Even so, the putative reason for something must be kept separate from the thing itself. Before God, we are responsible—justly held liable—for our actions, regardless of why this is so.

According to popular usage, insofar as the issue in dispute is concerned, to say that we behave as we do of our own free will, is to say that we do what we do in such a way that while we ourselves cause what we do to be done, we ourselves, nevertheless, are not caused to cause what we do to be done. It is claimed that since we, however mysteriously, are somehow exempted from the governance of causation, we therefore enjoy ultimate control.
over the occurrence of our actions, over whether they do or do not occur.\footnote{This claim, however, does not follow and will not hold. This is because it is simply a fact that one has no more ultimate control over what one does due to nothing, than over what one does due to something. One could no more prevent the occurrence of an uncaused, unexplainable event, than one can avoid the occurrence of a caused, explainable event. To appeal to mystery here, is simply the last bastion of stubbornness.}

In philosophy, this notion just described is termed “indeterministic” or “libertarian” freedom (it is also sometimes termed contra-causal or Cartesian freedom, after René Descartes, a proponent of this view). Yet to the ordinary person, it is known simply by the moniker, “free will.”

Libertarian freedom, however, even though it is an extremely popular belief, is nevertheless a demonstrably false belief. It is not just that it is not necessarily true, but that it is necessarily false, and so cannot possibly be true. This has been known for a long time; it is simply that any argument can be resisted, especially when a cherished notion is at stake.

The thesis that libertarian freedom cannot be true may be set forth as follows:

“All of our actions and choices are either alien-deterministic events—events such that there are causal factors beyond our control by virtue of which they are causally determined, or truly random events—those that are not produced by anything at all, or partially random events—those for which factors beyond the agent’s control contribute to their production but do not determine them, while there is nothing that supplements the contribution of these factors to produce the events . . . .

“[However,] an action is free in the sense required for [freewill-based] moral responsibility only if it is not an alien-deterministic event, nor a truly random event, nor

good, since it produces only that which is bad, injurious, and hurtful. Evil is terrible; evil is awful.

That, however, is not the question. The question instead is, Is it wrong for God to create evil and to bring it to pass? Since we are expressly told that God is the Creator of evil (Isa.45:7) and yet that all His ways are righteous judgment (i.e., decisions; Deut.32:4) and that Yahweh is righteous in all His ways (Psa.145:17), the question ought never be asked.

In light of such considerations as these, then, all who unreservedly accept God’s deity are constrained to declare not, Would there come to be evil in a city, and Yahweh have done it? but, “Would there come to be evil in a city, and Yahweh not have done it?” (Amos 3:6).

THE NECESSITY OF SIN AND SUFFERING

Still, even though it is so that God is the Creator of evil, and it is so that it is right for Him to be its Creator, the question remains, How is it right for God to be its Creator?

The answer to this question is actually as simple as it is glorious. It is right for God to cause evil to exist, because it is His servant, not His master. That which men contrive for evil, God designs for good. That in the end things might work out according as He is intending (cp Gen.50:20). This will be unto a glorious consummation, one far more glorious than would have been otherwise possible, apart from the temporary presence of evil.

There must be sinners and sufferers if God is to be glorified as the Saviour of sinners and sufferers, and, if men are to be blessed in a greater way than would have been possible had they never been sinners and sufferers. Sin and suffering, therefore, must not be left to chance (which is to say, to free will), but must be wisely ordered and governed by the Almighty Himself.

God’s plans and purposes are unspeakably vast and com-

God will be Making the Sequel

plex. Therefore, it would be vain for us to speculate as to just why it is necessary for a particular evil, its particular degree of attendant suffering, its particular subjects, or its particular prevalence in the world, to exist instead of not to exist. It is enough to know that God does all things well, and that “because of Him Who subjects it,” even though the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now, this is only so in expectation that the creation itself shall finally be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom.8:20,21).

We may learn through “exploring by wisdom” concerning all that is done under the heavens that, “It is an experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble them by it” (Ecc.1:13). Suffice it to say, then, that we may be confident that God, Who is love, would see to it that any certain evil did not exist, unless it were wise and needful to His purpose that it should exist.

“Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it” (1 Cor.10:13b). “Sequel” (ekbasis), literally, by its word elements, is OUT-STEPping. Even as we may be assured that God has made our trials themselves, we may be assured as well that He will “also” make the experience of good in that which follows them as their sequel, whenever it is time that we should be graced to “step out” of them, into a new and better experience. Some sequels are granted us within this present lifetime; others remain, to be granted in that day, that of our resurrection and glorification.

ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVE SENSE

Your difficulties concerning the propriety of the existence of blame and just desert in the absence of free will, are due to the fact that you customarily even though unwittingly read the notion of free will into these words them-
selves. Once you see your error here and are able to break this habit, your difficulties in this regard will vanish.

I have had some success in pointing out to others the circular reasoning involved in reading into the word “choice,” the notion of “avoidable, freewill-kind of [choice].” As a result, quite a few are now aware that a choice is simply that which is chosen or selected, from a field of two or more objects. That is, the word choice tells us nothing about the metaphysics of choice.

Now, I need to point out the circular reasoning similarly involved in reading into the words “blame” and “deserve,” the notions, respectively, of “freewill-based [blame]” and “freewill-based [deservedness].” As much so as in the case of the word “choice,” it is unintelligent to read the notion of “free will” into these terms as well; and, it is also unconscionable to do so, to any who at all perceive the fallaciousness and unfairness of so doing.

To “blame” (CV) or “find fault” (AV), is simply to charge with wrongdoing, regardless of the particular nature of the volitional activity of which the wrongdoing was the result.

Similarly, that which one “deserves,” merely speaks of that of which one is justly due. That which is given as that which is “deserved,” is that which, duly considered, ought to be given, since it is fitting and right to give it. The word itself says nothing of the grounds of justice, in the determination of that which is, in fact, justly due.

Even “retribution” and “vengeance” only speak of deserved, “reciprocal penalty,” or “reparation” in the interests of “the satisfaction of justice.” The unenlightened human opinion, however, varies greatly from that of the divine opinion in regard to what penalty ought to be given and for what purpose, with a view to the satisfaction of that justice which God deems to be true justice.

That all is out of God, does not change the fact that punitive sanctions should still be imposed upon wrong-doers. These should be meted out with sufficient force to be effective while in segregation from others as may be necessary. This is for the wrongdoers’ own good. Such may also serve as a deterrent to others, while at the same time affording protection to society, as needed.

That all is for God, however, makes it unmistakably clear that punishment is not an intrinsic good or end in itself. Punishment must be “forward-thinking,” sympathetic to the needs of the wrongdoer and dispensed for the good which it can produce, certainly including for the good of the wrongdoer himself. It must not be “backward-thinking,” given out for the gratification of blood-lust, or even for the gratification of any sort of lesser retaliatory longing according to which one wishes to impose “evil for evil,” that is, corresponding injury in return for injury received.

You also expressed concern as to the appropriateness of praise and reward apart from free will. In the absence of free will, clearly, praise and reward are not given for the commendable use of one’s free will, which does not exist. Instead, praise and reward for doing good are given in consideration of effort expended and faithful service engaged in, in the interests of fostering and instilling habitual virtue through association with the honor and benefits thereof. To “praise,” is simply to esteem and acclaim in the commendation of virtuous practice. Accordingly, a suitable “reward” (i.e., compensation or benefit), serves as an incentive to the pursuit of excellence, even as equitable sanctions (or “punishments”) serve as deterrents to wrongdoing.

The absence of free will certainly does nothing to render either praise or blame, or punishment or reward, either redundant or unsuitable. The only things that need to be “given up” in light of one’s repudiation of free will, are prideful, freewill-based praise and reward, and unmerciful and mean-spirited, freewill-based blame and punishment.

Rightly understood, praise, blame, desert, punishment,
reward, retribution, and vengeance, all have their rightful place—in the *absence* of free will. I hasten to add, however, that *vengeance* belongs to God; it is He alone Who can and will justly *repay*. As for ourselves, let us heed the entreaty, “Bless, and do not curse . . . To no one render evil for evil . . . be not conquered by evil; but conquer evil with good” (Rom.12:14-21).

Finally, you spoke of your concern as to whether your love for your wife could be “genuine” if it should be that it is something that “has to be.” This, however, is a needless concern, though as an argument it is something that is regularly pressed upon us by advocates of free will.

*Genuine* love is love which accords with the virtues of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, not that which accords with the delusional suppositions of free will. Love does not become non-genuine simply because, where it exists, it exists since it is caused to exist. Love, or any other virtue, loses neither its existence nor its excellence simply because it is created, as opposed to arising out of nothing, as a matter ultimately of sheer chance. Causation does not preclude either deliberation or volition; to the contrary, it produces them. Neither does simple causation entail either coercion or compulsion (being made to act contrary to one’s own desires and wishes); it merely entails efficaciousness, however gently produced.

Though regrettable in themselves, beliefs and practices in accord with freewill notions and attitudes, are out of, through, and for God. These things, too, will redound to God’s glory, in the day when He saves His creatures out of all such mistaken beliefs, granting them a realization of the truth (cp 1 Tim.2:4b).

In the meantime, as those who are walking in love, it becomes our privilege to bear with those holding such egregious errors—while at the same time not compromising our own faith in the truth.

J.R.C.
Paul to the Romans

SALVATION FROM WHAT?

The evangel is not a message of divine indignation and judgment, but of God’s power for salvation. It frankly recognizes human sinfulness and its dire consequences as demanded by divine justice, but it clearly reveals God’s righteousness in relation to the salvation of sinners rather than their condemnation. The subjects of God’s righteous indignation upon human irreverence and injustice (Rom.1:18) and of His just judgment of human sinfulness are necessarily involved in the announcing of the evangel (Rom.2:16); however, they do not speak of salvation, but rather of that which calls for salvation.

The apostle Paul does not write about human failure and divine judgment in Romans 1:18-3:20 in order to hedge the goodness of God’s power for salvation and the revelation it makes of God’s righteousness. Nor is he presenting an alternative means of salvation, one that calls for human contributions of righteousness and faithfulness. What Paul writes here establishes the great and universal need of the evangel. It is not part of the evangel itself but rather serves as the dark background which brings out the glory of the evangel.

GOD GIVES THEM OVER

In speaking of human irreverence and unrighteousness and their effects, Paul solidly relates these to God. In the first place, human sinfulness is, at its most fundamental level, failure toward God. And the effects of human sinfulness are established by God in His indignation and
judgment. But most important, all that is said here about God's operations of indignation and judgment directs us to the evangel and what it says about God's operations of justification, conciliation and salvation and all the glory of His great achievements through the gift of His Son. Finally, when related to the evangel, what is said here will be seen in the light of Romans 11:36, for out of God and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!

The first effect of human unrighteousness brought out by Paul in this section of Romans is that of God giving sinners over to their uncleanness, dishonor and disqualified minds (Rom.1:24-32). It is a downward spiral. We sin, and God gives us over to a condition in which sin is multiplied. It is God Who gives us over to these expressions of His indignation. God Himself locks us up in the stubbornness of our disqualified minds (cf Rom.11:32).

Yet nothing that is written here is said apart from the fact that God's righteousness is being revealed in His work of salvation which is sourced in the faith of Jesus Christ. The great impasse of this section of Romans, where God's response to human sin increases the separation between Him and His creation, effectively prepares us for the glorious message of justification and conciliation.

God gives over irreverent and unjust humanity to the lusts of their hearts and dishonorable passions and a disqualified mind. But also God gives up His own Son for us all (Rom.8:32).

As we contemplate the horror of the current human situation in the following words of Romans 1:24-32, we must not forget the evangel. That is the whole point of the passage. It is not written to justify a doctrine of hopelessness in some kind of eternal hell, but rather to prepare us for the greatness and glory of God's evangel of salvation. From what are we saved? Paul begins to tell us here:

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A Definition of Humanity's Need

1. Wherefore God gives them over, in the lusts of their hearts,

(a.) to the uncleanness of dishonoring their bodies among themselves,

(b.) those who alter the truth of God into the lie, and are venerated, and offer divine service to the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for the eons! Amen!

2. Therefore God gives them over

(a.) to dishonorable passions. For their females, besides, alter the natural use into that which is beside nature. Likewise also the males, besides, leaving the natural use of the female, were inflamed in their craving for one another, males with males effecting indecency, and getting back in themselves the retribution of their deception which must be.

(b.) And according as they do not test God, to have Him in recognition,

3. God gives them over

(a.) to do that which is not befitting, filled with all injustice, wickedness, evil, murder, strife, guile, depravity, whisperers, vilifiers, detesters of God, outragers, proud, ostentations, inventors of evil things, stubborn to parents, unintelligent, perfidious, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

(b.) those who, recognizing the just statute of God, that those committing such things are deserving of death, not only are doing them, but are endorsing, also, those who are committing them.

OUR NEED OF SALVATION

This passage from Romans thoroughly defines our need of salvation. That to which God gives us over (shown in the “a” sections in the preceding arrangement) is full
of shame. And the description of humanity given in the “b” sections is so accurate and penetrating as to leave us without hope apart from God’s own righteous provision of deliverance. He alone can save us from these deprivations and from the condemnation to which they lead.

Every charge against us and every expression of divine indignation given in this passage of Scripture call for the evangel which is the power of God for salvation, in which God’s righteousness is being revealed.

THE CREATOR

God gives over those who offer divine service to the creature rather than the Creator, to the uncleanness of dishonoring their bodies. There are two major problems here. The first and most noticeable one to us as human beings is that we are put into an impossible situation in which sin leads to further alienation from God, which leads to further and more dishonorable sin. The second and most critical problem, though often overlooked, is that the Creator Himself brings about this “impossible” situation which seems to complete the ruin of His creation. What God has created cannot be seen as good.

God is the Creator of humanity, and because humanity dishonors Him, He gives them over to that which dishonors themselves but also appears to discredit His skill as Creator. What God does is fair and just in light of human sin. But it does not lead to the creature’s blessing of blessing God as Creator. It does not lead to salvation and glory.

God’s solution to both these problems is found in the evangel. God has subjected the creation to vanity, but He has done so “in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom.8:21). The giving over of humanity to self-dishonoring and self-defeating acts is not the goal of the Creator. It is His present inten-

Harmful Effects of Indecency

Harmful Effects of Indecency, yet a matter of transitoriness, as expressed by the word “vanity.” It is part of that from which God saves humanity through the death of His Son. The Creator’s blessedness embraces His righteousness in His powerful work of salvation. Humanity will be saved to the place of blessing God as the “faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19), Who indeed is “blessed for the eons, Amen!” (Rom.1:25; 3:25; 9:5).

Thus we see that the apparent, impossible situation described in Romans 1:24, 25, is one which God deals with powerfully and gloriously in the sending of His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin (cf Rom.8:3). “For the One not knowing sin, [God] makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God’s righteousness in Him” (2 Cor.5:19).

THAT WHICH MUST BE

The Scriptures often speak of things which must be. They are binding. In giving over mankind to dishonorable passions in which they deceive themselves and their associates, and which effect indecency, God sees to it that they also get back retribution in themselves (Rom.1:26, 27). The Greek word rendered “retribution” is made up of two elements meaning instead-hire, literally referring to payment for work that one is hired to do (cp AV “recompense”), but in this figurative usage referring to the harmful effects of human dishonorable deception on them. These effects are inevitable, for they are part of God’s intention for the present. They are expressions of divine indignation, and they must be.

Again we see the downward spiral. Adam sinned, and so death passes into his descendants, on which they sin (Rom.5:12). As sinners they grow in irreverence and un-
righteousness, and (unless He intervenes with mercy) God gives them over to dishonorable passions, which involve built-in and harmful effects.

Adapting the language of Romans 7:24, we ask, “What will rescue us out of this wretched situation?” The answer, as in Romans 7, is: “Grace!” We all sin and are wanting of the glory of God, yet now, as the evangel declares, God’s grace brings gratuitous justification, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:21-24).

Then, are the effects of God’s grace in giving His Son for sinners as inevitable as the effects of human depravity? What must be so regarding God’s indignation is met by what shall be so because of the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ. The entire, vast multitude of sinners who are under condemnation shall be constituted righteous (Rom.5:19).

All people have the need of salvation. What Paul writes here in Romans 1:19-32 has application to us all. In presenting the great need of humanity for salvation, Paul glories in the cross of Christ which provides and establishes that salvation.

**HAVING GOD IN RECOGNITION**

God would have His creatures have Him in recognition, or realization.2 He would have them realize in fullness of comprehension Who He is and what He is like. This, as Romans makes clear, involves especially a recognition of God’s righteousness and love. But in their irreverence and unrighteousness, human beings do not test God to have Him in recognition (Rom.1:28). God must reveal His glory to them, and He does so “in the face of Jesus Christ” (cf 2 Cor.4:6; Col.1:15). God’s righteousness is made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom.

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2. The CV uses both these English words as a translation of the Greek term, ON-knowledge, cf KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.242.
God Gives Up His Son

...in Romans 2:26 and 8:4. And in Romans 5:16 and 18 it is rendered “just award.” Literally it means: just-effect. In our Keyword Concordance, we read that this word signifies “the result of a right standard” (p.166). As such, it refers to the effects of righteousness. In Romans it seems particularly to refer to the effects of God’s righteousness. Because such effects issue from the standard of divine righteousness they are themselves truly righteous or just. But the Greek word itself directs special attention to righteousness as the source of the righteous statute, requirement, award or whatever matter is in view as indicated by the context.

Here in Romans 1:32 we learn that when God pronounces sinners deserving of death, He does so as a product of His righteousness. Later we see that, as a result of His standard of righteousness, God lays down righteous standards of behavior in the law. But these effects of God’s righteousness do not display the fullness and the matchless glory of God’s righteousness. Once again, what is said here in Romans 1 prepares us for the presentation of the evangel especially, in this case, as given in chapter 5.

It is the evangel that tells us about an effect of God’s righteousness in view of human sinfulness which goes beyond the verdict of Romans 1:32. This is spelled out magnificently in Romans 5:18. There the just-effect of God is His giving of His Son, Who was faithful even to the death of the cross. There we learn that God’s righteousness had the effect on Him, operating through His Beloved Son, to do that which would put an end to all sin and death and evil and would ultimately bring forth life’s justifying for all mankind. His righteousness led God to give up His own Son because of our offenses and rouse Him because of our justifying (Rom.4:25).

Romans 1:24-32 is most profitable in paving the way for our appreciation of the evangel. What this section says

A Translation Problem

...about human depravity and God’s righteous response to this depravity is not good news in itself, but it prepares for the glory of the good news that Christ Jesus died for sinners. The obedience of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners is the highest of all the effects of God’s righteousness. It is the source of every blessing to come for humanity and of every avowal of glorification and thanksgiving and blessing given to God, Who is blessed for the eons! Amen!

D.H.H.

EFFECTS OF DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Greek word, dikaiōma, which is translated in the Concordant Version by such terms as “just statute,” “just requirement” and “just award,” draws attention to the righteous source of the just statute, requirement or award. The statutes, requirements and awards of God are truly just, or right, but this Greek term informs us that their right-ness is the effect of God’s own just standards. Consequently, the word, as it is used in Romans, has a great deal to say about God’s righteousness in speaking about the right or just effects which He brings about.

This important feature of dikaiōma is almost impossible to express in an English translation in a succinct, idiomatic manner. We have no English term or expression that corresponds exactly with the Greek word. Perhaps we could invent a term such as “just-ized,” although that could not be used in an idiomatic translation. Indeed, to speak of “God’s just-ized statute” would probably puzzle the reader more than help in conveying the rich nuances of the Greek word.

Nevertheless, these nuances are valuable to the believer, and if we can grasp them truly we may be sure they will be helpful for growth in our appreciation of God. We may not be able to express them fully in our translations of the Scriptures, but this should not stop us from the search for exactitude.

Continuing, then, with the uses of the word dikaiōma in Romans, when Paul speaks of the just requirements of the law
Growth in Realization of God

in Romans 2:26 and 8:4, we see that he uses a term directing attention to these requirements as effects of a right standard, even that standard held to by God. In giving the law to Israel, God required those things which accorded with His own standard of righteousness; they were, and are just requirements, but they are so because of the standard that produced them. This again leads our minds to an increased appreciation of God.

With this in view, we can see that the rendering, “just award,” in Romans 5:16 should be understood as an award that is just because it issues from God’s standard of righteousness. The passage speaks of God’s grace, but it also has something to say about God’s righteousness by way of the word dikaiōma. The blessing of justification (which seems to be the “award” in view) that we receive from God in contrast to the curse of condemnation is the achievement of His grace as sourced in His righteousness. Justification has a righteous basis, but this basis is not human works of righteousness; it is God’s attribute of righteousness as revealed in the evangel. It is that which results from God’s action of giving up His Son for sinners. Justification is not an arbitrary favor, but rests on that right standard of God that demands that every sin of every sinner be dealt with.

All these considerations indicate that it would be better for us to use the words “just act” for dikaiōma in Romans 5:18. This was the rendering suggested by Brother Knoch ninety years ago in an early study of this passage (cf Unsearchable Riches, volume 4, pages 102 and 110). But perhaps because of the usage of the word in verse 16, it must have been felt that Paul would have an award or blessing in mind when he penned the thought of verse 18. Consequently, all editions of the English CV since 1926 have used “just award” here.

But if dikaiōma refers to an effect of God’s right standards, it can be used of an act as well as an award or a statute or requirement. In this way the translation would bring out the parallel between “one offense” and “one dikaiōma” more clearly. The faithful act of Christ in giving Himself for sinners is contrasted with the offensive act of Adam. God’s own righteousness is what lays behind that great giving of His Son, which thereupon leads to life’s justifying for all mankind.  

D.H.H.
“The Kingdom in the ‘Old Testament’”

Vladimir Gelesnoff

“The Kingdom in the ‘Old Testament,’” was among the first publications of the Concordant Publishing Concern. From the San Diego address for Unsearchable Riches magazine included on the original copy of this study, kept in our archives, we conclude that it must have been issued in 1909 or 1910, before the mailing address was changed to Los Angeles.

In introducing the revised edition of this exposition in 1938, upon which this reprint is based, A. E. Knoch stated: “[This writing] was first published many years ago, and has long been out of print. As nothing equal to it seems to have appeared in the meantime, we welcome the opportunity of reissuing it . . . The careful consideration demanded by the work of revision has once more impressed me with the extraordinary excellence and value of this exposition. The great need for clarity on this elementary theme is evident on all sides, and grows as the apostasy proceeds apace. Hence I take this opportunity of commending it to all who wish to aid their fellow saints to gain an insight into God’s grand purpose through the nation of His choice and their Messiah, Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Unsearchable Riches, vol.29, p.210).

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EDITORIAL

When Paul spoke to Philemon about the fellowship of his faith (v.6) he was referring to an expression, or appreciation, of that which we have in common with other believers. The Greek word for “fellowship” signifies common-being, and is sometimes translated “communion” or “contribution” in other contexts. Philemon had his believing of the evangel concerning Jesus Christ in common with Paul and also with the slave Onesimus. Now, in writing his letter, Paul wanted his beloved friend and fellow worker to keep this commonness in mind in dealing with a particular situation that involved all three of them.

“The faith” which Philemon had (v.5) was the same that we all have. It concerns God’s Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and sees in His death a work and achievement of God for salvation, justification, conciliation, vivification, subjection and reconciliation. In God’s grace, we have believed the evangel, but also (again in His grace) we have the joy of retaining it and finding it operative (another word Paul used in Philemon 6) in our lives (cp 1 Cor.15:2). Paul was continually entreating believers to live in accord with what they believe. Thus he wrote, for example: “Become, then, imitators of God, as beloved children, and be walking in love, according as Christ also loves you” (Eph.5:1,2). As for Philemon, this love of Christ which he shared with Paul and Onesimus should become operative in the way in which he received his slave back again.

That is both a simple and a marvelous human story involving three believers and their common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Versions of this story can be repeated in the lives of multitudes of believers since that day, including ourselves today.
Our Foundation is Christ

I like to think of you who receive and read this magazine in light of our fellowship of faith. In many ways, of course, we hold faith in common with many others who do not feel kindly disposed toward us with respect to much that we believe. This is surely due to the fact that God does not grant everyone the same measure of faith and understanding with respect to what God has said in His Word. Hence, in particular, where there is strong emphasis on traditional teachings of men, and where the evangel is distorted from a message of grace and gratuity and triumphant love to one mixed with religious requirements and dreadful threatenings, the fellowship is sadly constricted. So it is that, even though we also may have our differences, there is a happy communion of faith where that which calls us “in the grace of Christ” (Gal.1:6) becomes and remains our foundation, and where there is a growing reliance on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:9,10).

It is with this in view that the present issue of Unsearchable Riches begins with some of the words (in translation) of the evangel we believe, as expressed by our apostle Paul nearly two thousand years ago. These are selected from all of Paul’s letters with no comments or insertions except for the headings. There is very little from Philemon because it is not involved with presenting the evangel but with living it, which is partly why I am commenting on it here in the editorial.

May these words concerning Christ’s death for sinners, His resurrection and exaltation, become operative in your lives and mine “in the realization of every good thing which is in us for Christ Jesus” (Philemon 6). We all have our own rough spots to get through and our own dealings with other people. The pattern in Philemon is particularly relevant in dealing with fellow believers, but it must surely have value in all of life’s affairs.

D.H.H.
PAUL, THE EVANGELIST

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, severed for the evangel of God... concerning His Son, ... Jesus Christ, our Lord... (Rom.1:1-4)

God... severs me from my mother's womb and calls me through His grace, to unveil His Son in me that I may be evangelizing Him among the nations. (Gal.1:15,16)

For if I should be bringing the evangel, it is not for me to boast in, for necessity is lying upon me, for it were woe to me if I should not be bringing the evangel! (1 Cor.9:16)

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED

Not ashamed am I of the evangel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing... For in it God's righteousness is being revealed, out of faith for faith. (Rom.1:16,17)

By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in [God's] sight... 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 all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood, 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 of the one who is of the faith of Jesus, where, then, is boasting? (Rom.3:20-27)
THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

[He] was given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying. Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God. (Rom. 4:25; 5:1,2)

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. (Rom.5:6-10)

THROUGH ONE, CONCERNING ALL

Even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned— . . . But not as the offense, thus also the grace. For if, by the offense of the one, the many died, much rather the grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man Jesus Christ, to the many superabounds. And not as through one act of sinning is the gratuity. For, indeed, the judgment is out of one into condemnation, yet the grace is out of many offenses into a just award . . . . Consequently, then, 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. 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.5:12-19)

God’s Love, Power and Wisdom

GOD’S OWN SON

For what was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh. (Rom.8:3)

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? (Rom.8:31,32)

GOD’S LOVE IN CHRIST JESUS

What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? . . . I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (Rom.8:35-39)

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

We are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity, yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor.1:23,24)

I am making known to you, brethren, the evangel which I bring to you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved . . . . For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our 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.15:1-4)

CHRIST ROUSED FROM AMONG THE DEAD

Christ has been roused from among the dead, the First-
fruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet . . . . Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all. (1 Cor.15:20-28)

THE LOVE OF CHRIST
For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying, and being roused for their sakes. (2 Cor.5:14,15)

YET ALL IS OF GOD
Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was, in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation . . . . For the One not knowing sin, [God] makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him. (2 Cor.5:18-21)

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that,
Christ Jesus, . . . being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

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.2:5-11)

ALL CREATED AND RECONCILED IN HIM

[The Father] rescues us out of the jurisdiction of Darkness, and transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we are having the deliverance, the pardon of sins, Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible . . . And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him 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.1:13-20)

ASSURANCE AND EXPECTATION

For the evange of our God did not come to you in word only, but in power also, and in holy spirit and much assurance . . . . And therefore we also are thanking God uninterruptedly that, in accepting the word heard from us, from God you receive, not the word of men, but, accord-

Faithful is the Saying

ing as it truly is, the word of God, which is operating also in you who are believing. (1 Thess.1:5; 2:13)

For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him. (1 Thess.4:14)

For God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for our sakes, that, whether we may be watching or drowsing, we should be living at the same time together with Him. (1 Thess.5:9,10)

THANKING GOD

Now we ought to be thanking God always concerning you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, seeing that God prefers you from the beginning for salvation, in holiness of the spirit and faith in the truth, into which He also calls us through our evange, for the procuring of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father, Who loves us, and is giving us an eonian consolation and a good expectation in grace, be consoling your hearts and establish you in every good work and word. (2 Thess.2:13-17)

THE EVANGE OF THE HAPPY GOD

The evange of the glory of the happy God, with which I was entrusted: . . . Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tim.1:11,15)

God . . . wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. (1 Tim.2:4)

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 (the testimony in its own eras). (1 Tim.2:5,6)

Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome . . . that
we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. (1 Tim.4:9,10).

DEATH ABOLISHED, LIFE ILLUMINATED
Suffer evil with the evangel in accord with the power of God, Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian, yet now is being manifested through the advent of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, Who indeed, abolishes death, yet illuminates life and incorruption through the evangel of which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of the nations. (2 Tim.1:8-11)

THE GRACE, KINDNESS AND FONDNESS OF GOD
For the grace of God made its advent for salvation to all humanity, training us that, disowning irreverence and worldly desires, we should be living sanely and justly and devoutly in the current eon. (Titus 2:11)
The kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God, made its advent, not for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but according to His mercy. He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit, which He pours out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, that being justified in that One’s grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian. (Titus 3:4-7)

AMEN
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit! Amen! (Philemon 25)
A SPIRIT OF WISDOM

“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).

When we are first given faith in the Lord, we do not fully comprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of the love in which we are grounded (cf Eph.3:17-19). It is in addressing believers in Christ Jesus that Paul bows his knees in prayer for this very enlightenment (Eph.3:14-19), and also earlier wrote, “Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him” (Eph.1:15-18).

INSTRUCTED IN THE WAY OF GOD

Even Apollos, although well instructed and fervent in spirit, had to be instructed in the way of God more accurately by Priscilla and Aquila when he arrived at Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). In accord with the testimony of Romans 11:36, quoted above, that all is out of God, it is instructive to note that this worthy couple were with Paul on this occasion because they had been expelled from Rome by order of the Roman emperor, Claudius (Acts 18:2).
When we read thus of God’s wise provision, we are reminded of the words of Jacob’s son, Joseph, in Egypt, as he sought to comfort his remorse-stricken brothers: “And now, not you sent me here, for it was the One, Elohim” (Gen.45:5-8). Meditate on the far-reaching consequences of his brothers’ evil act: ‘And saying is Judah to his brothers, ‘What gain is it that we kill our brother and cover his blood? Go, and we will sell him to the Ishmaelites, and our hand must not come to be against him, for our brother and our flesh is he.’ And hearkening are his brothers” (Gen.37:26,27).

In this dreadful deed and hideous hypocrisy we can yet perceive deep, emotional, moving images of the glorious outcome. Consider the anguish of the father, Jacob. Mark well the meek acceptance of all the unjust accusations and imprisonment suffered by Joseph. His interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream brought Joseph great blessings, but also, it proved to preserve the mighty nation of Egypt from extinction. But wait! There is far more important occasion than even these! “Now he [Joseph, husband of Mary], being roused, took along the little Boy and His mother by night and retired into Egypt. And He was there till the decease of Herod that that may be fulfilled which is declared by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I call My Son”’” (Matt.2:15; Hos.11:1).

CREATOR OF EVIL

The truth that all is out of, through and for God is clearly stated in Isaiah 45:5-7, where Yahweh claims to be

Former of light
And Creator of darkness,
Maker of good
And Creator of evil
I, Yahweh, make all these things.

Through and For Him

Those who determine right or wrong in accord with their own ethical principles will dissent, claiming that this declaration refers only to physical and not moral evil, pointing especially to the disruption of war. “Now war . . . is the direct result of wrongdoing; war results from racial prejudice; pride, greed, ambition, revenge, covetousness, and every other wicked passion that simmers in the human breast. So-called physical evils are inseparable corollaries of war, but they are the result rather than the cause of it.”

What prompted Claudius to banish all the Jews from Rome? Could their own bitterness of jealousy account entirely for the reprehensible cruelty of Joseph’s brothers? Was it mere vanity which caused Caesar Augustus to issue his arrogant decree of registration? Plainly, each was an evil act, but ultimately, each served the wise and loving purpose of our God and Father, out of Whom, and through Whom and for Whom is all.

THE BLINDING OF ISRAEL

Yet what might we declare concerning the disabling of the nation of Israel?

“And approaching, the disciples say to Him, ‘Wherefore art Thou speaking in parables to them?’ Now answering, He said to them that “To you has it been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, yet to those it has not been given. For anyone who has, to him shall be given, and he shall have a superfluity. Yet anyone who has not, that also which he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore in parables am I speaking to them, seeing that, observing, they are not observing, and hearing, they are not hearing, neither are they understanding And filled up in them is the prophecy of Isaiah, that is saying, In hearing, you will be hearing, and may by no means be under-

standing, and observing, you will be observing, and may by no means be perceiving” (Matt.13:10-13).

“This quotation from the sixth chapter of Isaiah is quoted more frequently than any other passage from the prophets. It occurs at the two great crises in the spiritual history of Israel, the rejection of the kingdom ministry of Christ, and the repudiation of its renewal by the holy spirit in Acts (28:25-28). It always marks the cessation of the evangel of the kingdom. Henceforth He is not seeking to open their eyes, but to blind them. After Paul’s pronouncement of Israel’s doom, the kingdom proclamation ceased. The history of the kingdom ended. It will not be resumed until the present administration of God’s grace, in which the evangel goes direct to the nations apart from Israel’s mediacy, is finished. Then once more the evangel will not only go to Israel, but through them to all the nations.”

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Here, our human spirit confused and bewildered, we are gently escorted by a spirit of wisdom and revelation in realization. Was this judgment of apostasy a good or evil action? Reverent consideration and the attendant adoration at the glory of our gracious calling leave us with but one thankful conclusion. It is all of God, for good.

In recognizing this, there can be no sense of detachment toward the immense pain and anguish involved in Israel's apostasy (cp Rom.9:1,2). It is rather that we are led to see value in the evil in seeing that it has a purpose determined by God.

To note the ordering and placing of Deity in all things is indeed a matter of spiritual maturity. Just as, physically, we all must learn to walk before we can run, so also we are tenderly escorted and enlightened by the spirit

2. Concordant Commentary, p.28.

we are Paying for Wisdom

which is of God toward a comprehension of the wisdom of God’s purpose.

“Now he who is spiritual is, indeed, examining all, yet he is being examined by no one. For who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will be deducing from Him? Yet we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:15,16).

NOT MANY WISE

Many must recall their first impression upon reading 1 Corinthians 1:26. “For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh...” Did we not assume that here was a presentation of humility alone? How could we have recognized that the apostle was not only introducing us to a fitting meekness, but also was preparing us for the profound realization fully disclosed through his prison epistles? Was this a first step for many?

We are not many wise, and yet we pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

It was a word of encouragement when we read of the expectation of our calling, but how can we compare even such words with the revelation of God’s intention to create a joint body both from the nations and certain privileged ones of the nation of Israel?

An ecclesia, we are chosen by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ “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).

Thus were we apprised of just one of the secrets of Christ Jesus. Ephesians blazes forth the secrets of the evangel, and Colossians presents in a hush the secret of Christ Himself. An awed whisper! Rejoice in this realiza-
tion! Bend the knee and heart to the exalted Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords! Throughout the entire universe none more mighty and noble than He!

TO HIM WHO IS ABLE

How delightful to stand in awe before the multicolored wonders of a glorious sunset! And how heightened is this same delight when shared in the company of some loved one! “Look!” we whisper. “See!” we gasp, when first we witness the grandeur of some mighty cascading waterfall or the strange alien sight of a rare eclipse. Listen! we whisper on hearing the sweet notes of a bird song.

How utterly disarming then to read the apostle’s words and grasp some slight measure of the compulsion which gripped his heart: “For if I should be bringing the evangel, it is not for me to boast in, for necessity is lying upon me, for it were woe to me if I should not be bringing the evangel!” (1 Cor.9:16).

This insatiable hunger, this driving compunction to share, to communicate, is a God-given blessing.

There was a weary excess of worldly wisdom in the city of Athens when Paul visited. Small wonder that the apostle, sensing the rejection of the evangel he was bringing, described as “announcements of strange demons” (Acts 17:16), should depart from thence. How familiar this rejection seems. Especially today there is an abundance of trivia. How the words of faith concerning the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the delight of His will and purpose shine forth through the murkiness and confusion!

And so we pray for a spirit of wisdom and realization.

“Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!” (Eph.3:20,21).  Donald Fielding
GOD’S JUST JUDGMENT

IN A REMARKABLE WAY Romans 1:18-3:20 is a summation of the course of humanity as recorded in the Sacred Scriptures from Genesis 2:4 to Revelation 22:21. It speaks of human wickedness and God’s indignation on this wickedness and His judgment of sinners. Adam and Eve in the garden, Cain with his offering, Israel in apostasy, humanity at Golgotha, the multiplication of wickedness at the end of this eon—all of this accords with the description of human irreverence and unrighteousness set before us in this section of Romans.

But these themes of human sin and divine judgment are embedded here in Romans in the themes of justification and grace in the evangels of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ. They serve, by contrast, to clarify the glory of the evangels which is the power of God for salvation. They speak of that from which God saves us, and by their pain and sorrow and darkness bring out the glories of God so that we might know Him as He truly is.

DESERVING OF DEATH

We have learned from Romans 1:32 that, apart from the evangels, the just effect of divine righteousness, in view of human irreverence and unrighteousness, is the statute that those who commit acts of unrighteousness are deserving of death. God first declared that this would be so in Genesis 2:17 when He warned Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: “For on the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying.” God may delay the exe-
when it Comes to Sin

greater and fuller display of God’s righteousness which is
made known in the evangel and the glorious effect of that
righteousness on sinners.

Even in Genesis and Ezekiel and the book of Reveal-
ation the evangel is never wholly out of view. It is there in
the types (such as the offerings), in the promises of future
good and in the operations of divine grace and mercy to
God’s chosen ones. It is there in the pattern laid down in
the first chapter of Genesis, and it is there in the contin-
ued testimony to divine wisdom and power and righteous-
ness. And by implication the truth of the evangel is there in
the patience and kindness and forbearance of God toward
sinners in general. All of these themes find their comple-
tion in the death of Christ for sinners, and none of them
can have any real meaning and justification apart from this
pivotal and crucial work of God in the giving of His Son.

ALL SIN

The recognition that we all are sinners is basic to our
appreciation of the evangel. There is much difference
today (but not forever!) between believers and unbeliev-
ers, but it does not lie in what we are in ourselves. It lies
in the bestowing of God’s grace. At its very core it lies in
the measure of faith graciously granted (Rom.12:3; Phil.
1:29) and in God’s choice before the disruption of the
world (Eph.1:4).

To be sure, this grace leads forward to the gracious and
powerful influence of God’s spirit in the believer, as it did
for Paul, so “that the just requirement of the law may be
being fulfilled in us, who are not walking in accord with
flesh, but in accord with spirit” (Rom.8:3,4). But when it
comes to what we are in ourselves, or as Paul puts it, what
we are in our flesh, we stand with all human beings in
being unrighteous and irreverent and deserving of death.
None of us are exempt from sin.

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Consequently, Paul now looks at each of us personally and addresses us all directly as you, O human!

**ROMANS 2:1-6**

a. Wherefore, defenseless are you, O human! everyone who is judging, for in what you are judging another, you are condemning yourself, for you who are judging are committing the same things.

b. Now we are aware that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who are committing such things.

a. Yet are you reckoning on this, O human, who are judging those committing such things and are doing the same,

b. that you will be escaping the judgment of God? Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance?

a. Yet, in accord with your hardness and unrepentant heart you are hoarding for yourself indignation

b. in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts:

**O HUMAN!**

The human being, as shown in the “a” sections above, is defenseless against the charge of sin and liable to the judgment of God, hoarding for himself indignation in the day of indignation. This, viewed apart from the evangel, applies to everyone.

Consider Abel, as an example, one who is called “just” (cf Matt.23:35; Heb.11:4). He was a human being and a sinner, even though, in comparison with Cain, he was righteous with respect to glorifying and thanking God by means of

**The Evidence of Truth**

an approach present. From the evidence available to us, we, as human judges, could not say that Abel was guilty, like Cain, of altering the truth of God or of offering divine service that paid homage to himself rather than the Creator (Rom.1:25). But what of a judgment that would take into account the standards Jesus set before Israel in Matthew 5:21-45? Abel could never be Cain’s judge without exposing the fact that he also was a sinner. If one fails in one requirement of law, he fails in all (James 2:10). In the final analysis, apart from the evang, no one can put up a successful defense before a tribunal based entirely on truth. This is so even of Abel and Joshua and Daniel and others who are called “righteous” in the Scriptures, in relation to their contemporaries.

As for Abel, he was aware whether or not he had ever been angry with Cain (cf Matt.5:22) or had never felt envy, or always, at every moment, kept God before him in recognition (cf Rom.1:28). And, more to the point, God was aware. We do know this for certain: that death passed on to Abel from Adam, on which Abel sinned (Rom.5:12). Had not God purposed that His Son would come into the world to save sinners, and had Christ Jesus not done so, Abel’s position before God would be no different from Cain’s. In himself he was deserving of divine indignation and death. That is what is demanded by the righteousness of God, and that is what would result for all mankind had Christ not died for our sins.

(Yet since Christ has come into the world to save sinners, can Cain’s ultimate state be different from Abel’s? But this is to anticipate the revelations of Romans 5.)

**ACCORDING TO TRUTH**

The judgment of God (as shown in the “b” sections above) is according to truth. For good and righteous reasons God may display His kindness and forbearance and
God’s Judgments are Fair

patience, forgoing judgment for a time. But in view of the actual record of human behavior, as we are in ourselves, each one individually, there is no escape in God’s determined time from condemnation and death. Every thought in this section of Romans pleads for the evangel.

Hence Paul continues with this view of things as they exist apart from the achievements of God in the gift of His Son, in order to prepare us well for that message of divine achievement:

ROMANS 2:7-10

God will be paying each person in accord with his acts:

to those, indeed, who by endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, life conian;
yet to those of faction, and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, indignation and fury, affliction and distress on every human soul which is effecting evil, both of the Jew first and of the Greek,
yet glory and honor and peace to every worker of good, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek.

GOD’S JUST JUDGMENT

Is there an evangel here? Is there hope that some will endure in good acts and so receive life conian? The judgment of glory is mentioned twice here (verses 7 and 9), while that of condemnation appears only once (verse 8). Indeed that reflects the character of God’s heart and purpose. The consummation will be glory, but it will never come through God’s works of judgment. It will come as the result of Christ’s faithful obedience in His death for sinners.

Nevertheless, we hear of those who find a hope of salvation by human works in these verses. Surely (it is supposed) there are some who endure in good acts and seek

No Salvation by Works

glory and honor and incorruption. Jesus spoke of a few who enter the cramped gate and follow the narrowed way of righteousness demanded by the law (Matt.7:13,14). There must be some who persist in good acts, who will receive the payment of life and glory and honor and peace. Everyone who effects evil will be paid with divine indignation and fury, followed by death. See, (it is said), Paul speaks here of those who endure and those who do not. God rewards the first class and damns the second. This is fair, and it is exactly what a gospel should be, according to popular, human reasoning.

Yet if any human beings could endure in good acts without taint of sin, which means “missing the mark,” always reaching the mark of righteousness by the exercise of their will and the strength of their moral discipline, they would receive life and incorruption as wages well earned. Boasting in themselves would not be debarred; in fact it would be fully appropriate, and not to do so would be a sin of hypocrisy.

The fact is, however, no one endures in good acts, for all sin. This will be Paul’s conclusion when he comes to Romans 3:9-20. Not one is just—not even one. All face indignation and fury, affliction and distress and are deserving of death.

Therefore, apart from the death of Christ for sinners, no one will be honored with life as their just recompense. What is written here in Romans 2:7-10 is no evangel of salvation. What is written here is critical in making God’s work of salvation the evangel that it is.

Yet the evangel of God does, in fact, speak of life and

1. All those to whom Jesus spoke failed to maintain the law, both as presented at Sinai and as the Lord defined it in Matthew 5; they all, including the twelve, denied Him in His darkest hour. But God will give Israel a new heart and a new spirit so that they do the works of righteousness (Ezek.36:26,17), yet this also will not be apart from the death of Christ (cf. Heb.9:13-15).
glory and honor and peace for human beings. The wages mentioned here for endurance in good acts are the very gracious gifts of God which are given to the believer. It is because of the faith of Jesus Christ that we are being justified and may be having peace toward God and may be glorifying in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:1,2). It is because of the obedience of the One that the many who are constituted sinners because of Adam’s disobedience will ultimately be constituted just (Rom.5:19).

**Paul Was Not Ashamed**

Romans 1:18-3:8 comes from the heart of a man who had once given all he had to the belief that he could be justified by works of law, and Romans 3:9-20 is his admission, no, rather his avowal that it never can happen. He does not toss away the law, but he adamantly rejects it as a means for justification and life. We may sometimes tend to overlook the passion of Paul’s conclusions in 3:9-20, but all that he wrote from 1:18 forward leads inevitably to this great cry of realization: “no flesh at all shall be justified in [God’s] sight, for through law is the recognition of sin!”

And this, in turn, leads to the triumphant exposition of the evangel, starting in Romans 3:21.

What a change in thinking! What a change in theology! What an enlightenment! What a transformation of the heart!

First came the recognition of the truth of his complete defenselessness and helplessness, and then came the joyful thankfulness to God in believing the evangel of God’s righteousness revealed and love commended in the death of Christ for sinners.

As we follow Paul’s thoughts through this section of Romans, we also are led to a similar joy and heartfelt thankfulness to God.

D.H.H.
A MEMORIAL ADDRESS

Question:
I wonder if you have available a Scripture message which I could read at the funeral of my mother, whom I do not expect to live another year.

Answer:
The message which follows is one that I have presented at quite a few funerals, upon the death either of various ones among our friends in faith, or on their behalf upon the death of one of their family members. At such gatherings, I try to speak in such a way so as not to offend others, while at the same time speaking in a clear and positive way in order to be encouraging to those who have asked me to present my testimony.

* [Words of Introduction; Opening Prayer; Biographical Sketch; and Hymn.]

"For more than seven millennia generations of men, like shadows, have appeared and disappeared. From what source do they come, and where are they going? . . . Unquestionably, the problem of final destiny is for mankind the question of questions. Nothing else equals it in practical importance . . . . What is life to us if we do not know the end toward which we are borne on the wings of time?"

"Croesus, King of the Lydians, surrounded by everything that heart can wish and eye desire, asked the wise man if he did not consider him the happiest of mortals."
The philosopher replied, ‘It is not possible to decide that one’s life is truly prosperous and happy until we know how it terminates.’ This is preeminently true of man’s existence. All that this world can give does not satisfy heart and mind, with the inborn instinct of a hereafter, apart from some reasonable assurance as to whether that hereafter is to be one of infinite happiness or of infinite horror. So long as this point remains uncertain, everything is precarious and peace is impossible.”

Notwithstanding the scope and intensity of all of the evil extant in the world today, surely the permanent good that God will one day bring out of all evil and suffering will be so marvelous and all-encompassing that we can well thank Him for its temporary presence today—“giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to our God and Father” (Eph. 5:20). The suffering will not have occurred in vain; instead it will all serve God’s beneficent purpose on behalf of all, for His own glory. The apostle Paul said it best: “I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us” (Rom. 8:18).

It is axiomatic that one must be in need, in order to have one’s needs met. The infirm, weak and suffering are the very ones in a position to need and appreciate a Saviour, One Who is able to fill their every need, in due time to deliver them from all of their failings and pains of every sort. The words of Jesus to the Pharisees, who had asked His disciples why their teacher saw fit to eat with “tribute collectors and sinners,” were simply these: “No need have the strong of a physician, but those having an illness” (Matt. 9:12). Yet, in their unyielding pride, through self-sufficient eyes, they could not recognize their own infirmity.

God is Rousing the Dead

dissipates and the dissolution of the object itself begins. 

As the Psalmist says of God, “You send forth Your spirit, 
they are created . . . .” “You gather away their spirit, they 
die, and return to the soil” (Ps. 104:29,30).

In the Scriptures, there is no expectation in death, but 
in life. Death is an enemy not a friend. Expectation is in 
resurrection—life out from among the dead. As the apostle 
Paul said before King Agrippa, “Why is it being judged 
unbelievable by you, if God is rousing the dead?” (Acts 26:8).

The earliest inspired testimony concerning death is given 
to us in the book of Job: “The Lord, He gives, and the Lord, 
He takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this, 
Job neither sinned nor ascribed anything improper to God” 
(Job 1:21). In the midst of his terrible time of trial, Job said, 
“Why did I not die from the womb, from the belly come 
forth and breathe my last? For what reason did two knees 
anticipate me, and why the two breasts that I could suck? 
For now I would lie and be quiet; I would sleep; then there 
would be rest for me . . . . There the wicked leave off all 
disturbance, and there those wearied from vigor are rest-
ing. Prisoners are tranquil together; They do not hear the 
voice of the taskmaster. Small and great, he is there, and 
the servant is free from his lords” (Job 3:11-13,17-19).

“A human, born of a woman, is short of days and sur-
feited with disturbance. He comes forth like a blossom 
and is snipped off; He races away like a shadow and does 
not stand . . . . His days are decided, the number of his 
months are set by You, and You have made his statutory 
time, which he cannot surpass . . . . His sons may attain 
glory, yet he does not know it; Or they may be discredit-
ed, yet he does not understand it of them . . . . If a man 
dies shall he live again? All the days of my enlistment I 
shall wait until my relief comes. You shall call, and I shall 
answer You; You shall long for the work of Your hands” 
(Job 14:1,2,5,14,15,21).

The Dead Know Nothing

“As for mortal man, his days are like grass, like a blos-
sum of the field, so is he blossoming” (Ps. 103:15). “Let 
me praise Yahweh throughout my life; let me make melody 
to my Elohim through all my future. Do not trust in patrons, 
in a son of humanity with whom there is no salvation. His 
spirit shall go forth, and he shall return to his ground; 
in that day his reflections perish” (Ps. 145:2-4). Similarly, in 
Ecclesiastes, we read, “No man has authority over the 
spirit to detain the spirit, and no one has authority over 
day of death” (Ecc. 8:8). “This is the evil in all that is 
done under the sun: that one destiny is for all: . . . For 
the living know that they shall die, but the dead know 
nothing whatsoever . . . . All that your hand finds to do, 
do with your vigor, for there is no doing or devising or 
knowledge or wisdom in the unseen where you are going” 
(Ecc. 9:3,5,10).

James said, “Let the humble brother be glorying in his 
exaltation, yet the rich in his humiliation, for, as the flower 
of grass, shall he pass by” (James 1:10); we “ . . . are not 
versed in that which is the morrow’s, for what is your life? 
For a vapor are you, which is appearing briefly and there-
upon disappearing” (James 4:14).

The promise to and so the expectation of the believer, 
is “to be conformed to the image of [God’s] Son” (Rom. 
8:29), to enjoy a characteristic likeness to Him. As well, 
“We are awaiting a Saviour, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who 
will transfigure the body of our humiliation to conform it 
to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which 
enables Him even to subject all to Himself” (Phil. 3:20,21).

It is surely a cause of rejoicing that it may be said of 
God that, “He does not humiliate from His heart, nor is 
He afflicting the sons of humanity, to crush beneath His 
feet all the prisoners of the earth . . . . Indeed though He 
afflicts, yet He has compassion according to the abundance 
of His benignities (Lam. 3:32). It is true that “God locks up
Christ Jesus Abolishes Death

all together in stubbornness,” yet it is just as true that He
does so “that He should be merciful to all” (Rom.11:32).

God disciplines those of whom He is fond (cp Heb.12:
7-11; Rev.3:19), and He is fond of humanity (Titus 3:4). We
can be sure that God will be doing all things well, exercising
judgment founded upon His love, for He cannot deny
Himself (2 Tim.2:13), and “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

The Scripture speaks in many places of manifestations
of divine indignation, of sorrow, of suffering, and of the
retribution which must be. It must be that all these things
are true. While we must not seek to mitigate them or deny
them, neither must we increase their severity or protract
their duration. That is to say, in the Scriptures, all of the
bad news, is true news, but none of it denies the good news.

The good news is that “our Saviour, God . . . wills that
all mankind be saved and come into a realization of
the truth”: that “Christ Jesus is giving Himself a correspon-
dent Ransom for all . . . I am telling the truth I am not
lying” (1 Tim.2:4,6,7).

The good news is that “the living God . . . is the Saviour
of all mankind, especially of believers”—not exclusively
of believers (1 Tim.4:10). The good news is that “God is
vivifying all” (1 Tim.6:13), that “Christ Jesus . . . abolishes
death, yet illuminates life and incorruption through the
gospel of which [Paul, the apostle] was appointed a her-
ad and an apostle and a teacher of the nations.” As he
said, “For which cause I am suffering . . . , but I am not
ashamed, for I am aware Whom I have believed, and I am
persuaded that He is able to guard that which is com-
mited to me, for that day” (2 Tim.1:10-12).

“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” (Rom.5:18).

“Being justified gratuitously in [God’s] grace, through the
deliverance which is in Christ Jesus,” this good news, is

Glad Tidings to Sinners

“for all . . . for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of
God” (Rom.3:22-24).

The good news is that God “is operating all in accord
with the counsel of His will” (Eph.1:11b), and that “the
secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He
purposed in [Christ]), is, one day, “to have an administra-
tion of the complement of the eras.” The purpose of this
future divine operation is “to head up all in the Christ, . . . in
Whom our lot was cast also” (Eph.9:2-11a), and, “to re-
concile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His
cross), through [Christ], whether those on the earth or
those in the heavens” (Col.1:20). God is saying, “Should
it not, as I likened it, so come to be, and as I counseled it,
be arising?” (cp Isa.14:24). “All My counsel shall be con-
firmed, and all My desire will I do . . . . Indeed, I speak!
Indeed, I will bring it about!” (Isa.46:10,11).

Ultimately speaking, the needs of all men, one as much
as another, are fully met in the saving work of Christ, Who
tasted death for the sake of everyone (Heb.2:9). “For the
love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, 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.
6:7b). “For what was impossible to the law, in which it was
infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son
in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin, He con-
demns sin in the flesh” (Rom.8:3). “Behold! the Lamb of
God which is taking away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

The gospel is an announcement of glad tidings to sinners,
not a selfish scheme for gain for the sake of opportunists.
One may possess great riches of which he is ignorant. As
with the slaves during the American civil war who heard
and believed the news of their emancipation, we do not
make the gospel of our salvation true by believing it. When
we believe, we only enter into a realization and apprecia-
tion of what is already true.
Our Glorious Expectation

“For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, all will be made to live. Yet each in His own class: The Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ’s in His presence; thereafter, the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet . . . . Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be ‘All in all’ (1 Cor.15:22-28).

The glorious word of expectation for the believer personally is this: “For, if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him. For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose, for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, console one another with these words” (1 Thess.4:13-18).

To [the reposing believer], to his consciousness, this glorious moment will occur instantaneously to the moment of his death, rejoicing to be reunited with his [wife, his children,] his fellow believers, and eventually with all whom he knew throughout his many years of life. For the rest of us who are called upon to wait for that day, the day of Christ’s appearing, we say, May it come soon (cp 2 Tim.4:8)!

James Coram
10 These are the genealogical records of Shem: Two years after the deluge, when Shem was 100 years old, he begot Arphaxad. 11 After his begetting Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and begot sons and daughters.

12 As for Arphaxad, when he had lived 135 years, he begot Cainan. 13 After his begetting Cainan, Arphaxad lived 403 years and begot sons and daughters.

14 As for Cainan, when he had lived 130 years, he begot Shelah. 15 After his begetting Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and begot sons and daughters. Then he died.

16 As for Shelah, when he had lived 130 years, he begot Eber. 17 After his begetting Eber, Shelah lived 330 years and begot sons and daughters.

18 As for Eber, when he had lived 134 years and begot Peleg, 19 After his begetting Peleg, Eber lived 270 years and begot sons and daughters.

20 As for Peleg, when he had lived 130 years and begot Reu, 21 After his begetting Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and begot sons and daughters.

22 As for Reu, when he had lived 132 years and begot Serug, 23 After his begetting Serug, Reu lived 207 years and begot sons and daughters.

24 As for Serug, when he had lived 130 years and begot Nahor, 25 After his begetting Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and begot sons and daughters.

26 As for Nahor, when he had lived 79 years and begot Terah, 27 After his begetting Terah, Nahor lived 129 years and begot sons and daughters.
From Shem to Terah

26 + Terah lived 70 years and begot Abram, Nahor and Haran.

GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF SHEM

As the purpose of Yahweh was to rule the world through a chosen nation, and this was to come through Noah’s son Shem, he is given two genealogies (Gen.10:21-31; 11:10-26). The first, like that of Ham and Japheth, traces his descendants in a general way, with no special future nation in view. The other is confined to what may be called the Messianic line, as it is repeated in Christ’s genealogy in Luke (3:23-28). These two genealogies coincide as far as Peleg (Distributor), for then the land was distributed (10:25). Beyond that the annals complete the gap up to Abram, for through him Yahweh purposed to raise up a nation through whom all the rest should be ruled and blessed (11:10-26).

GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF TERAH

After the annals of the sons of Noah have been briefly presented, we are introduced to a group through whom would come the nation and the To-Subjector of all the rest. Terah, like Noah, had three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and a grandson Lot, like Canaan. But Haran died, and Nahor did not go with them all the way, so our chief interest is centered in Abram. His name signifies Father-high (Ab-rm), but he had no son, or any prospects of having one. He was nothing but “a lost Aramean” (Deut.26:5) who served other elohim (Joshua 24:2). Yet through him and his seed, under His greater Seed, the subjection of the nations will be accomplished in the next eon, the messianic millennial kingdom.

IDOLATRY

Both the beginning and end of this eon find the world steeped in idolatry. At the end, after the saints have left this scene at the call of Christ in the air, the man of sin will demand the worship of all (cf 2 Thess.2:7-10; Rev.13). In the beginning almost every division of mankind had its false god. Even the line of Shem and the ancestors of Abram no longer worshiped Yahweh Elohim, but had their own idols (cf Gen.31:19; 35:2).

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

The general tendency of humanity is to avoid God (Rom. 3:11,12). There were times in the world’s history, such as the period we are now considering, when all had turned away from Elohim. As Psalms 14:2-3 puts it:

Yahweh, He gazes down from the heavens
on the sons of humanity,
To see whether there is anyone acting intelligently,
Anyone seeking after Elohim.
All withdraw aside; together they are spoiled.
There is no one doing good; There is not even one.

Since the time of Abram there seems to have been a continuous line of those who worshiped Him. So also before the deluge, and afterward in the line of Shem, until we come to Terah and his sons. Joshua, at Shechem, speaking to Israel, told them that Terah, the father of Abram and Nahor, served other elohim (Joshua 24:2-3). So such seems to be the crisis in which Abram was called, and the new administration of Promise was begun. When the situation was most unpromising, and there seemed to be no possibility of future blessing, then the promises began which eventually lead to the blessing of all.

Abram’s relatives in the east continued to worship other elohim as is shown in the conversation between Jacob and Laban, when Jacob ran away and Laban overtook him on his return to Canaan. Laban said, “The Elohim of your father yesternight spoke to me,” and, “Why have you stolen my elohim?” (Gen.31:29,30).

THE DEATH OF TERAH

The genealogical annals of Terah are very long (Gen. 11:27-25:11), yet he himself died almost at the beginning. Abram has no annals for himself, even though the record of his activities (12-25:11) are about the longest in the whole record. Terah started Abram’s history by leaving Ur (LIGHT) of the Chaldeans (Demoniacal). It is possible that this indicates their forsaking the teaching of demons. Terah headed his party for the land of Canaan. But he went no farther than Charan (HEATED), for he died there.

A Father Who is Childless

ABRAM’S PHYSICAL SIDE SUPPRESSED

When musing upon the book of the Beginning we may wonder why there are no genealogical records of Abraham. We have annals of Adam, Noah, Shem, Terah, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, and Jacob, but none of the one who has the most prominent place, and, in some ways, influenced this eon more than any other. These all, however, are concerned primarily with the physical aspect, in which there is generation. But, in Abram’s case, this side is suppressed as much as possible. Figuratively speaking, he had no physical offspring. Even when he did generate the promised seed, he sacrificed him in a figure. This is the side of his history which is stressed, and which calls for the lack of physical annals, but an unusually long spiritual record (Heb.11:12; Rom.4:19).

Abram (FATHER-HIGH) had a very appropriate and suggestive name. To be sure it must have been very tantalizing to him during the long years when he was a father without a single child, let alone a son. This may account partly for the actions of his wife. In those days this was deemed a downright disgrace, altogether apart from his suggestive appellation. Yet how fine it is, when applied to his spiritual family! (Rom.4:11). All who believe are his offspring. Most of those who read these lines have the right to call him my Abram, my exalted father, in faith.

ABRAHAM

The name Abram refers to his spiritual seed, while he was figuratively dead. When his physical seed is promised, the name is enriched by a single letter, in order to conform to this further blessing. Instead of Ab-rm, he is now Ab-r-e-m. This seems to be abbreviated from Ab-rm-em (FATHER-HIGH-CLAMOB, or -throng), and is based on the fact he is to become the forefather of a throng of nations (Gen.17:5-6). These were to be identified by the sign of
circumcision, to remind them of their spiritual heritage, for even his physical seed sprang from flesh already dead-ened (Rom.4:19). He had to be invigorated by faith, which they also greatly need.

A. E. Knoch

SEPTUAGINT READINGS IN GENESIS

The ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, indicates that the Hebrew text from which it was translated was different in certain instances from the Hebrew text available to us today (called the Masoretic Text). The Concordant Version of Genesis often follows the Septuagint readings, placing the Masoretic Text reading in a footnote. This is especially so when the Samaritan text is in agreement with the Septuagint.

A special case is the addition of a generation in the list of Shem’s descendants between Arphaxad and Shelah in Genesis 10:24 and 11:12,13 (also in 1 Chronicles 1:18,24). That Arphaxad’s son was Cainan, and Shelah his grandson, is confirmed by Luke 3:36. (We have recently used the spelling “Kenan” for both the son of Enosh in Genesis 5:9-14 and the son of Arphaxad in Genesis 10:24, as was done by the AV in 1 Chronicles 1:2, but revert now to the more familiar spelling of “Cainan” in all these passages.)

We also use the Septuagint readings in Genesis 5 and 11 (sometimes supported by the Samaritan text) for the ages of the patriarchs when the particular son being listed was born. The effect is to extend the length of time noted by Scripture both from Adam to Noah and from Shem to Abraham.

These and associated details were discussed in an article by Brother E. H. Clayton, entitled “The Genealogies of Genesis,” in Unsearchable Riches, volume 40, pages 223-239.
WHAT WAS GOD THINKING OF?

The wisdom of God is so great, says the apostle Paul, that even those divine acts which seem stupid are wiser than human wisdom (1 Cor.1:25). Actually Paul is referring to one particular divine operation, the crucifixion of Christ. God's wisdom, power and righteousness are displayed here as in no other work; indeed all the acts of God ultimately find their reason in the cross of Christ and its results.

But before the death of God's Son, God first laid down the pattern of His wisdom in His work of creation. What was God thinking of when He created the heavens and the earth? He was thinking of that which would be very good (Gen.1:31). This is not altered by the coming in of chaos, vacancy and darkness as recorded in Genesis 1:2. In fact the great goodness of Genesis 1:31 could not have been manifest apart from the contrast with the great evil of Genesis 1:2, which also must be traced finally to God (cf Isa.45:7).

Here is a most important scriptural principle: Evil is never God's goal, but rather a means to His goal of good. Evil cannot be permanent; it is not eternal. The cross of Christ sees to that.

THE CREATION OF THE HUMAN

What also was God thinking of when He created humanity? Again, according to the first chapter of Genesis, He was thinking of a vast throng of human beings which would fill the earth and subdue it and sway over the creatures of sea and air and land (Gen.1:27,28).

The first chapter of God's Word sets forth the glory of God's thinking. Darkness and chaos are necessary, but they
are not permanent and are only a means for the light and magnitude of His greatness to be made known and appreciated and enjoyed by His creatures.

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

Let us look again at the details as they developed in Genesis chapter two. What was God thinking of when He created the human as a living soul with eyesight and desires, and then placed the human where He had planted a tree with desirable fruit which He warned Adam not to eat, and then, having travailed in forming the fugitive serpent (Job 26:13), left Eve, whom He had formed out of Adam, alone with that embodiment of the Adversary? We have traced the story over and over. We take it as a word from God, a beginning word, a very basic revelation of a very fundamental operation of God with respect to humanity. And we ask this question which we certainly ought to ask, What was God thinking of?

Was He thinking of a great test to find out those who really are deserving of life and glory because they freely choose to honor Him, apart from His interference in any way, in the midst of the temptations and pressures of a wicked world? Did He not know that there would be only a few, like Abel, Noah and Abraham, who would stand out from the rest in their trust in Him, and they only as they were given grace and faith from Him, and even then they would be without perfection in righteousness? Did He have in mind a great and eternal division of His creation, a hell of hopelessness filled with darkness and stubbornness, selfishness and depravity, forever and ever, and a heaven of bliss with no burden of concern for those in hell?

No, in all His operations as He paved the way for the drama in Eden, God was thinking of His goal which is the achievement of that which is very good. God subjected the creation to vanity “in expectation that the creation itself,

A Descent of Yahweh

also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom.8:20,21). “God locks up all in stubbornness that He should be merciful to all” (Rom.11:32).

GOD DOES NOT FORGET HIS GOAL

When we see this, and then see the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection, all the mysteriousness of God’s operations recounted from Genesis 2:4 forward, and continuing in the experience of everyone even today is on the way to disappearance.

DIVINE DEEDS AT BABEL

In reviewing God’s actions in Genesis, we have come now to chapter eleven and the account of the tower of Babel:

“Then Yahweh descended to see the city and the tower that the sons of humanity had built. Yahweh said: Behold, they are a single people with the same language for all of them; and this is what they start to do. Now anything they plan to do will not be restricted for them. Grant attention! Let us descend and let us disintegrate their language there, so that each man may not hearken to the language of his associate. Then Yahweh scattered them from there over the surface of the entire earth, and they left off building the city and the tower. Therefore one called its name Babel, because there Yahweh disintegrated the language of the entire earth, and Yahweh scattered them from there over the surface of the entire earth” (Gen.11:5-9).

What was God thinking of in these works of descent, disintegration and scattering?

God’s Word here provides the immediate reason for these actions. It was because the people God had made were attempting to work out their plan to make a name for themselves and unite together in the land of Shinar. They were doing what leaders throughout the world still long
to do in joining together in a common effort for their own glory. This will indeed be undertaken again as we read in the book of Revelation. But here at the beginning of the present eon, God stopped it by confusing their means of communication.

We can thus see what God was thinking of as far as the immediate situation was concerned. But God had not forgotten His purpose for humanity in accord with His design and will for good. His works of descending and disintegrating and scattering in Genesis 11 were temporary steps. They show forth the folly of human ways and contribute to the great lesson of reliance on God and appreciation of His will. So also Yahweh’s later works of descent for the purpose of disintegration and scattering spoken of in passages such as Psalm 144:5,6 and Isaiah 64:1-3 and the descent of the Lord in the last days of this eon prepare the way for God’s operation for good centered in His Son, Jesus Christ.

HE WHO DESCENDS

We need to look at the very most important descent of all, to get a glimpse of what was in God’s mind even in Genesis 11. This descent was that of our Lord to the lower parts of the earth, where He would humble Himself even to the death of the cross (Eph.4:9; Phil.2:8). And concerning that descent, the Scriptures testify that “He Who descends is the Same Who ascends also, up over all who of the heavens, that He should be completing the all” (Eph.4:10).

This completion of all was in God’s mind in Genesis 11 and always in God’s works of indignation, judgment and destruction, as it is also more obviously in His works of grace and rescue. What a great blessing there is for us in keeping this also in our mind as we live in this present wicked eon.

D.H.H.
CONFLICTS AND LEADERSHIP
(2 Samuel 10)

10 + It occurred afterward that the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son Hanun reigned in his stead. 2 + David said, I shall show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me. + So by means of his courtiers, David sent word to console him over his father. + But when David's courtiers came to the land of the sons of Ammon, + then the chief officials of the sons of Ammon said to their lord Hanun, Is David glorifying your father in your eyes because he sent consolers to you? Is it not rather in order to sound out the city, + to spy in it and to overturn it that David sent his courtiers to you?

4 + So Hanun took David's courtiers + shaved off a half side of their beards; + he cut their coats in half up to their buttocks and sent them away. 5 + When others told David about it, + he sent to meet them, for the men had been utterly put to shame. + So the king said, + Remain in Jericho! + When your beard sprouts, + then you can return.

6 + The sons of Ammon discerned that they were in bad odor with David. + So the sons of Ammon sent and hired Syrians of Beth-rehob and Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 men on foot, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and Ish-tob with 12,000 men. 7 + When David heard of it, + he sent Joab with the entire military host and the masters of war. + Then the sons of Ammon marched forth and arranged themselves for the battle at the portal of the city, + while the Syrians of Zobah and Rehob,
Ish-tob and Maacah were alone by themselves in the field. 9 When Joab saw that the battle-line was against him both from front and from rear, then he chose some of all the choice men of Israel and arrayed them to meet the Syrians. 10 The rest of the soldiers he gave into the hand of his brother Abishai and arrayed them to meet the sons of Ammon. 11 And he said, If the Syrians are too steadfast for me, then you come to my aid. 12 But if the sons of Ammon are too steadfast for you, then I will go ahead of you. 13 Be steadfast and let us encourage ourselves in behalf of our people and in behalf of the cities of our Elohim. 14 As for Yahweh, He shall do what is good in His eyes.

15 When Joab and the soldiers with him drew close for the battle against the Syrians, they fled before him. 16 Hadadezer sent messengers and brought forth the Syrians who were from across the stream; they came to Helam with Shobach, chief of Hadadezer’s military host before them. 17 When this was told to David, then he gathered all of Israel’s men, crossed the Jordan and advanced to Helam. 18 Now the Syrians drew up in battle array to meet David and fought against him. 19 Yet the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed of the Syrians seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand men on foot. He also smote Shobach, the chief of their host, who died there. 20 When all the kings, the servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were stricken before Israel, 21 then they made peace with Israel and served them; and the Syrians feared to save the sons of Ammon any more.

HUMILIATION AND WARFARE

The tenth chapter of 2 Samuel gives further details of some of the military conquests summarized in chapter eight. It is not surprising that Nahash would have shown some kindness to David (2 Sam.10:2). Nahash would have been an embittered enemy with Saul since the events of 1 Samuel 11, and he could easily have perceived David as a threat to Saul. David’s intentions toward the son of Nahash were friendly, but Hanun’s advisors did not interpret them as such (10:3). Israel had been successfully expanding its borders all around, and the Ammonites assumed that David had aggressive, ulterior motives. Their response was probably impulsive, and it lacked little of being a formal challenge to warfare.

BEARDS IN THE ANCIENT EAST

Beards were a mark of manliness, and in some cases freedom. In some cultures of that time slaves were required to shave their beards. There are even records of men dying in battle rather than allowing their beards to be shaved. Beards were generally well kept and an object of pride. When David feigned madness at the gates of Gath, the convincing detail of his pretense was letting his spittle run down on his beard (1 Sam.21:13).

The half naked, half shaved emissaries of David (2 Sam. 10:4) would have been ridiculed and mocked their whole journey departing from Ammonite territory. Hanun’s treatment of the emissaries was a formal declaration of his opinion of King David and of Israel as a nation.

THE ENSUING CONFlict

Realizing the severity of their offense to Israel, the Ammonites hired Syrian mercenaries to fight the Israelites. The Syrians probably expected they would eventu-
ally have to battle the ascending Israelite nation, so the Ammonite wages were just a help to their own preparations. The Ammonites stationed themselves in front of one of their walled cities, providing themselves with safe retreat, and the Syrians were left to earn their wages in the open field (10:6-8).

The Syrian force was the more formidable of the two, and Joab chose to meet them himself with hand-picked troops. The Israelites were in a compromising situation, but God caused both the Ammonites and the Syrians to flee before them (2 Sam.10:9-14).

The greatest benefit of this initial victory was a temporary deliverance of Israel from a precarious situation. Neither foe was actually defeated. The Syrians regrouped and returned in full force against Israel. David led the full force of Israel against the Syrians and defeated them soundly (10:15-19). After this Joab led a large Israelite force against the Ammonites. Israel dominated that battle, and the Ammonites retreated to the royal city, Rabbah. Joab then lay siege to Rabbah, a condition which continued for quite some time (cf 2 Sam.11:1;12:26).

CONFLICTS WITH AMMON

This was the third significant conflict between Israel and the Ammonites of which we have biblical record. In all three of these instances the Scriptures take note of shame and reproach on Israel as they underwent trial at the hands of the Ammonites. In each case the shame was related to Israel’s leadership.

The first instance is recorded in Judges 10:6-11:40. Israel had forsaken Yahweh and was worshipping the gods of neighboring countries, even of countries which they had defeated. In poetic justice, the unfaithful nation was only granted victory and freedom after naming Jephthah, the shamed son of a prostitute, their leader. The vow involv-

Need of Leadership

ing Jephthah’s only daughter left him without descendants, showing that Israel had not yet found continuing leadership that would bring them peace.

The second conflict with the Ammonites was that which confirmed Saul’s anointing as king and leader of Israel (1 Sam.10:27b [restored text]-11:11). The words of Nahash, king of the Ammonites, showed that his intention was to reproach the entire Israelite nation by his cruel treatment of the Gadites and Reubenites (1 Sam.11:2).

After the victory Samuel and the people went to Gilgal to renew the kingship of Israel (1 Sam.11:4). Nahash was mentioned in Samuel’s speech to Israel as being a cause for Israel’s request for a king (1 Sam.12:12). This desire for a king was to Israel’s shame, for it was the voicing of their rejection of Yahweh as their King (1 Sam.8:7).

The third conflict with Ammon begins here in 2 Samuel 10. It continues to unfold through chapters 11 and 12 which relate the most shameful episode of David’s life, his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah. Uriah would die at the walls of the Ammonite city, Rabbah, and David’s house would suffer unending turmoil and conflict because of his actions during that siege (2 Sam.12:7-12).

OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST

The believer’s leadership in life is God’s guidance through Jesus Christ. The Lordship of Christ is vital in every aspect of our lives. The declaration of saving faith, that God has raised Christ from the dead, goes hand in hand with the avowing that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom.10:9). The Lordship of Christ is also preeminent in bringing the fulfillment of God’s purpose to the universe. It is through the universal acclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord that God receives the greatest glory, and His purpose is completed (Phil.2:9-11). Jephthah and Saul brought great deliverance to Israel,
The Lordship of Jesus Christ

and yet both of these fell far short of David’s representation of Christ. Yet even David is only a dim shadow of the glorious One to Whom we are devoted. Whenever the leadership of our lives becomes something other than His Lordship, it is always to our shame. By His grace, may we honor Him daily and be faithful to the One Whom God has designated as Lord.

J. Philip Scranton

JUNE FERGUSON

Our good friend and sister in the Lord, June [Mallory] Ferguson, was put to repose on August 11, 2003, in Grangeville, Idaho. She loved the Word of God and deeply appreciated the grace of God which is revealed in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. For her, personally, and continually in her life, the evangel was the power of God for salvation.

God gave her many blessings of family, home and a setting among the mountains and streams of the northwest, yet, as must be, there were struggles and sad times along the way. Her disposition was a positive one in accord with her faith in God and reliance on Him as the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. She was preceded in death by her husband, Dale, but is survived by their four children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

GEORGE KNOWLES

George Knowles, of Deerfield Beach, Florida, passed away on July 15. Brother Knowles was a good friend and a long-time supporter of our ministry.

In his youth, George became acquainted with the Concordant ministry and with the teaching of the eventual salvation of all mankind, through the evangelistic work of Adlai Loudy, through whom he learned both a strong reverence for Scripture and the importance of giving careful attention to its declarations, accurately translated.

On many occasions we were encouraged not only by George’s kindness to us personally, but by the strength and stability of his faith. His quiet way, thoughtful speech, and unusually strong faith were a blessing to many. We share a sense of loss with all his family and friends, finding consolation and comfort where he also always found it, in faith and expectation centered in Christ Jesus.
GRACE IN FAITHFUL SERVICE

It is by no means inconsistent to call to duty those who
are wholly dependent upon God for the fulfillment of that
very duty. The voice of entreaty does not implore us to do
what we can do, of ourselves, but what we must do if we
would be faithful and well pleasing to God.

The word of entreaty affirms that which we ought to do,
that which it is imperative that we do, not that concerning
which we have no need of saving grace.

Indeed, upon occasion, entreaty must become rebuke
(cf 2 Tim.4:2), even if tempered with compassion. Yet even
here it does not approach the objects of its severity as ones
who are somehow in possession of a power of self-suffi-
ciency by means of which they are well able to do the ideal,
even if they have never done so. To the contrary, the one
who would faithfully entreat others, first of all, is keenly
aware that the disease of the sinner is no trivial infirmity in
the presence of which the constitutionally able, nonetheless,
mysteriously, sometimes err, but is rather a disabling
malady of vast proportions which proves its presence by
the fallen deeds of its victims. Such ones need not a lit-
tle “helper” whom they can control, but rather a great and
mighty Saviour Who will control them.

Since this is the reality of their situation, we do them
no favor by failing to make this clear to them. Indeed,
should they now succeed where once they failed, apart
from a knowledge of the true nature of their infirmity hith-
erto, they will boast partly in themselves in their renewal,
and so fail to thank God alone for the very victory which
they now enjoy.

Exposure (i.e., making the facts known) concerning our
duty, together with concomitant entreaty for “logical divine
service” (cf Rom.12:1,2), is often the means of grace unto
repentance which God employs to awaken us, first of all
to a sense of our duty (cf Titus 2:4), and then to a con-
cern that we might be fulfilling it. It is that those who
have believed God as to the mercy of their salvation might
become concerned for faithfulness, that this revelation is
made known to us. It has been manifested to us that it is
“not for works which are wrought in righteousness which
we do, but according to His mercy, [that] He saves us”
(Titus 3:5), in order “that those who have believed God
may be concerned to preside for ideal acts” (Titus 3:8).
EDITORIAL

The transition from young adulthood to the onset of agedness occurs over the span of only about thirty years (cp Acts 7:58; Philemon 9). As one who is now at the latter end of this transition, as I contemplate my friends of many years, I must, in the words of the hymn, declare, “Change and decay in all around I see . . . .” Yet these words are sung not only by myself with my friends in mind, but by my friends with myself in mind.

We are all dying. Even if our conscience is good before God, simply in consideration of the sheer brevity of life and with an awareness of the impendency of death, we are apt to identify all too closely with the words of Peter to Sapphira: “Lo! the feet of those who entomb your husband are at the door, and they shall be carrying you out” (Acts 5:9b).

Indeed, if we view things solely on the surface, we are apt repeatedly to find ourselves with “despair” in our heart (Ecc. 2:20). After all, “Since the destiny of the stupid man is also mine, and it shall befall me, to what advantage then have I been wise? Hence I spoke in my heart, This too is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise man or the stupid man for the eon; in the days which are already coming everyone is forgotten; alas, the wise man dies along with the stupid one! Then I hated life, for to me the work was evil that was done under the sun, for the whole is vanity and a grazing on wind” (Ecc. 2:15b-17).

Disappointment, discouragement and depression; decay, disease, dying and death; habitual sin, addiction and shame; decadence, depravity and wickedness; sadness, sorrow and misery; tragedy, horror, pain and suffering; these evil afflictions are common to man.
The Untenableness of “Free Will”

Do you see the problem here? God is love (1 John 4:8); He is Almighty (2 Cor.6:18); He is the only and wise God (Rom.16:27); He alone is good (Luke 18:19); He alone makes the world and all that is in it (Acts 17:24); yet the world contains an abundance of evil.

Some, attempting a “free will defense,” have claimed that God has endowed man with a power of “free will,” that is, with a power of ultimate control over his own decisions. Since man has misused this power, sin and suffering, dying and death have been the result.

Such an “explanation,” however, explains nothing. In the face of such a grand purported power, how are we to account for man’s having misused this power so egregiously, and for that matter, why did he misuse it at all? If man was so utterly “free,” why did he not instead use his freedom wisely and well, on every occasion and under all circumstances? Or, if man in himself was morally “neutral,” how did he ever arrive at any decisions at all, being intrinsically perfectly indifferent both to good and to evil?

Furthermore, this notion of ultimate control over one’s decisions, termed free will, which claims that one’s decisions are the result neither of causality nor of a lack of causality, is an incoherent notion in violation of the law of the excluded middle,\(^1\) and so cannot possibly be true. This is because any given event either occurs due to a cause or else it does not. If it should occur due to a cause, one has no control over its occurrence; its occurrence is inevitable. And, if it should occur without a cause and due to nothing at all, one still has no control over its occurrence: even though its occurrence is not inevitable, it is neverthe-

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1. In logic, the law of the excluded middle entails that a statement (e.g., “Causality exists”) is either true or else it is not. No third possibility exists. If either that statement’s truthfulness or falsity precludes the truthfulness of a certain other statement (e.g., “Free will exists”), that other statement cannot be true.

Facing Plain Declarations of Faith

less not avoidable; after all, such an event simply suddenly appears, due to nothing whatsoever. It is evident, then, on logical grounds alone, that any “free will defense,” however cherished, is doomed to failure.

But the even more serious charge against the free will defense is its unbelief. God has revealed to us that He is the Almighty; therefore, no one can have any power of any kind independent of Him. Further, He has revealed to us that He makes the world and all that is in it, declaring that He “has made everything for its own pertinent end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil” (Prov.16:4).

If there is a “problem of evil” it exists (in our eyes) because God is love, is Almighty, is wise, and is good. Yet He makes all, and makes all for a purpose—\emph{even the wicked}. Even so, He is righteous in all His ways, and benign in all His works (Ps.145:17).

Many have seen that the free will defense fails, and that in any case it is not much of a defense. Yet even those few who intelligently acknowledge God’s supremacy and deity over all (commonly termed His “sovereignty”), who nevertheless assume the validity of the orthodox teaching of the eternal damnation of the lost, have pronounced the “problem of evil” an irresolvable mystery.

It is understandable that they should make such a pronouncement. After all, if, above all, God is love, and if He is the Almighty, Who is good, wise, purposeful, and righteous, Who has made all that exists and all that occurs—all being out of, through, and for Him, and to His glory (Rom.11:36)—\emph{how is it that there is an eternal hell of punishment to which vast numbers of His beloved creatures will be interminably subjected}? If such an awful scenario were true, then Love could not bless many of Its beloved, nor could many of Its beloved respond in love to their Benefactor.

If God either does not even will the salvation of all, or
Rejoicing in God, our Saviour

wills it but cannot achieve it, then either the universality of His love is denied, or the universality of His power.

How privileged we are to know that, “in the grace of God,” God determined that “[Christ] should be tasting death for the sake of everyone” (Heb.2:9). Thus it is that God is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10). All for whom salvation is designed will be saved, for salvation is in grace. And salvation is designed for all; hence, all will be saved.

Since God is love, and is righteous, good, and wise, besides being One Who makes all for its own pertinent end, it becomes evident that evil would not exist at all unless the form and degree in which it does exist were to accord with God’s love, even as with His righteousness, goodness, wisdom, and purpose.

It is clear that God cannot be glorified as Saviour and that humans cannot be blessed with salvation unless there are sinners to be saved. Therefore, the evil of sin and sinners must exist; it is but the dictate of wisdom that this should be so. Rather than being “shocked” that this should be so, we should rather be shocked were this not so.

Surely the almighty God, Who is love, would see to it that any certain evil did not exist, unless it were wise and needful to His purpose that it should exist. In that case, He would cause it to exist—for His own glory and in order to bless His creatures in a greater way than would otherwise be possible.

In making testimony to such little known things of consequence as considered herein, our prayer to God is that even if we are becoming somewhat “aged,” that we might still be able to continue on for some time in useful service to Him through the ministry in which He has placed us. And, we pray as well that many of our friends will be likewise graced to continue on as our associates and supporters in common cause, “for God and His Word,” in the ministry of the Concordant Publishing Concern. J.R.C.
Studies in Genesis

PROMISE AND FAITH
(Genesis 12)

12 + Yahweh said to Abram: Go by yourself from your land, + from your kindred and from your father’s house to the land that I shall show you.
2 + I shall make you into a great nation,
   And I shall bless you;
   + I shall indeed make your name great,
   And you will be a blessing;
3 + I shall indeed bless those blessing you,
   And I shall curse the one maledicting you.
   + In you all the families of the ground will be blessed.
4 + So Abram went just as Yahweh had told him; and Lot went with him. + Abram was 75 years old when he was going forth from Charan. 5 And Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot and all their goods that they had gotten and every soul they had acquired in Charan; + they went forth to go to the land of Canaan, and they entered to the land of Canaan.
6 + Then Abram passed through the land as far as the place of Shechem to the high oak. + The Canaanite was then dwelling in the land. 7 + Yet Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him: To your seed I shall give this land. + Then Abram built there an altar to Yahweh Who had appeared to him. 8 + From there he shifted toward the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent there with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east.
   + He built an altar there to Yahweh and called on the
Name of Yahweh. 9 +Then Abram ‘decamped to go’ + in stages toward the Negev.
10 +Now there + was + a + famine + in + the + land; “so Abram went ‘down to’ Egypt + to + sojourn + there, + for + the + famine + was + heavy in + the + land. 11 +And + it + came + to + be + just + as + ‘Abram’ + got near to + enter Egypt’ + “that + he + said + to + his + wife + Sarai: ‘Behold’ “I + know + that + you + are + a + woman, + lovely + of + appearance. 12 +So + it + will + ‘occur + when + the + Egyptian + men + see + you, + * + they + will + say, + This + is + his + wife. + * + Then + they + will + kill + me, + “but + * + keep + you + alive. 13 +* + Please + say + that + you + are + my + sister, + so + that + it + may + go + ‘well + with + me +’ + for + your + sake, + and + my + soul + will + remain + alive + due + to + you.

14 + + It + came + to + ‘be + + when + Abram + entered + Egypt, + + the + Egyptian + men + ‘saw + the + woman + that + she + was + very + lovely. 15 +* + Also + Pharaoh’s + chief + officials + ‘saw + her + and + ‘praised + her + to + Pharaoh, + and + the + woman + was + ‘taken + to + Pharaoh’s + house. 16 + + On + ‘account + of + her + it + ‘went + well + with + Abram; + and + it + came + to + ‘be + that + he + ‘had + a + flock + of + sheep, + + a + herd + of + cattle, + and + donkeys, + + + maidservants, + + jennies + and + camels.

17 + + Then + Yahweh + ‘touched + Pharaoh + and + ‘his + household + with + great + * + and + evil + * + contagions + on + account + of + Sarai, + Abram’s + wife. 18 +* + So + Pharaoh + ‘called + Abram + and + ‘said: + What + is + this + that + you + have + done + to + me? + Why + did + you + not + tell + me + that + she + is + your + wife? 19 +Why + did + you + say, + She + is + my + sister, + “so + that + I + was + about + to + ‘take + her + for + me +’ + as + a + wife? + + Now + + if + your + wife; + ‘take + her + and + go. 20 +And + Pharaoh + ‘instructed + men + to + oversee + him, + and + they + ‘sent + away + ‘him + and + ‘his + wife + and + ‘all + + that + he + ‘had, + ‘and + Lot + went + with + him”.

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PROMISE, A NEW DEPARTURE

In the eon before this in which we live, Yahweh Elohim put Adam in the midst of luxury, and warned him, lest he should lose it (Gen.2:17). Noah, also, was apprized of the coming judgment (Heb.11:7). But Noah also received a promise for the future. This is the new method, elaborated in the life of Abram. It is important to note that God’s promises are not based on anything that anyone was or had done, but were altogether sourced in the purpose of the Subjector alone. It was part of His great plan of subjecting all to Himself. He needed a people and a nation of His own, and a man through whom to bring them upon the scene, and Abram was chosen as their forefather, because he was physically unfitted for the task. It must be made clearly evident that all is of God. That is why it could be promised beforehand, and why its physical fulfillment was made practically impossible, from the human side.

PROMISE

The promise was by no means confined to one nation, or to Abraham himself. He, indeed, was to be blessed and to have a great name. But best of all was the promise that he was to become a blessing to others. Yahweh Elohim is the great Blesser, and Abram was chosen as His channel of blessing, until all the families of the ground shall partake of it. Here is where the nation which sprang from Abraham has hitherto failed. It has tried to monopolize all the blessing for itself. The full fruition of this part of the promise will not appear until the greater Son of Abraham is upon His throne.

The charge to Abram was threefold: He was to leave his land, and his kindred, and his father’s house (12:1). These evidently were hindrances to the course which Yahweh had planned for him. His land was probably given over to demon worship. His kindred also had idolatry, or to-subjectors, other than Yahweh, such as Rachel, Jacob’s wife, had stolen from her father, Laban (Gen. 31:30-32). Terah had, indeed, set out for Canaan, so he seemed to be the least
objectionable. But he did not go all the way. He did not merely interrupt his journey at Charan, but built a permanent dwelling there. The reason for these severances was this, that Abram was to begin anew, and receive a land, and generate a nation and set up a house of worship apart from and above all the rest, and subject these to Yahweh, his Subjector.

Abram seems to have obeyed his instructions. He left his land and his father’s house, and his kindred. We are not told that he took Lot. Rather, Lot went with him. As Haran, Lot’s father, had died, and Abram had no son, it seems that Lot adopted Abram for his father. But he seems to have inherited his father’s cattle, which he kept separate from Abram’s. Later on, when there was a contention between their grazers, Abram insisted on parting from him. So Lot was severed from the promise, for he left Abram for the rich pasture of Sodom, and became involved in the curse of Canaan.

THE CURSE OF CANAAN

Why was Abram sent to Canaan? It seems that, when the land was distributed under Peleg (Gen.10:25), the descendents of Canaan, who were cursed by Noah (9:25) were temporarily given the land later allotted to Israel, and seized by them under Joshua. The Canaanites forfeited their right to the land by their immoralties. This is clearly shown by the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. So Abraham and his seed were used by the Elohim to judge these nations, and their land was allotted to Israel as a tenancy, as long as they did not also defile it.

ARRIVAL

Abram seems to have gone as far as Shechem, about the center of the land, and stopped there (Gen.12:6-7). The promise had been given at a distance from the land, but now he was in the midst of it. So Yahweh appeared to him again and confirmed it on the spot: “To your seed am I giving this land.” But Abram and Isaac and Jacob did not build themselves homes in the land. They lived in movable tents. Their only permanent structures were altars, for worship is the immovable and irrevocable recognition of the true Owner. Cain built a city contrary to the Subjector’s command. At Babel men started to build to make themselves a permanent name. The men of faith built only at God’s command, as Noah built the ark. In the land the patriarchs built nothing but altars as a sign that the land was Yahweh’s to perpetuity.

ALTARS

The patriarchs Abram, Isaac and Jacob built seven altars in the land, in five places. Abram built four, at Shechem (Gen.12:7), at Bethel (12:8;13:4), at Mamre (13:18) and at Moriah (22:9). Isaac built one at Beersheba (26:25). Jacob built one at Shechem again (33:20) and one at Bethel again (35:1,3,7). These were the outward symbols of their inward subjection, and their worship of the real Owner of the land. This was all the payment He required. Later on, the altar was part of the elaborate tabernacle and temple ritual. But whenever their hearts were not in their worship, the temples and altars were destroyed, and the land was taken from them. Today they are claiming it without offering aught to Yahweh, but they will not be permanently blessed in it until they once more worship the perpetual Proprietor, Yahweh Elohim.

THE LAND NOT EDEN

The land promised to Abraham was not another Eden, where the moisture continually came up and watered the surface. It was not even like Egypt or Mesopotamia, where the water of a stream could be applied by human labor.
The dwellers in the land depended almost entirely on moisture from above. The rain from heaven was wholly in God’s hand. Its quantity and seasonableness determined their welfare to a large degree. Too little or none meant famine. At the wrong time, it could do a lot of damage. Yahweh used it to bless and to chastise His people (Amos 4:7). In the day of Yahweh, He will use the rain to control other nations also (Zech.14:17).

**FAITH**

In the administration of promise we are now introduced to a new method or principle of subjection, that of faith in God’s word, as distinct from obedience to His will. Strange as it may seem, the word-stem ann for faith, or believe, does not occur in the Scriptures until we read that “Abram believes in Yahweh Elohim, and He is reckoning it to him for righteousness” (Gen.15:6). This is very important, and seldom fully understood. Abram was not righteous because of what he did, for he often failed and did the wrong thing. But he was reckoned righteous nevertheless for his faith. Yahweh never accused him of failure or sin, but counted him as just, no matter what he did.

If the reader will carefully read the episode concerning Abram’s journey to Egypt and back, from the time he left Bethel to his return to it, he will see that all of it was reprehensible and contrary to God’s will. *Yet not one word of censure will be found*, except by Pharaoh. Commentators have criticized freely, with such truisms as, “It is better to starve in Canaan . . . than to live in luxury in Egypt.” *Yet Abram was blessed in both places!* Pharaoh was good to Abram, so that he came to have a flock of sheep and a herd of cattle and donkeys and menservants and maidservants and jennies and camels (12:16). When he returned, he was richer than ever, not only heavy in cattle, but in silver and gold. When we criticize Abram, even for his lack of faith, we miss the point of the passage, and are ourselves at fault. He was justified by faith, not by his conduct.

Abram had been told to go from his land to Canaan, and that this would belong to his seed. A full measure of faith would have deduced from this that he would not perish in it, but would be kept in any circumstances. Yet he was not told to remain. In the days of Isaac there was another famine, and Yahweh appeared to him, and told him to remain in the land. As a result he not only survived, but reaped a hundredfold when he sowed (26:1,12). Still later, there was a famine in the days of Jacob. He would not leave the land, but sent to Egypt for provisions, until Joseph sent for him, and all Israel left the land to serve as slaves in Egypt (46:3), as had been revealed to Abram (15:13).

The fact that Yahweh said to Isaac, in this connection, that Abram had hearkened to His voice and kept His charge, His instructions, His statutes, and His laws (26:5), shows that He did not reckon it against Abram when he left the land for Egypt but that He wished to reveal His care for him even in an alien land. Abram sought to protect himself from danger. But his unworthy subterfuge of telling a half-truth proved entirely unnecessary, for Yahweh had to step in and send contagious, great and evil, on Pharaoh and his household, although they had not intended any harm. This shows a method of divine dealing, in reckoning righteousness to one who has faith, which does not seem just to those unacquainted with God’s ways, but which apply to all, who, like Abram, believe Him.

**GOD’S GRACE EMPHASIZED**

In commencing a new line of divine dealing by means of Abram, it was necessary to show it in action. In the first place, belief in Yahweh (15:6) is the general attitude toward God which led Abram to go to Canaan, and to build altars to worship Him. He did not necessarily have that fulness
of faith that trusted Yahweh implicitly on all occasions. If blessing depends on unbroken acceptance, unwavering response, then no one could be awarded His gifts. The merest flicker of faith, to begin with, suffices to show the presence of the holy spirit, and is enough to give the assurance of divine favor. We will not condone his leaving the land, or lying to Pharaoh, but rejoice in the blessed outcome, due to God’s grace. God not only justified Abram because of his faith, but us also, so we praise and worship Him for dealing thus with us in this era, through Christ Jesus, our Saviour.

When a similar truth was first made known by Paul in connection with judgment, and it had been shown that the injustice of the Jew commended the righteousness of God (Rom.3:5-8), some reasoned that we should be doing evil that good may be coming, without any reference to God’s wise control. Paul did not even answer them. As a matter of fact men do just that to their children. A wise father disciplines his children in order to keep them from doing evil. But, in His works of discipline, God has a deeper and greater end in view, that He may be revealed to them as good and gracious and loving, not alone in the transcendent blessings which will be ours in the future, but also through the preparatory evil which we are now called upon to endure.

THE SPECIAL BLESSING OF FAITH

Not all are included in the ranks of faith. In Abram’s day he seems almost alone. And even today, with Christianity spread over a large part of the earth, real faith is not too plentiful. What, then, is the fate of unbelievers? God is the Saviour of all humanity, especially of those who believe (1 Tim.4:10). Salvation by faith is not the portion of all mankind, but only of those chosen beforehand for it. The rest will be saved through sight, at the judgment.

is Just and Right

Salvation by faith is a high privilege, and should be cherished as such by all who are fortunate enough to enjoy it.

From the divine standpoint, all that Abram did was right, for it revealed God’s method of operation in grace, so Abram is not charged with any wrong. Indeed, he prospered. God was back of all he did. Yet He disciplined Pharaoh even when he was about to do wrong, unwittingly, and had not yet committed the sin.

LOT ACTUATED BY SIGHT

Abram was told to go away from his kindred (12:1), which he evidently did. But Lot, his fatherless nephew, went with him, without an invitation. Here again, we can see that this was wrong. Nevertheless, it is just as evident that it was God’s intention, for he is a necessary contrast to Abram, especially in his relation to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. Besides, Lot was a just man (2 Peter 2:7). He fared marvelously well in material things by his association with Abram. But he was actuated by sight, rather than faith. When their herds became too large to be kept together, he should have left the choice pastures for his benefactor. When there was contention, it was his place to yield to the elder man to whom the promises were given.

After Lot had left Abram, Yahweh not only renewed his promises to him but emphasized them, especially as to his seed. All the land that he could see in every direction, was his to use for the eon. And his seed was to be as the soil of the land, uncountable. But he still remained a stranger and a sojourner in it, for he actually had no allotment of sufficient size to plant his foot (Gen.13:14, Acts 6:5). For Yahweh he builds an altar, for His is the land, yet he himself only tents in it, for it was his only by faith in the promised future.

All this is in contrast to the course of Lot. No promises were given to him. If he had been shown the future, he
would have been told that none of his choice land would be his, but all would be destroyed. Moreover, his seed would be the result of a drunken debauch, and given a name as shameful as Abram’s was glorious. Lot was captured, together with his people and his goods, in the war that came soon after. Abram, on the contrary, delivered him and his. Lot lived in a house in the city (19:3), and attained to some eminence, for he sat in the gate where the judges ruled. Abram lived in a tent, but built a permanent altar, and became the intercessor, seeking to save Lot and the whole city of Sodom from destruction.

Justification by faith is one of our greatest treasures today. Indeed, our other blessings are based upon it, for it alone makes peace with God possible (Rom. 5:1). Nothing can condemn us (Rom. 8:1). Like Abram, once we believe Him, however it may seem to us and to others, all our acts are according to the Subjector’s intention, and are used by Him to work out His will. We make no pretense of being righteous in ourselves. If we were, the sacrifice of Christ would not be needed. But our failings, together with His work in Christ, constitute the divine combination which carries out the purpose of the eons, and displays the essential love, on which the future is founded.

But the truth concerning the function of evil cannot be imparted to those who have not learned its lesson, for then its purpose could not be accomplished. Only those given the spirit of God by receiving His revelation, and believing Him, can be justified in this eon. Abram was often unjust in his actions. He was not reckoned righteous by what he did, but by Him Whom he believed. As subjection is accomplished through to-subjecters, His sons by faith, these are the subjects of justification in this eon. The rest are left for later eons, in which the sons are used by the Son to bring the rest into the circle of subjection.

A. E. Knoch
FAITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

Faith righteousness is first found in connection with Abram in Genesis 15:6. He was prepared for the righteousness of faith by his previous experience with his fellow men as recorded in Genesis 13 and 14. Everything they do is below the strict standard of justice. Everything God does far exceeds it. There is no neutral condition such as men would deem just and right. The action of Lot in going to Sodom was wrong. The men of that city were exceedingly wicked. The war of the kings was unjust. The spoiling of Sodom cannot be defended, especially the fate of Lot. Even the rescue of Lot does not set matters right. On the other hand, the act of Abram exceeds the strict line of justice. Abram refused his just due for the rescue. It is only when we come to the declarations of God that we have divine righteousness, but this far surpasses what we understand by that term. Abram’s acceptance of God’s unmerited favor is what constitutes his righteousness, because this is the aim and object of God’s dealings with him, as it is with all of His creatures.

Genesis 13 and 14

Faith righteousness is about to be reckoned to Abram. It is with this in view that we are given the episodes which precede it.

The human idea of right is one of exact reciprocation, so much service for so much hire, so much protection for so much reward. Our great failure is that we carry this into our relationship with God, and thus drag Him down to our own level. Men are ever trying to pay God for His protection and give Him wages for His work. This may
be considered right among men, but it is utterly wrong when applied to God. It is an insult to patronize Him. It is a shame to offer Him wages. We have nothing that He has not given us, and can do nothing for Him except in the strength which He provides. We are bankrupt when it comes to paying for His salvation and utterly destitute when we seek to settle for His services. It is absolutely wrong that we should even attempt to do these things, for they are contrary to His present place as the Deity and His future goal as our All.

When we focus our eyes upon men and their activities we are bewildered if we try to judge between them. There is no fixed standard by which to determine right from wrong. No one seems to be absolutely right or utterly wrong. The only settled standard is God's revelation. The simplest and most practical test is the consummation. **Whatever directly tends to subject men to God and make Him their All, that is divinely right.** Whatever tends otherwise and only indirectly effects God's intention, is wrong, even if it eventually contributes to His glory and His goal. It is only as we consider Abram's experience in the light of God's ultimate that we can understand how his faith is reckoned for righteousness.

**GOD IS THE OWNER**

Abram was given the land of Canaan. From the superficial human standpoint it may appear wrong to take the land away from its inhabitants and give it to Abram and his seed. Seen from the vantage of the divine, it was supremely right. God alone is the actual Owner of the earth and its treasures, and He alone has the disposal of any part of it. The nations of Canaan not only had no title to the land they held, but they did not recognize the true Owner. They brought Him nothing for its use. Superficially again, Abram had even less claim on the land, for he was a stranger and made no

**The Gems of God’s Diadem**

improvements. The only rights he had were divine, and looked forward to the future, when Israel would bring a tenth of its produce to support His worship, and it would become a place where Jehovah would dwell and glorify His name. Neither Abram nor the nations in the land could make any material return for the use of the land, for this was also Jehovah's, and He has no need of anything that they had. Abram alone paid the proper price when he built an altar and offered a sacrifice. Worship, thanksgiving and praise, the outflow of a grateful heart, these are the precious gems which God can use to adorn His diadem, and they are a rich rental for the promised land.

**ABRAM AND LOT**

Let us consider Abram's dealings with his nephew (Gen. 13:1-13). Lot was not the possessor of the promises, and he had no rights in the land of Canaan, either human or divine (Gen.12:7). As there was not room for the flocks of both of them, he should rightfully have withdrawn. Abram would have been within his rights if he had driven him out. When strife arose between their herdsmen, Abram was in line with God in his desire for peace, for God will eventually reconcile all to Himself. As the younger, Lot ought to have been subject to Abram, for that is the proper place of humanity in the consummation. In the East there is a constant reminder of this in the subjection of the younger to the elder. Of course, those who are older have had more experience, and are more fitted to rule, but that is not the basic fact. All, in their youth, should learn to realize the place which properly belongs to the creature, the necessary complement of the place of the Deity. But Lot does not volunteer to take this place. He probably thinks he has rights as well as Abram.

Abram, strange to say, although it does not belong to him, takes the place of subjection! He not only refuses to
make good his rightful claim to the whole land, as promised him by God, and his rights as the elder, but gives Lot his choice. He took what was left. This Lot should never have allowed. Abram had taken God’s choice for him, and was acting along the line that leads directly to the consummation. This is what counts as righteous with God. This is divine righteousness. Abram had it, not because he made a just division of the land between himself and Lot, but because he anticipated, by faith, the end that God has in view. On the other hand, Lot, though righteous among men, did not act according to faith righteousness, so he takes advantage of Abram, and appropriates the best part of God’s gift for himself. His choice was soulish. He looked for physical satisfaction from the rich pastures of the Jordan valley. But when he came to dwell in Sodom, his soul was tormented by the lawlessness of his surroundings. Later, he lost all, and Abram had to come to his rescue. He was not in God’s will, but served as a foil for God’s dealings with Abram. His descendants became foes of the chosen people.

THE WARS OF THE KINGS

Abram’s contact with the warfare of that day (Gen.14) gives a further insight into His faith righteousness and the wrongdoing of the times. Of some of the kings, engaged in this conflict, we know that they had no right even to live, for later they were destroyed by God Himself. The rest of them were probably not so very much better. What real right did they have to the territory they claimed as their own? Did they pay Yahweh for the use of it? Did they give Him a tithe of what it produced? Did they thank and praise Him for it? And now some of them band together and subjugate the peoples about them and demand tribute, just as if they were God, the true Owner of the neighboring lands as well as their own. Had they been subject to God and acknowledged His rights, no such wrongs could have been perpetrated.

Abram, with his vast wealth, must have been a tempting object of plunder, but God kept the marauders away from him, although he was very close to their line of march. This was because he had set his heart on God, not on His gifts. Lot, on the contrary, was after wealth. His heart was occupied with the lush land and the cattle and the goods, which he really owed to the God of Abram. He had no right to them, so they are taken from him, and he himself is carried captive together with all that is his. Abram could have said that it served him right. That would have been quite just from the human standpoint. In a land given to Abraham he had made trouble, and then actually took what he considered the choicest part of it for himself. He had treated Abram most unjustly. Abram was under no obligation, from the standpoint of human righteousness, to go to his aid, especially when he had to do it at the risk of his own riches and even of his life.

THE BLESSING OF BEING A BLESSING

But in the righteousness of faith there is more than mere possessing. There is blessing. Abram was given a much greater gift than the land. He and his seed were to be blessed in it, and, far more than this, he was to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. Instead of resenting Lot’s mercenary conduct and refusing to help him in his distress, he takes hold of God’s promise by faith and rescues his relative and neighbors from their foes. He is confident that God will prosper him in it, for His word must be fulfilled. His land and his life are safe in Yahweh’s keeping. As he has no son, he cannot die until provision has been made for the innumerable progeny which Yahweh promised. His life was insured by the Life Giver Himself. Later, the nation of Israel lost sight of this great
truth. They wanted blessing for themselves, but were little concerned about the blessing of others. They implored for deliverance when in distress, but made no move to insure the well being of other nations when they needed help. In the future their blessing will rest largely on their ability to bring peace and plenty to the other nations of the earth.

Blessing, however, demands a background. Perhaps we can understand this better if we put ourselves in the place of Lot. He was probably pleased to get the grazing land near Sodom for his herds and flocks, after the strife with Abram’s herdsmen, although the Sodomites would not let him enjoy it. But how much more blessed did he feel after having been rescued from the captivity of the kings! In both cases Abram was a blessing. In the first case it was hardly appreciated, because Lot imagined it more or less his right. But in the latter he had no illusions, and Abram acted far above the level of mere justice. What Abram did was right from the divine standpoint, for it was in line with God’s plans, and this alone determines right in His sight.

RECOGNIZING GOD AS GOD

What a contrast between Abram and the kings! They had no title to their own land, yet seek to extend their unjust holdings by force of arms. He had a perfect title to all that Yahweh had given him, yet he yields to Lot when he calmly appropriates the best part that he could find. They not only robbed God of His rights, but this led to much loss and harm and woe to their fellows and probably cost them many lives besides. So it must always be. Those who do not glorify and thank the Deity as God must suffer the righteous retribution of this fundamental error by being barred from blessing themselves, and of being a blessing to others. Abram’s faith led him to give God His place, and this led to restoration and blessing.

A. E. Knoch
YAHWEH SPEAKS TO ABRAM

The good of light and order and life began with the word of God when He said, “Let light come to be” (Gen.1:3). The first revelation of God’s purpose for humanity is given in those words of His when He said, “Let us make humanity in Our image and according to Our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). So also, God’s work of blessing Israel and bringing blessing to all families of the ground through the nation of Israel began with Yahweh’s words to Abram, when He said, “Go by yourself from your land, from your kindred and from your father’s house to the land that I shall show you. I shall make you into a great nation, and I shall bless you; I shall indeed make your name great, and you will be a blessing; I shall indeed bless those blessing you, and I shall curse the one maledicting you. In you all the families of the ground will be blessed” (Gen.12:1-3).

GOD’S WORK OF SPEAKING

When we say what we have in mind to do, it often is not much more than sound and breath. But God’s saying concerning what He will do, is the inseparable partner of His doing that very thing.

We see this pattern in the first chapter of Genesis in those instances where what God says comes to be so. But more and more, especially with the creation of humanity, what God says stands as an expression of His work in process. The sayings of God after the first chapter of Genesis are often not yet realized in accomplishment. Nevertheless, God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11).
God Speaks and He Will Do it

Consequently we would give careful attention to what God says He will do. This very simple work of God, His act of saying what He intends and wills to do (His word of “promise”), is critical to us in getting a hold on the vital issues of human existence: who we are and where we stand in relation to the world about us and what life is all about.

The completion of what God said to Abram thousands of years ago in Genesis 12:1-3 has not come to be so. But God has counseled it, and He will bring it about.

INSTRUCTION AND PROMISE

To be sure, the first word of Yahweh to Abram is not one of promise, but one of instruction, put in the imperative voice: “Go.” This word directs our attention to the man, Abram, and the greater part of this section of Scripture centers on Abram and what he did in response to this instruction. Indeed, we need to heed Abram’s example, and learn the lessons of his going and believing, as God’s word operated in him.

But we are concentrating now on the actions of God, what He is doing and shall do as outlined in these opening verses of Genesis 12. Abram is seen in his actions of response to Yahweh’s sayings (the correct place for human beings), but Yahweh is seen principally in what He says He will do.

Let us take time, then, to meditate on the five action words Yahweh uses here in speaking of what He would do for Abram, searching for what they reveal about God. They are as follows: “I shall show,” “I shall make,” “I shall bless” (used twice), “I shall make-great [or: greater],” and “I shall curse.”

YAHWEH SHOWS

Abram journeyed to the land as he was instructed, but Yahweh was the One Who showed him the land (which He

God Reveals What He Counsels

had designated for him beforehand). God is the Revealer of what He has in view.

In Hebrew the word for show is literally, make-see. Yahweh made Abram see the land in which He would bless him. Yahweh did carry out this initial promise, so that what He said came to be (cf Gen.13:14-17). This was the work of God, making Abram see with the eyes of flesh, the area of the earth which God will give to him and his seed, through (as we later learn) His greater Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To us also, God has spoken of an allotment which He shows to us, not to our physical eyes, but the eyes of our heart. Hence we read these lines written by the apostle Paul to believers in Christ Jesus: “Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive . . .’” (Eph.1:15-18).

Yet all of us are to some extent are like Abram in Genesis 12. When he first heard these words, they operated in him with the force of anticipation. God had not yet made him see the land with his eyes of flesh. Hence, in our lives today, we pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ for enlightenment concerning “the expectation of His calling, and . . . the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and . . . the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing” (Eph.1:18,19). It is God Who gives this insight, through His spirit.

YAHWEH MAKES

The verb “make” here at the beginning of verse 2, is the same word often translated “do.” It is a very common
term in the Hebrew language for expressing action. But it is not used here of a common thing. When the nation of Israel, which commenced with Abram, is completed as envisioned here by these simple terms, it will be seen as an achievement of centuries of divine activity, of molding and shaping and polishing, of training and disciplining which never, on God’s part, loses sight of the goal.

This work of God, that of making Abram into a great nation, is far from being completed, even yet after all these thousands of years. It still stands as a work in process, even delayed because of God’s present calling in grace, apart from nationality and fleshly descent from Abraham. But it shall be fulfilled when God gives Israel a new heart and a new spirit, and they will dwell in the land which He gave to their fathers, and they become His people, and He becomes their Elohim (Ezek.36:26-28). He has spoken, and He will do it (Ezek.36:36).

If we are tempted to think that the failures of that chosen nation which descended from Abram can keep God from making them into a great nation both in size and in quality, we should listen again to Paul’s testimony in Romans 3:3,4. “For what if some disbelieve? Will not their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? May it not be coming to that! Now let God be true, yet every man a liar.” Indeed, “... all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them whenever I should be eliminating their sins” (Rom.11:26,27).

This testimony of Paul’s concerning God’s making of this great nation is presented in the same epistle where he writes this welcome word to us who are called: that “whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also” (Rom.8:29,30). These are works of God which He does, but nevertheless remain unsupported by what we see physically. They are works of God of which He speaks in His Word, but remain matters for faith. Nevertheless, we find that there is great blessing for us who have been graciously granted to believe what God has said to us in the evangel concerning these blessings. What God has said, centered on what He has done in sending in own Son (Rom.8:3) is a source of daily strength and encouragement.

Consequently, we are blessed as Abram was blessed, by accepting what God has said to us in His Word, and being invigorated by faith, giving glory to God, being fully assured also, that, what God has promised, He is able to do also (Rom.4:20,21).

YAHWEH BLESSES

The key work of God in Genesis 12:1-3 is that of blessing. It is mentioned twice in speaking of what God Himself will do. He will bless Abram, and He will bless those blessing him.

God’s work of blessing was first mentioned in Genesis 1:22,28 (cf Gen.5:2) regarding certain of His creatures. In Hebrew its root meaning is “kneel.” Hence it is associated with a right relationship toward God, as suggested also by God’s blessing of the seventh day (Gen.2:3). Nothing is more blessed for us than to glorify and thank God, the lack of which is a source of present human woe (cf Rom.1:21).

What God said in Genesis 12 about blessing Abram began to be realized in a limited way with his prosperity in association with his honoring of God. But the fullness of blessing to Abram and His descendants, and indeed embracing blessing for all the nations, is still to come. Hence we read God’s word through the prophet, “For to Me shall bow every knee, and every tongue shall swear fealty” (Isa.45:23).
Yahweh adds also the happy promise that Abram and his seed will become a blessing. This indeed is God’s operation as well, although here it is expressed literally in the form of instruction: “Become a blessing.” But, like the imperative word “Go” in Genesis 12:1, the imperative “Become” in verse 2 is empowered by God’s words of promise.

We will only refer now, in passing, to Paul’s use and expansion of the promise from Isaiah (quoted above) in Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10,11. The core of our blessings and ultimately God’s blessing of all, involves our kneeling, or subject to our Lord. For us who are believing today, there is, again, no promise of present, physical prosperity, but in faith we may be blessing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing, in our appreciation of Him (cf Eph.1:3-12).

YAHWEH GREATENS

The verb in the third line of Genesis 12:2 is “make-great.” It appears in an emphatic form which the CV has tried to indicate by the lightface word “indeed.” (The same form is used with the verb “bless” in the first line of verse 3.) Abram had a name which meant FATHER-HIGH, and which was later changed to Abraham, meaning FATHER-HIGH-throng, but at this time he was not a father at all. Yet the promise of God, which meant so much to him, was that his name and honor would be “greatened.” And this will be realized in joyful reality.

In the meantime, “he 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). This word will come to pass in every detail when all Israel is saved, but for this father who had no children for so many years, and never experienced the fullness of this greatness of which Yahweh spoke, the speaking of it by Yahweh, remained a blessing in itself.

Curses are Secondary

We pause again, and ask: What has God spoken to us concerning justification, conciliation, vivification, subjection and reconciliation? Glory is added to glory (cf 2 Cor. 3:18). What God says to us is ever an invigoration to us as we are believing.

YAHWEH WILL CURSE

Finally, God speaks to Abram again of blessing, but involves with this promise of blessing for others who bless Abram and his seed, the promise of a curse for those who maledict him and his seed. We will treat these two works of God together as Yahweh presents them in Genesis 12:3. The primary work is blessing, but this blessing involves the negative action of bringing a curse on those who set themselves against the chosen of God.

It may seem to us that the cursing is out of place, even incongruous, in the context of these promises of blessing for Abram, his seed and all the families of the ground. Indeed it is if the work of cursing is a final and everlasting operation. But as part of the process of blessing, serving the necessary end of bringing out the blessedness of the blessing, as well as displaying God’s power of deliverance from harm for His chosen ones, the cursing needs to be appreciated. And beyond these immediate purposes for good, the cursing is in line with God’s operations of indignation and condemnation and indeed the entire experience of evil which entered into the world with the eating of the forbidden fruit. Here God’s object embraces His entire covenanted purpose and the whole matter of the appreciation of Himself.

The blessing of Abram and the cursing of those who maledict him as God’s chosen vessel for honor, and thus maledict God, are both processes toward the end that God be All in all. Yet still, we need to look at the immediate reasons for these operations. God continues to show
His mercy to certain individuals and guard them from the hate and greed of others who are not blessed. Even today in this era of conciliation when He is not reckoning the offenses of the world against them, God fills the believer’s every need (Phil.4:19). He leads us to let our lenience be made known to all (Phil.4:5) and to pray for all, that we may be leading a mild and quiet life (1 Tim.2:1,2). We are also reminded of the spiritual armor God has provided for us against those powers who oppose God’s choice of us for the celestial allotment (Eph.6:10-17).

But we do not know the details of what is ahead for ourselves. In this, the lessons given in God’s word to Abram can only encourage us in our faith and in reliance on the living God.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF FAITH

Yahweh’s words to Abram were words of blessing. That of which they spoke will be carried out by God. Nothing will keep God from faithfully doing what He has said He will do. But in the meantime, these words of Yahweh became the source of many blessings to Abram as he believed them and responded to them, including often physical blessings of protection and prosperity. This was most fitting in line with the promises of physical and earthly blessings to come.

To us also, God has spoken, through His chosen apostle, concerning blessings of an allotment and calling which put us in a right relationship with Him. But, more in accord with the blessing of justification pictured in Genesis 15:6, as is fitting where spiritual blessings are in view, our walk remains entirely by faith, and our growth to spiritual enlightenment by His grace. Faithful are His sayings to us, and worthy of all welcome, especially as they center on His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessings with which God blesses us in Him.

D.H.H.
11 + It came to be 'at the year's return, * the season when * kings march forth*, + that David *sent* Joab and *his servants* with him, and *all of Israel*. + They *brought* ruin *to the sons of Ammon* and *besieged* on Rabbah, *while David *remained* in Jerusalem.

2 + It *v*as *at* 'eventide, and David *arose from* on his bed. *When he *walked about on the housetop of the royal *palace, *he *saw from* on the housetop a woman bathing. *The woman was exceedingly good in appearance, *and David *sent* someone *to 'inquire 'about the woman. *He *v* reported, Is this not Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite? *David *sent messengers *that he might take her; *she *came to him, and he *lay with her—she had *just hallowed* herself from her uncleanness. *Then she *returned to her house. *When the woman became *pregnant, *she *sent + to 'tell *David, *saying, I am pregnant. *At this David *sent word to Joab, *saying, Send *Uriah the Hittite to me. And Joab *sent* Uriah to David.

7 + When Uriah *came to him, *David *asked* him *about Joab's well-being and 'the *soldiers' well-being and 'about any accomplishment in the war. *Then David *said to Uriah, Go down to your house and bathe your feet. *So Uriah went 'forth from the royal *palace, and a helping *from the king's table was brought 'forth after him.

9 + Yet Uriah *lay down at the portal of the royal *palace *with all the other servants of his lord and did not go down
to his house. 10 When they told David, saying, Uriah did not go down to his house, then David asked Uriah, Have you not come to a house? For what reason did you not go down to your house? 11 Uriah replied to David, The coffer and Israel and Judah are dwelling in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping on the face of the field. 12 Then how can I enter my house to eat and to drink and to lie down with my wife? By your life and by the life of your soul, I shall assuredly not behave in this manner! 13 Then David said to Uriah, Stay in this place today also, and tomorrow I shall send you off. 14 So Uriah remained in Jerusalem on that day, and on the morrow. 15 And David invited him that he might eat and drink in his presence; and he made him drunk. 16 Yet in the evening he went forth to lie down on his bedding among the other servants of his lord; and he did not go down to his house.

14 + It came to the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 He wrote in the letter, saying, Get Uriah to the forefront, in face of unyielding fighting; then you all will turn back from behind him, so that he will be smitten and will die. 16 So it was when Joab kept guard over the city that he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew that there were men of valor. 17 When the men of the city sallied forth and fought against Joab, then some of David's servants among the soldiers fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.

18 + Joab sent word and told David all the details of the fighting. 19 + He instructed the messenger, saying, When you finish reporting to the king all the details of the fighting, then it may occur that the king's fury flares up and he says to you, For what reason did you come so close to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?

21 + Who smote Abimelech son of Jerub-besheth? Did not a woman fling on him the rider section of a millstone from on top of the wall at Thebez so that he died? Why did you come so close to the wall? + Then you must say, Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite, he also died. 22 + So the messenger went off; + he came and told David all that Joab had sent him to report.

23 + The messenger said to David, The men had the mastery over us and salailed forth against us into the open field. + But we drove them back as far as the portal of the gateway. 24 + Then the shooters shot at your servants from on top of the wall, and some of the king's servants died; moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite, he also died. 25 + David told the messenger, Thus shall you say to Joab, Let not this matter be displeasing in your eyes, for the sword shall devour this one just as that one. Intensify your fight against the city, and demolish it. + So encourage him!

26 + When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah had died, + she wailed over her spouse. 27 + After the period of mourning had passed, + David sent and had her gathered to his palace; + she became his wife and bore him a son. + But the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of Yahweh.
David with Saul. But here the contrast is between Uriah and David. It was the time when kings go forth to war (v.1), but David stayed behind in the palace. David was rich and had the comfort and companionship of several wives, but he looked elsewhere for satisfaction. Uriah, on the other hand, was not even a blood-born member of the nation in which he lived. He was a Hittite. Yet he was so zealous and devoted to Yahweh and the chosen nation that he refused to enter his own house and enjoy the comfort and companionship of his own home and family. How could he do such a thing when “the coffer and Israel and Judah are dwelling in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping on the face of the field?” (v.11). Uriah shamed David.

It is the same David in both chapters, but here David is more like Saul. Saul had killed the Gibeonites and taken their possessions and broken a covenant which Yahweh honored (2 Samuel 21). David committed adultery with a Hittite’s wife, killed the Hittite and broke the law of Yahweh.

PLATEAUS

People often set goals in life. These goals may be a career position, or owning a home, or perhaps retirement. They believe if they can reach their goal, they will have reached a plateau. On the plateau stress will be decreased. Or, on the plateau they will enjoy a measure of control and security. On the plateau they will experience some greater degree of satisfaction.

David had reached a plateau. Long ago his mentor, Samuel, had anointed him to be king of Israel. But Saul’s jealousy had forced him to live the life of a fugitive. Now, finally, Saul was gone, and David was king. The nation became united under him. His enemies were nearly all defeated. The rock of Zion was captured and David lived with power and authority in a comfortable palace. David was doing all

Freshness has Turned to Drought

God would allow to provide a permanent resting place for the coffer of the covenant. This was David’s plateau.

But later, in the words of Psalm 32, David shared his contemplation on this period of his life. He did not describe it as some high level plane to which he had attained. Instead, David saw himself cascading down treacherous rapids. His strength was dried up to the very marrow of his bones. He was a lone dry autumn leaf about to be whisked away by the next passing breeze. David had cut himself off from God.

“When I kept silent toward You, my bones became worn out with my roaring the entire day. For the day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me; My freshness was turned into the droughts of summer” (Ps.32:3,4).

TRUE HAPPINESS

David was a man of unusually broad experience. He had been a shepherd and known the solitude and danger of being alone in the wild. He had stared death in the face with faith in God and beheaded the giant before whom his whole nation cringed. With the head of the giant in his hand, he had heard the cheer rise from his people like the roar of the ocean, as they picked up their weapons and pursued the enemy. He had seen the victory parade and heard the songs of the people acclaim his greatness. He had been the leader of a band of idealistic, patriotic rebels who were fed up with the status quo, and who were persecuted and hunted all over the countryside. He became king of his nation and led it to unprecedented supremacy in that area of the world. He had a harem in which he gathered the women who pleased him most. He lived in a palace, and had many devoted men around him who would, without a moment’s hesitation, give up their lives for him.

In the Psalm the man of these experiences spoke of happiness—true happiness—that ever-fleeting wisp which humanity so feverishly pursues, like a cat chasing a reflected
light on the wall. The man of these experiences said happiness was in a cleared conscience and in the blessing of being able to stand before God with your sins covered—hardly what the world would have expected for a definition of happiness!

“Happy is he whose transgression is lifted away, whose sin is covered over! Happy is the human to whom Yahweh is not reckoning depravity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Psa.32:1,2). “I am now acknowledging my sin to You, and I do not cover over my depravity. I said, I shall confess against myself my transgressions to Yahweh. And You, You lift away the depravity of my sin” (v.5).

When the apostle Paul summed up the depravity of humanity, much of what he said could have been applied to David in this passage:

“Not one is just—not even one . . . . All avoid Him: . . . A sepulcher opened is their throat. With their tongues they defraud. The venom of asps is under their lips . . . . Sharp are their feet to shed blood” (Rom.3:10-15).

But Paul went on to use the reference to happiness in Psalm 32, which issued out of these circumstances, as a basis for presenting the happiness inherent in the evangel. Such is the happiness of those who are in Christ. If sin, more than any other thing or circumstance, has the power to rot away our joy from the inside out, how gloriously blessed we must be to be justified from every sin (Rom.4:4-8). And if the glory of God is the brightest and highest of all, how blessed it is to be conciliated to Him and to possess His glory as our expectation (Rom.5).

**WHY?**

How could David fail so miserably with Bathsheba? How could he murder Uriah? Why such a tragic evil? Psalm 32 again may help us with these questions.

“You said, I shall make you contemplate, and direct you in the way that you should go; I will give counsel with My eye upon you. You must not become like a horse, like a mule in which there is no understanding, whose scruff must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it would never come near you” (Psa.32:8,9).

If God sent Gad, the prophet, to meet David on the rooftop that night, and told him what the consequences of his actions would be, there is little doubt that David would not have committed adultery with Bathsheba. But God did not do so.

David already knew that adultery was wrong. He already knew that murder was wrong. But knowing that something is wrong may not be nearly as strong a deterrent as knowing what the consequences are. It is not until we realize the consequences that we can appreciate the purpose of instruction.

When David called for Uriah to return from the siege, he was trying to cover his sin, and his spirit was full of deceit. Then David discovered he could not depend on Uriah’s natural inclinations, so he tried to cover his sin by making Uriah drunk. Finally, David realized that he could not manipulate Uriah, so, enmeshed in his depravity, he had his loyal subject killed. All this he did to cover his sin. And still his sin was not covered.

**GOD’S DISCIPLINE**

God calls us into His family to be His sons. This is a high calling. It is not a calling that God would have us enjoy by blundering thoughtlessly on day after day without concern, needing to be turned this way or that by reins and bridle. Consequently, God exercises us with experiences that press us into heart-breaking, soul-searching, gut-wrenching circumstances. He will not be satisfied with us as children only. He will have us to be sons that have come of age. He will bring us to maturity, “to a mature
man, to the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ” (Eph.4:13,14). The experiences that wean us out of childhood are not pleasant. But the blessedness of sonship is too great for us to be deterred by the “momentary lightness of our affliction.”

David’s experience of failure brought him to God: “When I kept silent toward You, my bones became worn out . . . . I am now acknowledging my sin to You, and I do not cover over my depravity. I said, I shall confess against myself my transgressions to Yahweh . . . .” (vs.3-5). David’s experience resolved his sin: “And You, You lift away the depravity of my sin” (v.5). David’s experience changed him, giving him a new realization of God’s grace and righteousness. This in turn brought about a change in David’s conduct: “You said, I shall make you contemplate, and direct you in the way that you should go” (v.8).

J. Philip Scranton

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES BOUND VOLUMES

Our newer subscribers may not be aware that Unsearchable Riches is not only published as a bimonthly magazine, but is also published as an annual volume (hardbound in green cloth, with gold stamping on spine). Nearly all previously issued volumes for the years 1909–2002 (volumes 1–93) are available in print.

Our current edition, volume 94 (2003), should be available as well by late winter or early spring, 2004. Individual volumes are $23.00 each (add 10% s&h; CA orders, add sales tax).

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CONTRAST AND AGREEMENT

If Paul had written Romans 1:18-3:20 as an epistle complete in itself, wholly concerned with the human condition before God as the righteous Judge, it would be a most pessimistic and despairing piece of literature. It begins with a harsh and very true assessment of human irreverence and unrighteousness along with a stern description of divine indignation against that depravity. Then, when a hope seems to be raised (in Romans 2) that some good people may be found without sin in the day of God’s judging, we discover Paul is simply speaking hypothetically in order to show the impartiality and thoroughness of divine judgment. By the time we reach Romans 3:20, all hope of justification by human works has been dashed for both Circumcision and Uncircumcision. The uncompromising conclusion is that “Not one is just—not even one” (Rom. 3:10). In consideration of human deeds, apart from the obedience of Jesus Christ, no flesh at all shall be justified in God’s sight (Rom.3:20).

But Romans 1:18-3:20 does not stand by itself. It is firmly embedded between the declaration that the evangel is the power of God for salvation, in which the righteousness of God is revealed (Rom.1:14-17), and the unequivocal exposition of that evangel beginning with Romans 3:21. Romans 1:18-3:20 is not a direct presentation of the evangel, but it is written in service of the evangel. It establishes the need of the evangel and provides important points for comparison.

This special association of Romans 1:18-3:20 with the evangel can perhaps be seen in the following arrangement of key points in the opening chapters of the epistle:
1. Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, severed for the **evangel** of God . . . concerning His Son . . . Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Rom.1:1-4)

2. For not ashamed am I of the **evangel**. (Rom.1:16a)
   a. For it is God’s power for salvation to every one who is believing. (Rom.1:16b)
   b. For in it God’s righteousness is being revealed, out of faith, for faith. (Rom.1:17)
   c. For God’s indignation is being revealed from heaven on all the irreverence and injustice of men . . . .

    Wherefore, defenseless are you, O human! . . . In accord with your hardness and unrepentant heart you are hoarding for yourself indignation in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God . . . . For there is no partiality with God . . . . God will be judging the hidden things of humanity . . . . Not one is just—not even one . . . . By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in [God’s] sight.) (Rom.1:18; 2:1,5,11,16; 3:10,20

   d. Yet now . . . a righteousness of God is manifest . . . through Jesus Christ’s faith, for all, and on all who are believing. (Rom.3:21,22)

Here we see that Paul’s overall theme is the evangel committed to him. In 1:17 (section “b”) he begins to present the very important feature of this evangel concerning the revelation of God’s righteousness, but he interrupts the direct exposition of his evangel with the long section we are presently examining (section “c”). Then with Romans 3:21 he resumes the direct presentation of the evangel (section “d”). Section “c” contributes much to our appreciation of the evangel by way of contrast, along with insightful points of agreement, and by the way all this discussion of human unrighteousness and divine indignation and judgment sup-

ports the great need of the evangel, both for humanity and for the revelation of the righteousness of God.

**POINTS OF COMPARISON**

By making God’s work of righteous judgment a theme for comparison with the evangel Paul helps us appreciate several important features of his message:

First of all, the fact that no one will be found righteous before God’s judgment accentuates, by sharp contrast, the glory of God’s gracious gift of justification for all mankind.

On the other hand, by emphasizing the demand that divine righteousness be based on truth without overlooking even the most hidden of sins, Paul helps us grasp the standard of truth and righteousness that God holds to in His work of justification through the deliverance in Christ Jesus. In this respect there is important agreement between judgment and the evangel.

Furthermore, by keeping this section of Romans in view when we come to Romans 3:21-8:39, we will come to realize that the blessings of justification, life, glory and peace mentioned in Romans 2:7,10,13, which no one can possibly gain by works of human righteousness, are the very blessings (with more besides) that will come to us gratuitously as God’s achievement through Jesus Christ. Here indeed there is marked harmony.

**TWO DIVINE OPERATIONS**

There are thus two righteous works of God being set before us. One is His work of judgment, which is brought forward to enhance our appreciation of the other: God’s work of deliverance through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God’s judgment of sinners is just, but it is not a work of salvation. It is based on truth and reaches its verdict according to the facts of human sin. Consequently, if it were God’s only work in dealing with human sin, every-
one would be condemned. Even more seriously it would result in a final meaninglessness to God's work of creation, even failure if indeed God had a goal of good and glory in His work of creation. Involved in such a final state of tragic mystery would be the fact that God could not righteously be faithful to His promises to His chosen people.

The evangel also tells of a work of divine justice, for indeed, in it God's righteousness is being revealed (Rom. 1:17). But, unlike the word of God's just judgment, the evangel is, in its very essence, a message of salvation (Rom. 1:16). With respect to what is right in dealing with the fact of human sin, there is agreement with divine judgment. There is no compromise concerning righteousness in God's work of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the righteous achievement of good for all, God's gift of His Son for sinners fulfills all the demands of divine righteousness to the glory of God.

**IMPARTIALITY AND THOROUGHNESS**

We now come to Romans 2:11-16, which continues to emphasize the righteous standards God holds to in His work of judgment. There is no partiality toward either Circumcision or Uncircumcision. Those of the nations are given the principles of right and wrong in their hearts and consciences and could theoretically carry them out just as well as the Jew who has the law written on stone in clear and well defined terms. But not only will God be impartial, He also will be thorough in His work of judgment. God will examine all human acts, both good and bad. He will judge even the hidden motives and thoughts, including matters of love and hate, of honor and dishonor, of honesty and dishonesty, of compassion and envy, contentment and covetousness, selfishness and selfishness. Every outward deed and every inward thought and attitude of every human being must be addressed without prejudice.

**Every Deed is to be Considered**

**ROMANS 2:11-16**

*a. For there is no partiality with God,*

*b. for whoever sinned without law, without law also shall perish, and whoever sinned in law, through law will be judged.*

*a. For not the listeners to law are just with God, but the doers of law shall be justified.*

*b. For whenever they of the nations that have no law, by nature may be doing that which the law demands, these, having no law, are a law to themselves, who are displaying the action of the law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying together and their reckonings between one another,*

*a. accusing or defending them, in the day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity, according to my evangel, through Jesus Christ.*

In the preceding arrangement, statements concerning God's work of judgment (the “a” sections) are set apart from what Paul says about the human situation (the “b” sections). The message is that all people, both those of Israel and those of the nations, must be judged with respect to all their acts and motives. They will be judged fairly which means no sin will be overlooked. God's judgments are righteous and must take into account every human thought and deed, both outward and inward, without prejudice or oversight.

This would mean that all must perish. But at this point, halfway between 1:18 and 3:21, Paul connects his thoughts about the human situation and God's judgment with his evangel, with particular attention given to the place held by Jesus Christ in all of God's works, both His work of judgment and His work of salvation.

These closing words of verse 16 stand out as a pointed
Since God’s Judgment is Just

reminder that Paul’s evangel of justification through the faith of Jesus Christ, revealing the righteousness of God, is still the major theme.

**THE HUMAN SITUATION**

It takes a person who knows what the law says and who had been becoming blameless, outwardly, as to its righteous demands (Phil.3:6) to write so plainly about the human predicament before the righteous God. It also takes a person who recognizes his own sinfulness and is becoming acquainted with God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ to speak of the fullness of God’s righteousness in relation to salvation. It was in accord with the counsel of God’s will that Saul of Tarsus was led into the hypocrisy of Pharisaism, which harbored so much hidden hate and pride and covetousness, and through this hypocrisy into zealous enmity and calumny toward God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Then, in accord with His purpose and grace, God called this foremost of sinners into a slavery (cp Rom.1:1) of love in heralding the evangel of God concerning Jesus Christ.

Paul knows what he is talking about. He is not playing games. Apart from the faith of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners, in order for us to be justified before God we must do the right things always, without faltering and without failure. We cannot sin, ever, even in the tiniest degree. This is true of every human being. It is true of the Jew as well of those of the nations. There is no partiality with God. When He judges, He takes into account every thought and every act of every person. If sin is found, the sinner must perish. On the other hand, if any descendant of Adam is found who carries out the law in every respect, perfectly, without the slightest failure, that (hypothetical) person (who does not exist) would be justified. That is only fair and just. And that is bleak and hopeless.

Such is the human situation that desperately calls for it Cannot Result in Salvation

the evangel. Every deed of every human being must be taken into account. This needs to be made clear, and that is why Paul belabor the point of divine impartiality and thoroughness in judgment so relentlessly. There must be no doubt that he is speaking about the entire human race and the entire corpus of human sin here in Romans 1:18-3:20. Whoever of the nations, who were “without law,” should sin, they must perish. Whoever of Israel, who had the privilege of living “in law,” should sin, they must also be judged with that sin taken into account (Rom.2:11).

**ALL HAVE SINNED**

These words of Romans 2:11-16 make it clear that, were it not for the truth of Paul’s evangel, no one could be excepted from this righteous examination of God’s just judgment and its consequences. Neither “righteous” Abel nor “righteous” Noah, neither “faithful” Abraham nor anyone of the chosen nation of Israel, none even of these blessed people could be justified in God’s sight if their own righteousness does not measure up to the standards of God’s righteousness. Nor could Enoch be left out of this penetrating judgment with its just verdict, nor Job, nor the Ninevites of Jonah’s day, nor the humble Canaanitish woman who sought for crumbs of favor from the Lord in extraordinary faith. Nor could the Ethiopian eunuch be excepted, nor Cornelius, nor any other honest person who, in comparison with the general behavior of humanity, does so well in seeking the Lord and wanting to understand His Word.

We honor them and hold them high for their goodness and courageous stand. But they too must perish if they have sinned, and if Christ has not died for them.

Nor could Paul be excluded from this indictment, he who endured persistent persecution and hardship and who kept the faith. “If Christ has not been roused,” Paul’s diligent labors were for naught as well as all the faithfulness and
goodness of all God’s chosen people (cf 1 Cor.15:14-19). Indeed, if Christ has not been given up because of our offenses and has not been roused from among the dead because of the achievement of justification in His blood (cf Rom.4:25; 5:9), we all are still in our sins and must be judged by the perfect standards of the righteous God, and so be condemned.

We all have sinned and continue to sin to one extent or another as long as we live. Therefore, before God, considered as we are in ourselves and apart from what Christ has done for us, we must perish.

Although some may do exceptionally well and deserve applause for it, there is no one who adheres in every way to the divine standard of what is right; there is no one who is without sin, except our Lord Jesus Christ, Who came into the world to save sinners by giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all.

**JUSTIFIED**

Romans 2:13 informs us that the doers of law shall be justified. To be justified one must be found righteous in every way. This definition of justification is inflexible. (We must not forget it when we come to Romans 3:24.) Consequently, Romans 2:13 tells us about a justification that is impossible because it is based on human effort. But the evangel tells us about a justification that is certain because it is gained by God in the giving of His Son (cf Rom.8:3), yet one where no sin and no failure can be found.

In speaking in Romans 2:13 about righteous doers of the law, even though there are no such people, the apostle establishes the standard of righteousness involved in justification before God. No sin, no matter how unavoidable and unintentional it may be, can be overlooked by God Who searches into the hidden things of the heart. We must be found absolutely righteous if we are to be just-ified. If one could be justified by works of law, that one would have to be found absolutely righteous. Every deed and every motive, every act and every thought would have to be right. So also, one who is justified in the blood of Christ will be constituted absolutely righteous.

Even our believing that Christ died for our sins does not justify us in the literal sense of the word. We speak, as Paul did, about justification by faith as opposed to justification by acts (cf Rom.3:24,28; 4:2; 5:1), but this is literally the blessing of being accounted righteous, on the basis of what Christ has gained. Righteousness is presently reckoned to us who are believing (Rom.4:24). It is in the blood of Christ that we are justified (Rom.5:8,9).

What God did in sparing not His own Son is what literally justifies, not what we do, even in our choosing and believing and retaining and enduring of affliction (which are all righteous works graciously granted to us by God). These are good works which God has prepared for us to walk in, and there are many more ahead which will be fully separated from sin and failure (cf Eph.2:10). But our justification, that is, actually being righteous, rests solely on the one work of God in sending His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin (Rom.8:3).

When James wrote to the Circumcision about justification by works and not by faith alone (James 2:24), the same principle applies, although James did not seem to realize it. Neither human works nor human faith (which is a hidden work of the heart) can be the cause of actual, literal justification. They are means by which God grants to His chosen people what Christ has gained. In the evangel of the Uncircumcision the means is faith alone, and in the evangel of the Circumcision the means are works and a faith that is often fostered by signs and miracles. But in the end, justification cannot be something simply reckoned but experienced in full, so that all are constituted righteous.
All Humanity is in View

ACCORDANCE

Paul is bursting with good news, a welcome message that was given to him through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12), an evangel of such vast dimensions that it encompasses the needs of all sinners without distinction and makes known the glories of God as no other message in all of Scripture can do. Everything Paul has been writing here has had this message in view, sometimes by way of contrast, sometimes by points of harmony. Now in Romans 2:16, in association with his remarks about God judging the hidden things of humanity, the apostle is led to speak directly of his evangel.

The association between the subject of divine judgment and Paul’s evangel is expressed here by the Greek preposition, *kata*. The CV has rendered this term by the words “according to.” For indeed, in presenting the evangel, as he does here in Romans, Paul brings out the fact that God will judge the hidden things of humanity, through Jesus Christ.

But the association implied in Romans 2:16, by the word, *kata*, is also one of harmony. There is something about God’s judgment of the hidden things of humanity, through Jesus Christ, that is in accord with God’s work of salvation and justification through Jesus Christ’s obedience to the death of the cross. Hence, in reflecting on this passage, A. E. Knox came to the conclusion that Paul was speaking “of things which are in accord with” his evangel.¹

God’s righteous judgment involves all of humanity, both Jew and Greek, those of the nations who are not under the law of Sinai and those of Israel who received that law. So also Paul’s evangel involves all of humanity, all of whom are sinners (*cf* Rom.5:18,19). Again, God’s righteous judgment involves all the sins of all humanity, even the hidden thoughts and motives of the heart, as Romans 2:16 tells us. So also Paul’s evangel involves every single one of the many sins and offenses of all humanity, for, as we read in Romans 5:16, “...the judgment is out of one [act of sinning] into condemnation, yet the grace is out of many offenses into a just award.” (We note here that “offenses” are hidden wrongs.)

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

The final words of Romans 2:16 are especially suggestive. The phrase, “through Jesus Christ,” applies both to God’s operation of judgment and to His work of salvation. No doubt Paul gave special stress in presenting his evangel to the fact that God’s work of judgment is channeled through Jesus Christ. Elsewhere Paul wrote that for us there is “one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is” (1 Cor.8:6).

That God carries out His operations through His Son, Jesus Christ is certainly in accord with Paul’s evangel itself as a message of righteous salvation and righteous justification. The righteousness of God which is revealed in the evangel is manifested through Jesus Christ’s faith (Rom.3:21,22). Gratuitous justification is “through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom.3:24). Paul’s evangel teaches that “we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ” (Rom.5:1). The salvation of believers is through Him (Rom.5:9), and it is through Him that we have obtained the conciliation” (Rom.5:11). We shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Rom.5:17). And the many who are constituted sinners through the disobedience of the one [Adam], “shall be constituted righteous through the obedience of the One [Jesus Christ]” (Rom.5:19).

Indeed, Romans 2:16 prepares us for great tidings of good.

D.H.H.