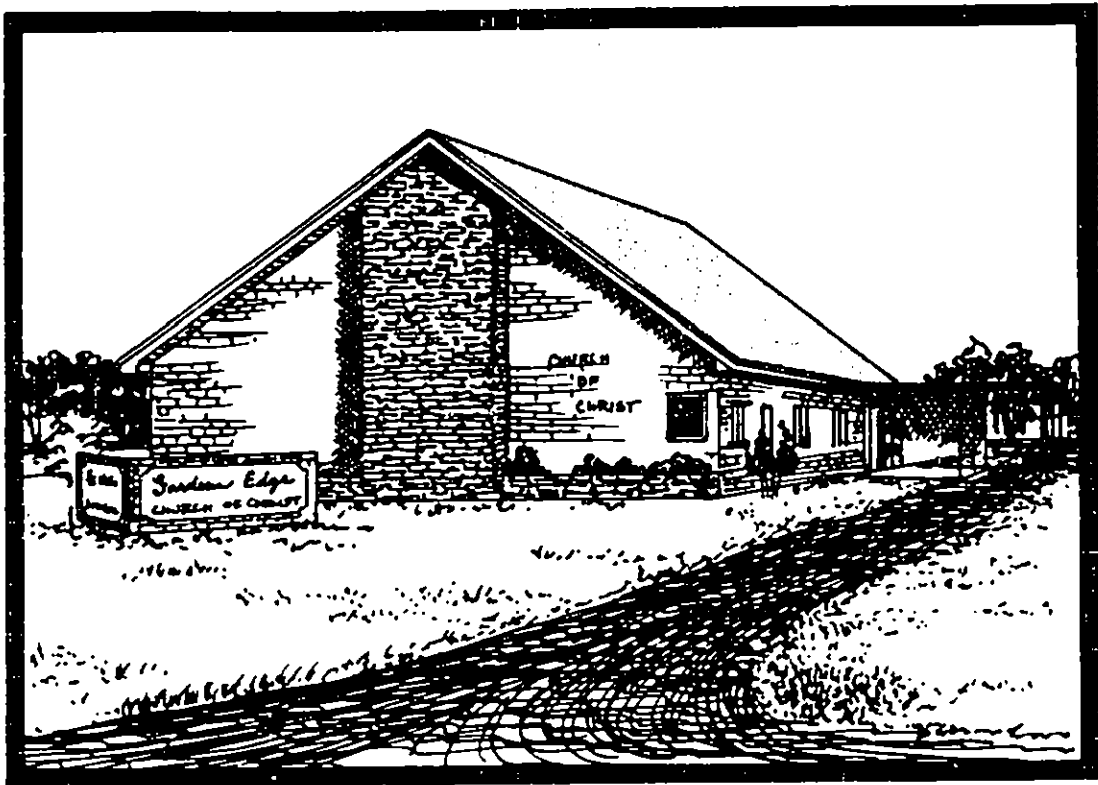


1983 PREACHERS' STUDY



Garden's Edge
Church of Christ

THE PREACHERS' STUDY

Gardens Edge Church of Christ, Wichita Falls, Texas

December 1983

The annual Preachers' study was conducted by the Gardens Edge Church of Christ, Wichita Falls, Texas during December 19 thru the 22, 1983. This annual study is well attended by many preachers from over the land, as well as brethren seeking to increase their knowledge. In previous years the only way to really benefit from this study was to attend or obtain copies of tapes. The owners of *The Watchman* felt that such a study should receive wider circulation, therefore we approached the participants and requested that they submit an outline of their subject material for publication. This book is the result of this effort. We send it forth with the prayer that it shall accomplish good for the cause of Christ.

The Editors of *The Watchman*: Lonnie K. York & Delmer Lee

THE DECEMBER STUDY

The December Study in Wichita Falls, Texas was one of the great ones in recent years. It was great in its theme—"The Great Texts of the Bible"—and the quality of speakers who addressed themselves to the study of the theme. Seventeen speakers gave their interpretation of some of the great verses of the Bible. Preachers, leaders, teachers and students of the Bible from across the nation were present. A Salient feature of the Study was the spirit of Christ among those in attendance. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Johnny Elmore and Don King. The Gardens Edge Church considered it an honor to have been host for the 1983 Study.

—Ted M. Warwick

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HOW DO WE DELIVER SUCH AN ONE TO SATAN?

By Melvin Blalock

Introduction

Our first study has to do with disciplinary action against a brother guilty of immorality. The question to be dealt with is, "How do we deliver such an one to Satan?" We find this subject discussed in I Corinthians chapter 5. For clarification we would suggest reading verses 1 - 5 and also verse 13. The verses that we are to primarily consider are verses 4, 5 and 13. The Apostle Paul wrote, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. (Verse 13) But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person."

As we peer into this chapter we find that the offense committed was fornication. "This immorality was of such magnitude that even the heathen denounced it. (that one should have his father's wife). 'His stepmother' The marriage of a son to his stepmother was forbidden among the Jews under the penalty of death. (Leviticus 18:8; 20:11; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20; and it was a violation of the Roman law and held in abhorrence by them. From the complete silence as to the crime of the woman, it is inferred that he was a heathen." (Commentary on I Corinthians by David Lipscomb)

This was a flagrant violation of God's moral law and yet the Corinthians had been tolerant of this outlandish sin. Paul rebuked them for their moral laxity in this matter. He had already judged in this case and his disposition was, "that he that hath done this deed might be taken from among you." (I Corinthians 5:2) He must be withdrawn from! This verse is a preview of what this chapter is about.

Throughout the forthcoming verses in this chapter he instructs the Corinthians not to company or eat with one who is guilty of this sin as well as others that are catalogued in verses 10, 11. This is to be the behaviour of the church toward a brother who has been excommunicated for these sins. He concludes this chapter by instructing the church to, "put away from yourselves that wicked person." But how?

In verses 4 & 5, the church was told to convene for this action. "The sentence was not to be passed or executed in secret, but openly. It was to have the solemnity of a judicial proceeding, and, therefore the people were convened, though they were merely spectators." (Charles Hodge, I Corinthians) As I perceive it, this was not a trial to determine guilt or innocence. The guilt was well established. Neither were all the people convened to take a vote on the expulsion of this offender. It was necessary that the church as a whole come together with a united voice to denounce this sin that they had tolerated in their midst. Not doubt the offender would feel the weight of this discipline, hopefully bringing him to repentance. This was the desired result. (Verse 5) "That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This should be the object of all such discipline.

Many believe that this man did repent because of what is written in (II Corinthians 2: 6 - 8). "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him."

Paul was not only concerned with the salvation of this man's soul, but he was concerned about the purification of the church of Christ at Corinth. This action was for the purpose of removing a moral gangrene that was likely to spread through the body bringing about the complete destruction of the church. He wrote in (verse 6) "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Paul instructed them to, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may

be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." (Verse 7) They were to purge themselves of this sin that they would no longer have this corrupting influence in the church.

It should be understood that this collective gathering of the church for the purpose of withdrawing fellowship is the last official act of the church until the offender repents. This weighty measure can only be taken after the guilt has been firmly established. Concerning the importance of establishing guilt and seeking repentance of the sinner the following scriptures may be helpful: (Matthew 18:15 - 17)) "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Unlike the case of the fornicator that we have under consideration, this sin was of a more private nature and the guilt had to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses. This is also true of the elder who sins according to (I Timothy 5:19, 20) "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." He further writes to the Corinthians in (II Corinthians 13:1 - 3) concerning other disorders among them, "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare." The chief differences between these cases and the one under consideration is that they were more private and had to be established. The case at hand was open and the guilt was obvious.

Another difference involves the judgment of an inspired apostle in this immediate case. Notice (Macknight on the Epistles, Verses 4, 5) "1. And of my Spirit.) - Paul being particularly directed by the Spirit to give this command, with an assurance that the offender's flesh should be destroyed, he ordered them to assemble, not only by the authority of the Lord Jesus, but by the authority of the Spirit, who inspired him to give the command; who therefore he calls his Spirit. 2. With the power of our Lord Jesus.) - the word (power) here, as in other passages, denotes a miraculous power derived from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 5 - 1. Deliver such an one. As the infinitive is used for the verb in all its modes and tenses I have translated the word (deliver) shall deliver. The Corinthians having been very blamable in tolerating this wicked person, and the faction, with their leader who patronized him, having boasted of their knowledge and learning, the apostle did not order the church to use admonition before proceeding to excommunication, but required them instantly to deliver the offender to Satan, that the faction might be roused to a sense of danger, and the whole church be convinced of their error in tolerating such gross wickedness."

The Corinthian church was instructed to deliver this one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Macknight offers the following comments: "They who think the punishment to be inflicted on the incestuous person was only excommunication, explain the delivering him to Satan in the following manner: As there are only two families or kingdoms in the moral world, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the devil, the expelling of a person from the family or kingdom of God, is a virtual delivering into the hands of Satan, to share in all the miseries resulting from his usurped dominion; and a depriving him of all those advantages which God hath provided in his church, for the defending men against the snares of the devil, and machinations of his instruments. In short, by a sentence of excommunication, it is justly founded, a person is as it were put out of the protection of God. For The Destruction Of The Flesh - It was observed, Chapter 4:21, note, that the apostles were empowered to punish notorious offenders miraculously with diseases and death. If so, may we not believe that the command which the apostle on this occasion gave to the Corinthians, to deliver the incestuous person to Satan, for the destruction of his flesh, was an exertion of that power? Especially as it was to be done, not by their own authority, but by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Spirit who inspired Paul to give the command. Accordingly, Chrisostom, Theophylact, and Oecumenisus conjectured, that in consequence of his being delivered to Satan, the offenders body was

weakened and wasted by some painful disease."

It has been observed by many that the apostles had the power to deliver to the agency of Satan for bodily affliction. The following cases are examples: Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5); Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:11); The false teacher (I Corinthians 4:21); and those who followed the false teacher (II Corinthians 13:1 - 4, and 10). The phrase, "Deliver Unto Satan" is also used in (I Timothy 1:20). "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme."

In conclusion, we yet have the sin of fornication as well as the other sins catalogued in this chapter. We are no longer living in the age of miracles where an apostle can judge with the aid of the Spirit and bring on a bodily affliction upon the offender. This in no way distracts from our duty to excommunicate the impenitent sinner. This duty is clearly taught in these verses. Before one can be withdrawn from guilt must be firmly established. Without the benefit of apostolic judgement in the immediate case it appears appropriate to deliver a first and second admonition, but due to the seriousness of the sin it should be done expeditiously to prevent a lingering influence. The spiritual minded should be in charge of such procedures, preferably the elders, if the congregation has elders. After guilt is established and one is twice admonished to repent, if he refuses he should be publicly withdrawn from by convening the church. The offender should be made to realize that the saints no longer accept him and will not associate with him until he repents. All of the saints are obligated to honor this charge.

II

HOW SHALL WE JUDGE THE WORLD AND ANGELS?

(I Corinthians 6:3,4)

Of the three passages that were assigned to me, I found this by far the most difficult. There has arisen much controversy over the question, "How shall we judge the world and angels". The scholarship has been divided over these verses for hundreds of years. I consulted numerous commentaries on this subject and a number of others were quoted by them. In researching this subject there were two principal theories that emerged. I will present the most prevalent one first.

Most held the view that the saints would in some way participate in the judging of the world and the fallen angels in the final judgment. In summation of the many commentaries that were consulted I will quote from Albert Barnes. "The common interpretation, that of Grotius, Beza, Calvin, Doddridge, etc. is that it refers to the future judgment, and that Christians will in that day be employed in some manner in judging the world. That this is the true interpretation, is apparent for the following reasons. (1) It is the obvious interpretation --- that which will strike the great mass of men, and is likely, therefore, to be the true one. (2) It accords with the account in Matthew 19:28, and Luke 22:30. (3) It is the only one which gives a fair interpretation to the declaration that the saints should judge angels in verse 3. If asked in what way this is to be done, it may be answered, that it may be meant simply that Christians shall be exalted to the right hand of the judge and shall encompass his throne; that they shall assent to, and approve of his judgment, that they shall be elevated to a post of honour and favour, as if they were associated with him in the judgment. They shall then be regarded as his friends, and express their approbation, and that with a deep sense of its justice, of the condemnation of the wicked. Perhaps the idea is, not that they shall pronounce sentence, which will be done by the Lord Jesus, but that they shall then be qualified to see the justice of the condemnation which shall be passed on the wicked; they shall have a distinct and clear view of the case; they shall even see the propriety of their everlasting punishment, and shall not only approve it, but be qualified to enter into the subject, and to pronounce upon it intelligently. And the argument of the apostle is, that if they would be qualified to pronounce on the eternal doom of men and angels; if they had such views of justice and right, and such integrity as to form an opinion and express it in regard to the everlasting destiny of an immense host of immortal beings, assuredly they ought to be qualified to express their sense of the smaller transactions in this life, and pronounce an opinion

between man and man."

Others offered the following scriptures in addition to those referred to by Mr. Barnes: (Daniel 7:18 - 22), (Romans 8:18), (II Timothy 2:12). These scriptures refer to our being glorified with the Lord Jesus and reigning with him. Most who hold this first position suggest that the reigning infers that the saints will be involved in the judgment. Notice in verses 3,4: "The saints shall judge the world, " "The world shall be judged," and "We shall judge angels". Also notice that he refers to "Judgments of things pertaining to this life." As we read this text it might appear that he was comparing the judgment in the final day with the saints ability to judge in things pertaining to this life. Roy Deaver, commenting on these verses in "Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained" penned these words; "The word 'world' in this passage according to Thayer (the Greek 'kosmos') means; 'the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ.' 'Shall judge' is the Greek, 'Krinousi' - the future indicative, 3rd person plural of 'krino'. 'Is judged' is the Greek 'krinetai' - the present passive indicative 3rd singular, Passive voice, with the present tense, means continuous action being received by the subject in present time. Note that even though 'shall judge' points to the future, the passive 'is judged' (literally, is being judged) allows that the judging under consideration takes place during this lifetime."

The strongest reference scriptures that were relied upon as supporting this first position were found in (Matthew 19:28) which reads, "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Then the next scripture is found in (Luke 22:29, 30). "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The contention is that here we have saints judging the world and that this will occur at the resurrection which is said to be the regeneration.

As we scrutinize these verses it becomes evident that Jesus is addressing his apostles with these words. They would set upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This would be done by their preaching the gospel and by their writing the inspired epistles. The word of God, preached and written by the apostles, saves those who believe and obey, but it judges and condemns those who do not. Jesus already sits on his throne of glory and all of the apostles were at his table in his kingdom during their life times. The apostles continue to judge us through the words that are recorded in the holy scriptures. In my opinion these verses do not support the first position.

Because the judging of the world and angels is tied to the regeneration by those espousing this theory, I wish to present these comments about the regeneration. H. Leo Boles in his commentary on Matthew, writes, "This word is used only one other time in the New Testament. (Titus 3:5) Here it is 'the washing of regeneration,' which refers to baptism in conversion. Two interpretations have been given with respect to the meaning of 'regeneration'. One is that it refers to the time of the future resurrection of all men, or the 'new generation', or 'regeneration'. According to this view the day of judgment and recompense will come at that time. All who have suffered here with Christ will reign with him and receive an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They refer the time of 'regeneration' to a period after Christ comes the second time. The other view is that the 'regeneration' belongs to the period of time between Pentecost and the second coming of Christ. It is the time of the church, when the law of the new birth is a law of its increase, when all men shall be in Christ 'new creatures;' or a new creation, that is a 're' or 'new generation', when old things are passed away, and all things have become new. During this period the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory at the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19), (Hebrews 1:3; 8:1), (Revelation 3:21). The Apostles are not promised 'thrones of glory', but simply 'thrones'. The idea is that the apostles are the judges, as during their lives they arranged the laws and practices while they were on earth and now, by their inspired writings, they govern the members of the church. This view makes the use of 'regeneration' here the same as that used in 'the washing of regeneration' in Titus 3:5."

In exposing the first position the second becomes apparent, "The the saints shall judge the world

and angels during this present life." The saints shall judge the world and angels by their preaching of the gospel and their faithful Christian lives. The following scriptures might harmonize with this view. (Matthew 12:41, 42) The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold a greater than Solomon is here. The people who repented at the preaching of Jonas condemned the generation that Jesus preached to because they received Jonas's preaching while that wicked generation rejected Jesus and his message. Noah is another classic example of a righteous man condemning the world. (Hebrews 11:7) By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Roy Deaver writing in "Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained", says, "The word 'judge' sometimes means: 'to pronounce judgment; to subject to censure.' Perhaps this is the sense in the present passage. Perhaps the judgment under consideration takes place in this life -- the lifetime of the saints. Cf. Daniel 7:22; Matthew 19:28; Hebrews 11:7. Christians judge with reference to matters of this life by being able to point out what is wrong in relationship to the divine standard." He further offers these comments on (1 Corinthians 6:2), "On Pentecost of Acts 2 the Lord began his reign as King over his kingdom. The present reign of Christ is the only reign the scriptures talk about. As the Lord reigns his apostles also ' . . . sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' (Matthew 19:28) All those persons who submit themselves to apostolic authority and to the authority of the King join with the apostles in the reign and rule of the Christ. As Christians(saints) point out --by life, work, word, and pen -- the right, and oppose the wrong, they are participating in the reign of the Christ and in apostolic judging. In this sense Christians are constantly 'judging' the world." It is also in this sense that we judge the angels, those angels who disobeyed God. (II Peter 2:4) For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.

Macknight makes the following comments in his commentary on the Epistles. "Here St. Paul told the Corinthians, that, agreeably to Christ's promise to the apostles, Matthew 19:28, they were at that time actually judging or ruling the world by the laws of the Gospel which they preached to the world. Hence Christ told the apostles, (John 12:31) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. --But Bengel says-- (the word for judgment) is the future tense, and signifies shall judge; and the apostle had in his eye the state of the world under Constantine, when the Christians got possession of civil power. This interpretation is mentioned by Whitby likewise. Nevertheless, the subsequent clause, if the world is judged by you, shows, I think that the apostle spoke of the time then present. Others, because of the judgment of angels is spoken of in the next verse, interpret this of the last judgment: and by the saints judging the world they understand, the affording matter for condemning the wicked. But this sense has no relation to the apostles argument. --With respect to the idea which many entertain, of the saints being Christ's assessors when he judges the world, I observe, that it is repugnant to all the accounts given of the general judgment; and particularly to our Lord's own account of that great event, Matthew 25 where the righteous are represented as all standing before his tribunal along with the wicked, and as receiving their sentence at the same time with them. Besides, for what purpose are the saints to be Christ's assessors at the judgment? Is it to give him counsel? or only to assent to the sentence he will pass on the wicked? Surely not the former: and for the latter, why should their assent be necessary, more than the assent of the holy angels? To found a doctrine of this magnitude merely on two obscure passages of scripture, which can easily admit of a different interpretation, seems not a little rash." Notice the scripture in (Matthew 25:31 - 33) When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

The saints are going to be at the judgment to be judged and not to participate in the judging. Our

conclusion is that the saints judge the world and angels in this life by preaching the gospel and by living godly lives.

III

IN WHAT ARE WE NOT TO BE UNEQUALLY YOKED?

(II Corinthians 6:14 - 18)

In this study Paul is concerned about the Corinthians' intimate connections with the heathen. "To be unequally yoked would be so connected with the unbeliever that the believer would be controlled by the unbeliever. The expression comes from Jehovah's command to the Israelites: (Deuteronomy 22:10) Thou shalt not plow the ox and ass together." (Lipscomb & Shepherd, G. A. Commentary) B. W. Johnson says, "The idea is that, Christians are not to pair off with unbelievers. All intimate associations are forbidden." Adam Clarke observes, "This is a military term: keep in your own ranks; do not leave the Christian community to join that of the heathens. The verb (unequally yoked) signifies to leave one's own rank, place, or order, and go into another; and here it must signify not only that they should not associate with the Gentiles in their idolatrous feasts, but that they should not apostatize from Christianity; and the questions which follow show that there was a sort of fellowship that some of the Christians had formed with the heathens which was both wicked and absurd, and if not speedily checked would infallibly lead to final apostasy."

"The wicked environment of Pagan Corinth was world known. The average citizen of Corinth was depicted in the ancient Roman theaters as drunk, vile, licentious and totally without moral fiber. Fornication was as common as breathing and even the women who served in Aphrodite's temple there were given over to prostitution in the name of their goddess. But the gospel demands better conduct, purer ethics and nobler emphasis." (Johnny Ramsey, *Difficult Texts of the New Testament Explained*)

It is apparent that which is contained in these verses was a much warranted admonition. The church membership in any given community has social connections with that community. The church must maintain her purity. She is expected to obey the Apostle's command, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (II Corinthians 6:17) The Christians were to have no part of the idolatrous feast of the heathen and no connection with the infamous temple of the goddess, Aphrodite in the city of Corinth.

Paul shows the absurdity of fellowship in these things by alluding to the opposites in verses 14 - 16: righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, believer and infidel, and the temple of God with idols. W. E. Vine says that, "Belial is a synonym for Satan. In the New Testament, in II Corinthians 6:15, it is set in contrast to Christ, and represents a personification of the system of impure worship connected with the cult of Aphrodite." As we read such expressions as, "He that believeth with an infidel" and "The temple of God with idols" we are surely reminded of the words of the prophet Amos, "How can two walk together except they be agreed."

It seems to me that anything that binds the Christian together in an intimate relationship with the unbeliever would constitute a yoke. A yoke was used to join two draft animals neck to neck with a common purpose in mind. They were to work together. The injunction in the law was that an ox and ass were not to be yoked together (Deuteronomy 22:10). Their temperament and size made them incompatible. They would have been unequally yoked. Bear in mind that while they could not be yoked neck to neck for work, they could drink from the same water trough. All social contact is not forbidden, but an intimate and binding relationship is objected to.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the apostle was specifically referring to intermarriage with the heathens. One states, "The primary reference is to intermarriage and association in heathen festivals." There is a far reaching principal given in these verses that affects various relationships, but I think that there can be no question that the intimate union of marriage constitutes a yoke. How can

a believer enter into the yoke of marriage with an unbeliever when their values are so diverse. Johnny Ramsey offers these comments: "God has always intended for his people to avoid marriage entanglements with the world. Solomon's decline came swiftly when he married strange or foreign women (I Kings 11:1). These wives are called 'outlandish women' in Nehemiah 13! In Ezra 9, after the Babylonian captivity days, God's servants had to put away women of heathen background with whom they had married in order to keep Abraham's seed pure. In (II Corinthians 6:14 - 18) the inspired Apostle Paul, speaking for God (I Corinthians 14:37; II Corinthians 5:20) urges Christians to come out of close ties with worldly folk lest they wind up being yoked with them, yes, 'evil companions corrupt good morals' (I Corinthians 15:33)"

Paul told those whose spouse died, should they desire to marry again, to "marry only in the Lord." (I Corinthians 7:39). Paul further inferred if a Christian man was to marry, that it should be a sister and not an unbeliever (I Corinthians 9:5). "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as the other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" How can Christians contemplate unequally yoking themselves with unbelievers in marriage? One is carnally minded and the other is supposed to be spiritually minded. A Christian and an unbeliever are as unequally yoked as an ox and an ass. Paul wrote in (Romans 8:6), "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The servant of God and the servant of Satan are on opposing sides. Adam Clarke wisely said of those who marry an unbeliever, "Such persons cannot say this petition of the Lord's prayer, Lead us not into temptation. They plunge into it of their own accord."

It should also be noted that the joining of certain organizations and clubs could amount to being "unequally yoked." To simply form intimate friendships and associations with the heathen as some at Corinth did, would be likely to become a yoke. Business partnerships involving the Christian and the unbeliever should be viewed very carefully to say the least. It is difficult to see how one could avoid being yoked in such a relationship. The moral values, Christian ethics and principals should govern every business transaction. Will the unbelieving partner lead the Christian into things that are dishonest and unethical? Paul was a tentmaker by profession. Can you imagine him entering into a business partnership with a pagan? He and the Christian couple, Aquilla and Priscilla worked together making tents. (Acts 18:3). They had their faith as well as their occupation in common. They could work together in harmony with the same high standards. There are Christian business men today who can attest to the mistake of entering into business with the unbeliever. It reminds me of this little story I recently read: "Two men went into business together; one had the money, and the other had the experience. After about a year, the one who had the experience had the money, and the one who had had the money had the experience."

Paul was especially concerned that the Christians at Corinth were too involved with those of the heathen community. He feared their intimate ties would lead them to apostatize from Christ. Therefore he gives them the instructions, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (Verse 17). Perhaps we would do well to remember the old proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together." We recall the words Paul wrote in (Ephesians 5:11), "And have not fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

In conclusion Christians should realize their place in the kingdom of God. We are bonded together by the greatest yoke of all, that of Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:29, 30). It would be impossible to discuss everything that involves an unequal yoke, but it is sufficient to say that Paul was teaching against intimate relationships with the heathen.

DIFFICULT TEXTS OF I PETER

BY Doug Edwards

I would like to begin by thanking Johnny Elmore, Don King, and the church at Wichita Falls, Texas, for the opportunity to participate in this study. My assigned topic is Difficult Texts from I Peter. The questions that were assigned to me are as follows:

1. What is meant by the "end of all things" (I Peter 4:7)?
2. What is the "fiery trial" (I Peter 4:12)?
3. How do we reconcile scarcely being saved (I Peter 4:17, 18) with an abundant entrance into heaven (II Peter 1:11)?

It is always appropriate in studying verses such as these to begin by looking at the context. The immediate and overall context deals with an upcoming persecution. In every chapter of I Peter there is some reference made to the approaching afflictions (cf I Peter 1:6, 7; 2:19, 20; 3:14, 17; 4:15, 16; 5:9, 10). I Peter then was written to encourage these suffering Christians.

Secular history also bears record to the fact that Christians were about to go through hard times. Most commentators believe that I Peter was written somewhere between 60 - 65 A.D. This was during the reign of Nero. The very name of Nero is synonymous with evil and suffering.

The Great Roman Fire (64 A. D.) played an important part in Nero's deciding to persecute Christians. This burned for almost ten days, and it destroyed or damaged more than half of the city. The cause of the fire remains a mystery. Public rumor traced it back to Nero, who had wanted to rebuild Rome and rename it Neropolis. There is no actual proof, though, that Nero actually started the fire.

Someone had to be blamed for the fire so Nero chose Christians. Why would he single them out? Remember that we are talking about a very wicked probably insane person. He not only cast the blame on Christians to take the blame off himself but also to provide new entertainment for his cruelty. Historians tell us that at that time there began a carnival of blood that heathen Rome had never seen before. Some Christians were crucified, others were sewed up in skins of wild beasts, while others were exposed to wild dogs in the arena. Still others were covered with tar and burned as human torches in Nero's garden. This persecution soon spread to the other provinces in the Roman Empire. This was the great persecution that Peter referred to in his first letter.

There are some important points to consider dealing with this persecution. First, this was not a strictly religious persecution like those of later emperors. It originated as an effort to make Christians scapegoats. Second, it was basically Gentile in nature. All of the persecutions of the church up to this point had either directly or indirectly been caused by the Jews. This one originated with the Gentiles. Third, this persecution was more widespread and not just local. Nero's action left a legal precedent for translating this popular action into official action. It spread throughout the Roman provinces because they wanted to be like Rome. Fourth, this persecution was one of the signs of the times Jesus predicted before the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:9, 10). It was this great persecution to which Peter is referring in his first epistle.

I Peter 4:7

The first passage to consider is I Peter 4:7. Peter writes: "But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." What is meant by the "end of all things?" Is it the end of the world, or is it referring to some other great event that is about to occur at the time of his writing. I believe that Peter is actually considering the end of the Jewish nation here and not the end of the world.

Notice, first of all, the phrase "at hand". It is from a Greek word that means "to draw near or come near, to approach . . . has come nigh, is at hand." (Thayer, page 164). It is used in reference to:

(1) place or position; or (2) time. When it refers to time it invariably refers to that which is imminent or impending. For instance Jesus said: "... the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." (Mark 1:15). It is obvious that when the Lord made this statement the kingdom was indeed near. It was about to be established. This word is used approximately forty times in the New Testament, and it always refers to something near. Peter then tells us that the "end" is very near. The end of the world was not near when Peter wrote the epistle.

Peter describes this event by calling it the end of all things. Notice carefully the word "end". It does not have to refer to the end of the world. It is used many times to refer to the end of a nation, or some national disaster. God told Amos that an end would come upon the northern kingdom of Israel (Amos 8:2). Ezekiel was told an "end" would come upon Judah (Ezekiel 7:1 - 3). Jesus also said, in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem which would occur in 70 A. D.: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14). The end, in these verses refers to the end of nations and not the end of the world. Peter evidently uses the same idea in I Peter 4:7 to refer to the end of the Jewish nation and not the world.

What about the expression "all things"? How did all things end in the destruction of Jerusalem? Many times, the word "all" is used in a more limited sense, contrary to the way we sometimes think. For instance, Jesus said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Obviously Jesus did not mean that all men would become Christians. He must have had reference to all of a more limited group that would become Christians. When Peter used the expression "all things", he was referring to all things of the Jewish nation. Please note the following things which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem:

1. The Jewish nation (over 1,000,000 killed with thousands wounded and carried into slavery).
2. The temple was destroyed. This building, which was so dear to the Jewish heart, was demolished stone by stone, never to be rebuilt.
3. The whole religious system of Israel with its types and shadows of Christianity ended.
4. The daily sacrifices ended.
5. The high priesthood ended.
6. The Sanhedrin never met again.

The destruction of Jerusalem was a great event and its importance cannot be minimized. As long as the temple and Judaism stood there would be the danger of combining the law and the gospel. This great destruction also removed the Jewish threat against the church. The first enemies, in fact, of the church were the Jews. They pushed God to the limit. At one time they were God's chosen people, but they rebelled and even crucified their Messiah. The destruction of Jerusalem was a message to the world that God was faithful to his promise to punish the unfaithful. So Peter is referring to this great event in I Peter 4:7.

I Peter 4:12

Our next passage under consideration is I Peter 4:12, which reads: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." What was the "fiery trial" that was to try them? Some commentators think it may be a reference to Nero burning Christians, but I understand it more as a figure of speech.

The words "fiery trial" literally mean a "burning" (Thayer, page 559). It is used here as smelting furnace and the smelting process in which gold or silver ore is purified. The ancients would heat up this ore until it was liquid and then would remove the impurities with the end result pure gold or silver. Peter is saying that through these persecutions the lives of Christians would be purified and their impurities removed. It would make them stronger Christians.

This illustration of smelting ore is frequently used in the Bible. Job saith. "But he knoweth the

way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Psalms 66:10 says: "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." Zechariah 13:9 and Malachi 3:3 also describe the same illustration.

The definition of "try" also helps us to understand the meaning of this verse. Thayer defines it as "an experiment, attempt, trial, proving . . . b. spec. the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy, etc." (page 498). Peter wants his readers to know that there is a reason behind this upcoming persecution. It was not just to hurt them but to strengthen them.

This fiery trial was not to simply pain them, but by its painfulness to prove them, i.e. to bring out their sincerity, their greater excellence and their deliverance from remaining impurities. Affliction makes us feel the reality of life. It tends to make us humble, thoughtful and dependent on God. It is as sufferers that we obtain the tenderness of God and our love is drawn toward him. All the recipients of Peter's letter should be grateful to God that he cares enough to try his people.

I Peter 4:17, 18

Our final passage under consideration is I Peter 4:17, 18. Peter writes: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" How do we reconcile "scarcely being saved" with an "abundant entrance into heaven" as found in II Peter 1:11?

First, let's look at II Peter 1:11. It reads: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Thayer defines "ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Thayer defines "ministered" as "to supply, furnish, present" (page 246) and "abundantly" as "abundantly, richly" (page 519); hence we have the idea of being richly supplied. We are richly supplied with an entrance into heaven. Thayer defines "entrance" as "the act of entering" (page 188). This passage has reference to our actual entrance into heaven. We do not enter into that which we are presently dwelling. Peter is telling us that on the great judgment day we will have a richly supplied, an abundant entrance into heaven. We will not make it "by the skin of our teeth". If we have been faithful Christians, God will welcome us into heaven with open arms. Peter seems to be saying that if we supply the virtues mentions (II Peter 1:5 - 10) than God will supply our entrance into the eternal kingdom.

Why would the same apostle make two seemingly different statements about the same event? The answer lies in the fact that he is actually talking about two different events. In I Peter 4:17, 18 he is actually talking about persecutions that would be affecting his readers. He is not considering their actual entrance into heaven. He does, however, consider their entrance into heaven in II Peter 1:11. Thus these two passages are not contradictory and do not have to be harmonized.

How do we know that I Peter 4:17,18 is not referring to the day of judgment? This can be determined by remembering the overall context of I Peter and the immediate context of these verses. We have already learned of the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem (verse 7) and the fiery trial of persecution (verse 12). The judgment described in verses 17 and 18 likewise have an application to Peter's first century readers. Notice the language of Peter: "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." The judgment that he alludes to is near and impending, it was not at least 1900 years distant as the day of judgment would be. Notice how some other translations render the first part of this verse:

NIV "For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God . . ."

ASV "For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God . . ."

The Emphasized Bible "For it is the ripe time for judgment to begin with the house of God . . ."

Every translation that I have checked indicates that it was to be a present judgment for Peter's first century readers.

The word "judgment" is used in different senses in the New Testament. It especially refers to the sentence of God as a judge. Sometimes it is used as a condemnatory sentence (II Peter 2:3). Surely this is not the judgment, though, that God has in mind for the house of God. The judgment Peter has in mind here is that of persecution with the end result of strengthening of the saints. It is a similar judgment to what Paul described in I Corinthians 11:32 where he said: "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

This judgment was to begin with the house of God. The house of God obviously refers to the church (I Peter 2:5, I Timothy 3:15). There are two ways that I can think of judgment beginning with the house of God. First, it has reference to first as far as time is concerned. God used Rome as His instrument to try the church and to punish Israel. The Romans first persecuted the church and then destroyed Israel. Adam Clarke mentioned that it was a Jewish Maxim that when God was about to pour down some general judgment, He began with an affliction of his people in order to correct them and amend them, that they might be prepared for the overflowing scourge.

The second way in which the judgment was to first begin with the house of God lies in the sense of importance. The church is far more important to God than wicked, rebellious people. Sins against light and knowledge are more grievous than the sins of those who don't know the gospel. Sometimes the church passes through great affliction, such as was at hand when Peter wrote. It would be a fiery trial, but the fire was a refining fire. It was sent in love, in fatherly care for souls. God will try his children now for the purpose of saving their souls. He reserves the punishment of the wicked until the day of judgment. If the church, which is the object of God's love and concern, is to be tried and afflicted, how much greater will be the hardship and misery of those who do not believe and obey.

Peter then asks, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" The word "end" means "final lot, fate" (Thayer, page 620). The best commentary of this passage is the words of Paul in II Thessalonians 1:7,8. Here Paul mentions that Jesus will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on those who know not God and do not obey the Gospel. After discussing the present judgment on the church Peter makes mention of the future judgment of the wicked.

In verse 18 Peter then says: "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The word "scarcely" means "with difficulty, hardly" (Thayer, page 417). It does not refer to their being barely allowed into heaven. It refers to their being saved with difficulty in this world. They were being saved with difficulty in the sense that it was necessary for God to purify their lives by drastic means, namely persecution and suffering. Again Peter considers the future judgment of the wicked by saying "where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" If the righteous need disciplining judgments, how much more will the unrighteous meet the wrath of God whose offer of righteousness they have rejected.

Probably most of us have been guilty of misusing I Peter 4:17,18 and applying it to the day of judgment. I have to plead guilty of misapplying this passage at different times. A close examination of these scriptures and others teach us, though, that this passage has reference to a judgment that was to occur in the lives of Peter's first century readers. May God help us to grasp the fact that for his children there will be an abundant entrance into heaven.

"WALKING IN THE LIGHT"

By Wayne Fussell

INTRODUCTION

1. I have been assigned three passages of scripture and three questions related to these passages:
 - (1) I John 1:5 - 7 Does the blood cleanse unconfessed sin?
 - (2) Romans 4:3 - 9 Is Jesus' righteousness imputed to the child of God?
 - (3) Galatians 3:6 - 9 What is accounted for righteousness?
2. It would be impossible to give adequate attention to each of these questions in the time allotted. I will spend more time on the first question.

DISCUSSION

I. I John 1:5 - 7 Does the blood cleanse unconfessed sin?

1. Good men have not always been in agreement on the proper interpretation and practical application of verse 7.
 - (1) Some believe that each time a Christian sins, whether wilfully or ignorantly, by commission or omission, he ceases to walk in the light, breaks fellowship with God, falls from grace, and is therefore lost until he recognizes and acknowledges such sin, repents, confesses to God and prays for forgiveness.
 - (2) Another understanding: The Christian can live an humble, penitent, prayerful life, making sincere effort to obey God at all times, and that, although he may sin, he is forgiven and can stand in God's grace (Romans 5:2), remain in the light and in fellowship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.
2. I believe the second position above for several reasons:
 - (1) The first position is totally unacceptable because it would require:
 - A. Sinless perfection in order to remain in grace at all times.
 - B. An infallible understanding of God's Word and a perfect memory which would enable one to recognize every sin (commission and omission) at the very time it is committed and repent and pray then and there.
 - C. This position would eliminate an assurance of salvation in this life and the hope of eternal life in heaven.
3. I do not believe:
 - (1) That the blood cleanses unconditionally.
 - (2) That the Christian can be forgiven of any sin without such involving repentance and prayer.
 - (3) That the child of God becomes an apostate each and every time he sins.
 - (4) That God commands a Christian to walk in the light, and then says that he cannot do so all the time.

4. Interpretation of I John 1:5 - 7

- (1) Verse 5 "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

- A. "God is light" - that is, as to His essence, character, nature, He is light.
 - a. "Darkness" is a figure of ignorance, superstition and sin.
 - b. "Light" represents truth, purity and holiness - also love (1 John 2:9 - 11).
- (2) Verse 6 "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:"
 - A. The truth stated: "If we walk in darkness, we have no fellowship with God."
 - B. "Walk" - In the Greek, "walk" is in the present tense, active subjunctive. The present tense in the Greek suggests continuous action. Here, the literal translation would be "keep on walking". "Walk" always involves conduct. So, John is referring to one's manner of life, or as Vincent says: "habitual course of life". The thought is: if the habitual course of one's life is one of sin, he cannot live in fellowship with God.
- (3) Verse 7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - A. "Walk" - Same as in verse 6, present tense, continuous action. To "walk in the light" is to habitually and continuously live the Christian life. If one does so, he continues to live in fellowship with God. Also,
 - B. "The blood - cleanseth us from all sin"
 - a. "Cleanseth" is also in the present tense in the Greek and indicates continuous action - "keeps on cleansing from all sin". As the Christian continuously walks in the light, the blood continuously cleanses from sin.
 - C. Condition established in the word "if". The constant cleansing is conditional. A consistent Christian life is prerequisite to the constant cleansing from sin.
 - D. "Walking in the light" produces two results:
 - a. Fellowship
 - b. Continual cleansing by the blood of Christ

Guy N. Woods: "Moreover, it cleanses from sin, not merely or solely the conscience, but sin (amartias), all sin, whether of thought, word, or deed, rash sins, sins of ignorance, of malice, of omission or commission, sins of the flesh, sins of disposition, sins of pleasure or of pain, sins of every type and kind committed at any time or place."

Further: " 'Cleanseth' is from the verb katharizei, in the present tense, thus revealing that it is a constant process, conditioned on our walking in the light. As we thus walk the blood operates to keep us constantly cleansed from the defilement of sin and the condemnation which attends it." Commentary on 1 John)

- (4) Verse 8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - A. Sin is the common problem of us all. There is no one who is not faced with the ever present problem of temptation and sin. (Romans 3:23)
- (5) Verse 9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

A. "Confess" - humble acknowledgement of wrong

Guy N. Woods: " 'Homologeo' to say the same thing, to speak together, and figuratively implies a dialogue between God and the sinner, in which the Father describes the condition of the sinner, and the sinner finally accedes to the correctness of the description and thus confesses that God is right!"

Further: "The verb 'confess' is translated from a present active subjunctive, thus literally, 'If we keep on confessing our sins . . .' indicative of a continuous process." (Commentary on I John)

5. Deductions From I John 1:5 - 9

- (1) Verse 7 says that if we walk in the light, the blood "cleanseth us from all sin". That's present tense, continuous action, and denotes the fact that the blood keeps on cleansing from sin.
- (2) Verse 8 says that all of us sin. There is no denying it.
- (3) Therefore, if we cease to walk in the light every time we sin, verse 7 commands us to do something impossible. It is the constant cleansing of the blood of Christ that makes it possible for us to constantly walk in the light.

A. Since we sin, we would cease to walk in the light, at least for a time, unless we are forgiven the very second we sin.

B. Recognition, repentance and prayer would take some time - we would be in the light and out of the light all of the time - in and out, in and out - in grace, out of grace, etc.

- (4) We are to Walk in the light - not skip in and out of the light all the time.

- (5) Verse 9 entails an humble, penitent, prayerful attitude at all times. God knows our minds, our attitudes and desires. To forgive an inadvertent or rash or ignorant sin present no problem to an all-knowing God.

6. My Position: The presence of the blood of Christ in the body of Christ makes possible a flow of grace in the Christian's life, keeping him safe from the consequences of his sins, allowing faith, growth, and opportunity time to make corrections.

7. Presumptuous and Secret Sins

- (1) David prayed that he would have the knowledge and wisdom to be kept from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." (Psalms 19:13) Keil and Delitzsch defines presumptuous sins as "deliberate sins".

- (2) David was also concerned about ignorant sins. In verse 12, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." These were not sins unknown to God or to others, but unknown in the same heart that could commit presumptuous or deliberate sins.

Keil & Delitzsch: "all those sins, which even he, who is most earnestly striving after sanctification, does not discern, although he may desire to know them, by reason of the ever limited nature of his knowledge both of himself and of sin." (Commentary on Psalms)

- A. David recognized, as we, that he might not have the ability or knowledge to understand his errors, yet he believed that God would "cleanse" him from such sins. It is obvious that he could not identify, specify and repent of them by name. This position gives great comfort. If we live in fear that some unknown sin will keep us out of heaven, we have no hope.

8. Does This Position Encourage Sin?

- (1) No true interpretation of God's Word encourages sin. For instance, in I John 2:1, the prohibition is stated "that ye sin not", but then goes on to say "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ". The provision that sins can be forgiven through the advocacy of Jesus is not an invitation to sin, but some might interpret it so. Neither does the constant cleansing of Jesus' blood invite indiscriminate sinning. On the contrary, it encourages a righteous life. We can know that we are "in the light" and in fellowship with God in spite of our shortcomings. On the other hand, the in-grace-out-of-grace idea invites despair and neurosis, or maybe self-righteousness and Phariseism.
- (2) Any person who uses this as an opportunity to live as he pleases is surely not "walking in the light", and does not qualify for the constant cleansing of the blood of Christ. Paul anticipated this same problem with his position on grace in Romans 6, when he asked "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" And then he answered with a resounding "God forbid!" We must not use any of God's provisions of gracious forgiveness as an occasion to justify, rationalize or excuse sin.

8. What About David and Simon?

- (1) The sin of David with Bathsheba and the sin of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8 are examples of one sin that separated man from God. These are used to show that any sin places one out of fellowship with God and fallen from grace.
 - A. But where is the evidence that they were humble, penitent and prayerful while committing adultery, plotting murder and trying to buy "the gift of God" with money?
 - B. In David's case, he lived long enough to repent, acknowledge and ask forgiveness for his sin. (Psalms 51)
 - C. In Simon's case, his sin was of such magnitude that Peter said that his heart was "not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:21). He had reverted to his old motivations that characterized his former sinful life. Attitude does make a difference.

9. The Alien and The Christian

- (1) Someone might say that God demands the same of the Christian that he does of a sinner - that is, obedience to be saved or forgiven. And that is true. But the alien is not under the cleansing blood of Christ, he is not in grace, and he is not walking in the light. He, also, does not have the intercession of the Holy Spirit and the advocacy of Christ as his High Priest. The Christian has all of these, and God makes provision for the Christian that he does not make for the sinner.

10. Confessing Specific Sins

- (1) Does one have to specify each sin to be forgiven?
- (2) When one becomes a Christian, he must repent of his sins. Does this mean he must remember and specify each sin he has committed in order to repent. In many cases, the sinner is not aware of specific sins. Later, he learns and repents. Is he unforgiven until he knows enough to repent of certain sins? Certainly not. We believe that the blood of Christ cleanses him from all his sins, known and unknown.
- (3) When a backslider returns in repentance and confession, it is unlikely that he will remember every sin he has committed since he left the Lord. David gave the proper confession by just admitting "I have sinned".

Irvn Lee: "I could not give the Lord an itemized list of all my sins this month but I can realize that I am weak and can correct blunders as completely as possible when I realize them. The Lord knows if I really want to go to heaven."

11. The Direction of One's Life

(1) I believe that God is mainly concerned with the direction our Christian life is taking - not so much where we are, but where we are going.

- A. The sinner is getting after sin with all his being. Occasionally, he will do what we might call a "Christian deed". Doing that Christian deed does not make him a Christian or righteous in God's sight. He is still a sinner, for that is the general tenor of his life.
- B. The Christian gives his all to the Lord. He yields himself to righteousness (Romans 6:13). But occasionally, in a weak moment or ignorantly, he sins. That sin no more makes him a sinner than one righteous deed makes the sinner a Christian. It all depends on the direction his life is taking. The blood of Christ is available to this penitent faithful Christian that is continually cleansing him from sin.

E. M. Zerr: (on "walking in the light") "No man lives who does not make some mistakes and commit sin incidentally. But this phrase means a man whose general life is one of godliness and whose motive principles is the light of the New Testament. This man can truly be said to be walking with the Lord because he is in the pathway that Jesus laid out for him. Being in fellowship with God, the source of all light, is like being constantly in the stream of the blood of His Son. That blood is constantly flowing (figuratively) through the body or church of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the natural body of a man whose blood stream is healthy, if germs slip into that person that blood, being always present, will be alike a disinfectant that will destroy the germ. Likewise the blood of Christ is ever present to cleanse away the mistakes and incidental sins that a true Christian does. Hence if a man is a worker in the Lord's vineyard and his life as whole is one of obedience to the law of Christ, he does not need to worry about the mistakes he might make which he does not realize, for the blood of Christ will take care of it and wash them away." (Volume 6, page 279)

Clem Thurman: "Some Christians seem to walk in fear that some 'hidden sin' or 'impulsive sin' will be on their record (the Bible word is imputed). But the whole point of I John 1:7 - 9 is that the blood of Christ takes away those sins! To walk in light doesn't mean that we never sin, else there would be no sins for the blood to cleanse. But to walk in the light does mean that we walk with God, with the determination to do His will. And as long as we thus 'walk in the light' the blood of Christ 'cleanseth us from all sin'. It doesn't say that the blood will 'keep us from sin', but that it cleanses us from sin." (Gospel Minutes, May 5, 1978)

R. L. Whiteside: "And when people walk in the light, not only is there fellowship between them, but they also have the cleansing blood of Christ. This blood cleanses such people from all sin. This would include all those sins of which we may not be conscious. God graciously blots out such sins, as well as those of which we are conscious and of which we repent; and the next three verses of the chapter show that we all sin, whether consciously or unconsciously, and that God is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, if we confess our sins. And that is a blessing for which every sincere disciple of Christ is profoundly thankful." (Annual Lesson Commentary, 1937, page 291)

12. David And "A Good Man"

- (1) Psalms 37:23, 24 "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."

- A. The point is: God does not "utterly cast down" a child of His every time he sins.
- B. This scripture is used by Calvinists' to show the impossibility of apostasy, but they fail to see that a "good man" can turn "bad". This promise is not to the person who persists in his evil.

N. B. Hardeman: (in debate with Ben M. Bogard in Little Rock, 1938) "I could walk on this platform; I might stumble over Dr. Guthrie's small (?) feet and fall; but it is possible to get up again. But if I fall away, that disconnects me with the platform altogether, and the word away means 'from, separated'. Now then, they shall fall away. 'the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord . . . though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down'; that's quite true; but if he fall away, then what about it? A different story altogether."

13. Now the Question: Does the blood cleanse an unconfessed sin?

- (1) The answer is NO. The Christian life is one that is always characterized by penitence and confession of sins. Now, if the question is: Does the blood cleanse sins that have not specifically named, the answer is YES.

The Issue Is: Must a Christian understand all that God wants him to know and do, be able to recall, confess, repent of, and ask forgiveness of each and every sin (commission and omission) at the instant such is committed in order to stand in God's grace and walk in the light? I sincerely hope not, because I cannot! But I can do my best to know and understand His will, live an humble, penitent and prayerful life, and by thus walking in the light be assured that the blood is constantly cleansing me from all sin. Only in this way can I know that I have eternal life. (I John 5:13)

II. ROMANS 4:3 - 9 Is Jesus' righteousness imputed to the child of God?

- 1. Verse 3 "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

(1) This is a quotation from Genesis 15:6. It is also found in James 2:23; Galatians 3:6;

2. "Imputed"

- (1) Thayer: "place to our credit"

Ardnt & Gingrich: "reckon - calculate"

Vine: "To reckon, take into account, to put down to a person's account"

Wuest: "Counted is logizomai. It was used in early secular documents; 'put down to one's account, let my revenues be placed on deposit at the storehouse; I now give orders generally with regard to all payments actually made or credited to the government.' God put to Abraham's account, placed on deposit for him, credited to him, righteousness." (Romans, page 67)

Robertson: "it was set down on the credit side of the ledger". (Epistles of Paul, page 350)

3. "Righteousness"

- (1) Vine: "is the character or quality of being right or just; it was formerly spelled 'right-wiseness' which clearly expresses the meaning." (page 298)
- (2) "Righteousness" speaks of a right relationship with God, doing right and of uprightness of character.

A. In the context of Romans, it signifies justification.

- a. Berry: "acquittal, justification" (Page 28 of lexicon)
- b. "Justify"
Berry: "to hold guiltless, to justify, to pronounce or treat as righteous" (page 27)

Moses E. Lard: "to hold as right, to do justice to, to treat as just or declare innocent, to acquit or remit guilt, and then to hold and treat as just." (Commentary on Romans page 41)

- c. This is the subject of the context of Romans 4. Romans 3:28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 4:5 speaks of God "that justifieth the ungodly". Abraham is used as an example of justification by faith. David is used as an example: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." (Romans 4: 6 - 9) Notice that imputed righteousness is equivalent to "iniquities forgiven" and "sins covered". When righteousness is imputed or put down to one's account, it is when God forgives his sins. Then Paul states the same thought negatively, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Righteousness is when sin is not imputed. God does not put sin down to the account of the Christian because He simply forgives it. And that gives us great hope and peace.

4. "Justification" A Legal Term

- (1) Justification literally means to stand innocent or acquitted or vindicated.
- (2) There are two ways one is vindicated:

- A. He is proved innocent. If one is charged with a crime and brought in before a judge and jury and tried and found innocent, he is vindicated because he is proved to be innocent. He is justified because he is "not guilty" - innocent of wrong doing.
- B. He is pardoned. When one is pardoned, he stands justified and innocent in the eyes of the law. Whatever crime he has committed is removed from his record completely, and is no longer held against him.

- a. When one comes into Christ, God justifies him (Romans 8:33) and pronounces him righteousness on the grounds of the cross and man's response to God's conditions of pardon. Read Romans 5:6 - 9. The Biblical concept of imputed righteousness simply means that we are declared "not guilty" because God pardons or forgives us. It does not mean that we are perfect, but righteous because of Christ's blood and God's forgiveness.

5. Calvinistic Imputed Righteousness

- (1) The Calvinists teach that Christ's righteous life, as well as His death, justifies us. They say we are saved by His "dying and His doing". They declare that the righteous life of Jesus is imputed to us. There is nothing for us to do. He did it all for us.
- (2) Two Things Wrong With That Approach:
 - A. It leads to the impossibility of apostasy.
 - B. The Bible teaches that we will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. (Romans 14:12; II Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12)

(3) Some Scriptures Used To teach The Calvinistic Doctrine:

- A. Romans 5:9, 10 "saved by His life" (This refers to His resurrected life.)
- B. Romans 5:19 "through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous (The context shows that what we lost by Adam's one act, we gain back in Christ's one act of obedience, His death on the cross.)
- C. I Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9 (These show that Christ is the source of our salvation or righteousness.
- D. Romans 3:22, 26; Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:22; Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9 - "faith of Christ" - Most translators and commentators agree that "faith of Christ" is genitive of the object, not of the subject; so, it is the faith of which Christ is the object. Macknight translates it: "the faith which Jesus hath enjoined." The context is contrasting man's faith in Christ with meritorious works. This is man's faith, not Christ's, by which we are saved.

(4) What About Christ's Perfect Life In Our Salvation?

- A. Although Christ's life is not imputed to us, it was certainly necessary for Him to live a perfect sinless life.
 - a. His perfect life qualified Him to be our unblemished sacrifice. (Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:18, 19)
 - b. It enabled Him to die in our place. (I Peter 2:22 - 24; II Corinthians 5:21)
 - c. And it made Him our perfect example to follow. (I Peter 2:21, 22)

6. Our Question: Is Jesus' righteousness imputed to us?

- (1) If we are speaking of His personal righteousness - NO.
- (2) However, righteousness in the sense of justification is put down to our account. We are accounted righteous because of forgiveness which comes through the blood of Christ.

III. GALATIANS 3:6 - 9 What is accounted for righteousness?

- 1. Verse 6 "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." This is quoted from Genesis 15:5, 6, "And (God) brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." So Abraham's faith was put down to his credit for righteousness or justification.

2. Contention of Some:

- (1) Some believe that this referred to Abraham's justification as an alien sinner. Several passages show that he was a faithful child of God before the statement was made that his faith was accounted for righteousness. Three chapters before we find this statement, we find God commanding him to leave Haran for an unknown land, and the promises to bless him, make of him a great nation, and "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (speaking of Jesus) (Genesis 12:1-3). Those are not the words of God to a condemned sinner. Hebrews 11:8 says, "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Again, those are not the actions of a sinful person.

- A. When Abraham reached Sichem in Canaan, "The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him." (Genesis 12:7) Why worship if he is just a sinner?

- B. Genesis 12:8 (Another altar)
- C. Genesis 13:3, 4. After his experiences in Egypt, he built another altar and "called on the name of the Lord".
- D. After Abraham freed Lot from his enemies, Melchizedek, the priest, blessed Abraham and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High" (Genesis 14:19). Words like that would not be spoken concerning a condemned sinner.
- E. Finally, just before the declaration that Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness, God said, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1). God is not the shield of the sinner. So Abraham was an obedient child of God before it was said that his faith was counted for righteousness.

3. What Is Faith?

- (1) Saving faith is not mere faith, just the mental acceptance of testimony. Saving faith is a working faith. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Galatians 5:6)
- (2) Saving Faith Involves Obedience

- A. Thayer (faith) "in the New Testament of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it" (page 512). Faith seems to carry the idea of trust conjoined with obedience.
- B. Hebrews 3:19 Of the Israelites the writer says "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." The Greek word for "unbelief" is *apistian*. Bagster defines *apistian*: "unbelief, want of trust and confidence".
 - a. Now read Hebrews 4:6, speaking of the same people, "they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief." The Greek word here is *apeitheian*, which Bagster defines: "an uncompliant disposition; obstinacy, contumacy, disobedience, unbelief". The ASV & RSV and other translations have "disobedience" instead of unbelief, for that is the true definition of the word. The point is that the writer of Hebrews equates the unbelief of the Israelites with disobedience. Remove the "un" and the "dis" and you have "belief" as equivalent to "obedience". Through belief or obedience, the Israelites would have been able to enter the promised land. Believers in the Scriptures are those who render loving faith and obedience to the Lord.
- C. Romans 10:16 "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" What scripture did he quote to prove they didn't obey the gospel? Isaiah 53:1. Nothing is said there about obeying, but rather believing. So, to obey was to believe. A true believer is one who obeys the Lord.
- D. I Thessalonians 1:3 speaks of their "work of faith". Authorities say this is in the genitive case, so, "faith's work". Faith has its work.

- (3) Conclusion: It was an obedient faith which was imputed for righteousness.

4. James Uses The Same Old Testament Passage James 2:21 - 24

- (1) There is no contradiction between Paul and James.

R. L. Whiteside says it well: "Paul was talking about works of law; James was talking about works of faith. Paul was showing Judaizing Christians that no one could be righteous, or justified, by works of law, for no one kept the law perfectly, and that to be

justified, or made righteous, a person must believe in Christ. To the one who does not fulfill the works of the law, but believes in God, faith is reckoned for righteousness. Paul was arguing that works without faith would not justify, and James was arguing that faith without works would not justify. To exclude either is to fail of justification. Both referred to Abraham to illustrate their points. Abraham was justified without works of law, but he was justified by works of faith." (Commentary on Romans)

(2) Faith Justification Is A Process

- A. Whether God's word comes in the form of a promise or a command, the appropriate response must follow. When it does, justification is granted by God. Abraham trusted a promise and was justified (Romans 4:3). He heeded a command, and was justified (James 2:23).

5. Now The Question? What is accounted for righteousness?

- (1) In Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3, and Galatians 3:6, it was faith - not mere faith, but obedient faith.
(2) In James 2:23, it was works of faith.

6. Does This Mean That Faith Is A Substitute For Righteousness?

- (1) "For" is translated from the Greek word "eis", which has been the subject of some debate through the years.

- A. If the Greek word had been "anti", which means "instead of", you could say that faith is reckoned as a substitute for righteousness. But the word is "eis", which means "with a view to, or in order to".

Whiteside: "On the grounds of his faith God forgave him of whatever sins he might have been guilty, and so declared him to be righteous. If no guilt attaches to a man, if there is no sin charged against him, he is a righteous man." (Commentary on Romans)

Moses E. Lard: "Abraham's belief was counted to him *eis dikaion*. What does that mean? First: It does not mean to count *dikaion* instead of something else. The expression will not admit of this interpretation. Second: Nor does it signify to count *dikaion* as equivalent to, or as having equal value with, something else. But it means to count *dikaion* as one thing - the consideration of value or equivalence being excluded - in order to obtain another. This is the meaning. The use of *eis*, in this sense, or as performing this function, is so well known, and so common in the New Testament, that I shall not stop to adduce examples of it. Moreover, be it noticed, that the thing counted to Abraham was his own, not another's.

Dikaion means acquittal from sin, with subsequent recognition and treatment as just. Now Abraham's belief was counted to him *eis* - in order to *dikaion* - in order to his acquittal from sin, or that, by means of his belief, he might obtain justification. It was, in a word, the condition of his release or pardon, just as it is the condition of ours." (Romans, Page 129, 130)

CONCLUSION

1. If we are walking in the light, living an humble, obedient, penitent, confessing, and prayerful life, we will have fellowship with God, and the blood of Christ will continually cleanse us of our sins.
2. Righteousness in the sense of justification is imputed or credited to our account through the forgiveness of sin that comes through the blood of Christ.
3. Our obedient faith is accounted unto us in order to justification.

GOSPEL AND DOCTRINE

II JOHN 9

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOSPEL AND THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST?

By Billy D. Dickinson

Throughout the years there have been various passages of scriptures which have proven to be of great strategic importance in the warfare which is continually waged between truth and error. These passages and their interpretations have been discussed and debated often and this is where the controversies must be settled. Who can prove that their view or interpretation of a certain passage is the correct one, being both scripturally and contextually sound?

Ephesians 2:8, 9, for example, is such a passage in regard to the subject of salvation. Anyone who has discussed with a Baptist the importance of being baptized for the remission of sins realizes how important their interpretation of this passage is to their system of beliefs. To them, "not of works" in this passage means "not of baptism". Therefore, they conclude that Paul is affirming in Ephesians 2:8, 9 that salvation is by faith alone. So, in practically every debate on the subject of salvation, the meaning and application of these verses has been discussed.

Likewise, II John 9 has become a passage of scripture which is of great importance when discussing the subject of fellowship and unity with those of the so-called "Grace-Unity Movement". My conclusion is that with many of these people it is not so much that their interpretation of II John 9 has affected their stance on fellowship as it is that their stance on fellowship has affected their interpretation of II John 9! Indeed, I believe their loose interpretation of II John 9 is more of a reflection of where they are doctrinally rather than a true and unbiased exegesis of what is actually said!! As one writer put it, "Brethren have not been compelled by overwhelming evidence to reinterpret II John 9. Rather, they have been compelled by tolerance for error, unscriptural concepts of unity, and looseness on fellowship with liberals. Those who are drifting away from Bible authority may easily drift into the liberal reinterpretation of II John 9, and frequently do so."¹ I believe these statements are true, as well as a fair assessment of the situation.

Hence, I would like to do two things in regard to II John 9. First, I would like to consider with you the meaning of this passage and see if we can not determine what John is actually saying. Secondly, I want to consider with you the so-called "Gospel-Doctrine distinction" some are making and we will consider this distinction in light of John's statement in II John 9, as well as the way some are trying to interpret this verse.

THE MEANING OF II JOHN 9

What is John really saying in this passage? Specifically, what does John have reference to when he speaks of "the doctrine of Christ"? Surely, one only has to read John's statement to see the significance of it because John is writing of something which affects our relationship with God. John wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." With only a casual reading, one should be able to see that it is absolutely essential that we understand what John means by the term, "the doctrine of Christ". Because whatever the doctrine of Christ is in this passage, John says we must abide in it in order to have God and Christ. Also, looking at it from a negative point of view, John says those who don't abide in the doctrine of Christ but transgress (goeth onward - American Standard Version) in regard to it do not have God!! "The verbs 'goeth onward' and 'abideth not' are descriptive of the same act: the first presents it positively, the second, negatively."²

Now, the question and the issue is this: does John merely mean the doctrine about Christ i.e., Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (II John 7); or does John refer to the doctrine which has Christ as its author, which was first taught by Him and then later by His representatives, which certainly includes the fact He came in the flesh but is not limited to just that one teaching? This is what we must decide.

Scholars would say this expression, "the doctrine of Christ", is either subjective or objective genitive. It is either to be understood subjectively, i.e., "the doctrine which Christ taught", or it is to be understood objectively, i.e., "the doctrine about Christ".

There are some, of course, who insist it is to be understood objectively and, therefore, it refers to nothing more than the fact that Jesus is come in the flesh. This interpretation has led some to really broaden their basis for fellowship because this would mean that as long as a person merely believes the right things "about Christ", he has God and Christ. Hence, some of the so-called "Unity-In-Diversity Movement" are actually extending fellowship to those of the denominational world who haven't even been scripturally baptized!! As a matter of fact, Leroy Garrett made a statement back in 1967 in *Restoration Review*, "to say that a Baptist is necessarily one who 'has gone onward and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ' and therefore 'has not God,' as the passage reads, is not only to be judgmental but also to be unkind."³ So, to these men, to apply to the term, "the doctrine of Christ", anything more than the fact that Jesus is come in the flesh, is to take a position which is unscholarly, unfounded, and legalistic. Furthermore, Leroy Garrett says to apply II John 9 to such issues as instrumental music, Bible classes, the missionary society, or whatever, is to act "unchristian and crude, as well as downright stupid."⁴

But I want to demonstrate that these men are the ones who have taken an unscholarly position and their interpretation of this passage is the one which shows a total disregard for the context!!

Now it is true that if we were to isolate this expression and merely allow it to stand alone, it could be used either subjectively or objectively. But when this expression is considered in light of its context there is a strong balance of probability in favor of the subjective genitive, as F. F. Bruce points out in his commentary on the epistles of John.⁵ Also, after saying the Greek in this passage is capable of being understood either subjectively or objectively, J. W. Roberts in his commentary says, "Undoubtedly the majority of commentators are on the side of the subjective genitive."⁶ Obviously, there must be some reason why the majority of commentators are on the side of the subjective genitive! Let us, then, consider some of this evidence which gives a strong balance of probability in favor of the subjective genitive!

First, let's look at the immediate context. In verses 1, 2 and 4 of II John, the inspired apostle writes of the truth. He writes, "I rejoice greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father." If II John 9 is limited to "the doctrine about Christ" and verse 7, which speaks of Jesus coming in the flesh, limits "the doctrine" in verse 9, does it also limit "the truth" in the other verses? When John wrote of them "walking in truth", who can believe that he only had reference to believing Jesus is come in the flesh? Too, what about "his commandments" and "the commandment" in verse 6? Is this also limited to "the doctrine about Christ"? To ask the question is to answer it! Of course, all of this is in the immediate context.

But also, when one considers II John 9 in a larger context along with I and III John, the evidence pointing to the subjective genitive becomes even more overwhelming. All one has to do is read these three epistles and it becomes apparent what John is affirming and opposing. No doubt, John is combatting the false teaching of the gnostics, or at least those like the gnostics. These men were denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Some were denying His humanity while others were denying His divinity. But by reading all John has to say, it is obvious this is not all they were teaching! It appears they were also claiming to have special knowledge the other disciples did not have but, of course, their knowledge was not based upon revelation as given by the apostles. So, these false teachers were seeking to turn faithful brethren away from the truth by giving them something NEW!! Therefore, John points them back to the One "which was from the beginning", I John 1:1, and he exhorts them to continue in the truth which they had been taught and which they had known. John is saying we don't need any so-called special and esoteric knowledge which false teachers might offer us, but rather, we need to see the essentiality of abiding in the truth which the apostles received, preached, and delivered to the church from the beginning. In I John 2:24, John writes, "Let that therefore abide in you,

which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."

In his book, "The Doctrine Of Christ And Unity Of The Saints, Ron Halbrook gives an extensive and excellent treatment to the meaning of II John 9 and he also set forth the following contrasts, as found in I, II, and III John. The following will demonstrate what John is actually affirming and opposing in these three epistles, and please note, more is involved than just the fact Jesus is come in the flesh!

"The following specific contrasts from John's three letters demonstrate what he affirms and what he opposes: (1) Completeness and finality of God's revelation through Christ and the inspired men VS claiming of new, higher developments of truth. (2) Fellowship with God while walking in the light (truth) VS claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness (sin). (3) Seeking forgiveness for whatever sin may enter in our lives from time to time VS continuing to practice sin while claiming to be above sin (thus refusing to repent). (4) Knowing God and having His grace as we keep His commandments VS claiming to know God and have His grace while violating His commandments. (5) Abiding in God and His love by keeping His word Vs claiming to abide in God and His love while disobeying His word. (6) Walking in the light by loving the brethren VS claiming to walk in the light while despising brethren. (7) Loving the Father by doing His will Vs claiming to love the Father while doing the will of the world. (8) Having both the Father and the Son VS claiming to have the Father while denying the Son. (9) Abiding in God by not continuing to practice sin VS claiming to abide in Him while continuing to practice sin. (10) Abiding in life while loving the brethren (in deed and in truth) VS claiming to abide in life while also claiming to love brethren (in terms of esoteric definitions and philosophic verbiage about 'love') but in actual practice despising them. (11) Knowing God by hearing the inspired men (thus rejecting 'the spirit of error') VS claiming to know God while promoting doctrines characteristic of the ways of the world. (12) Loving God by loving the brethren VS claiming to love God while despising brethren. (13) Loving the brethren by obeying God's commands VS claiming to love brethren while violating His commands. (14) Abiding within the limits set down by Christ's word and thus abiding in the Father VS claiming to abide in the Father while going beyond these prescribed limits. (15) Showing hospitality to teachers of the truth exclusively (i.e., helping them on their way) VS setting at nought such teachers while aiding and abetting false teachers. (16) Maintaining a close relationship with God by practicing His revealed will VS claiming such a relationship while continuing to practice sin."⁷

These are some of the things John affirms and opposes in I, II, and II John! As asked by Halbrook, was there ever a more stunning rebuke of denominationalism and of the new grace-unity movement than what is found in these three epistles? Nay, verily!! I believe it is plain to see that actually II John 9 can be said to be a summary of all that John is affirming and opposing in these epistles! In one verse John captures the main theme of his three letters, the necessity of abiding in the doctrine of Christ.

Isn't it interesting that practically every item, with the exception of denying the deity of Jesus, that John is combatting in discussing the claims of these gnostics aptly describes the teachings of those involved in the so-called "Unity-In Diversity Movement"? In this sense, I guess we can say these men are truly Neo-Genostics. For instance, they claim one can remain in fellowship with God while walking in what they admit to be darkness (sin), like using instrumental music. Too, they say men can practice such sins and yet be automatically forgiven without meeting the conditions of forgiveness, especially repentance. Also, they say we can know God and abide in Him and His love while violating His commandments. Furthermore, they disregard the warning of II John 9 and say we can have God and Christ while going beyond the prescribed limits of His word. Yet, as previously pointed out, everyone of these things are specifically condemned by John in these three epistles!!

Therefore, when one takes into account the immediate context, as well as the larger context (all three epistles), surely it becomes evident as to why the majority of commentators are on the side of

the subjective genitive and why a strong balance of probability is in favor of the subjective genitive.

Finally, when one takes into account the use of the personal genitive in II John 9 it becomes crystal clear, except to the closed minded, what John meant by the expression, "the doctrine of Christ". In this passage, the Greek word *Didache* (doctrine) is followed by the personal genitive: "of Christ". " 'Of Christ' qualifies doctrine, taking doctrine out of 'a class of indefinite limits' by qualifying it. 'Of Christ' expresses the 'genus or kind' of doctrine - defining its essential limits, relationship, or quality. It is not just any doctrine."⁸ It is the doctrine of Christ! Whenever *Didache* is followed by the personal genitive in John's writings, never does it mean "the doctrine about"! For instance, is "the doctrine of Balaam" in Revelation 2:14 the doctrine about Balaam? Of course not!! Is "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes" in Revelation 2:15 the doctrine about the Nicolaitanes? Again, of course not! Obviously, it was the doctrine which they taught. Hence, this is what it means in II John 9. As A. T. Robertson wrote, "Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is the standard of Christian teaching."⁹ As a matter of fact, anytime *Didache* is followed by the personal genitive in the New Testament, never to my knowledge does it mean "the doctrine about". Was "the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" in Matthew 16:12 the doctrine about them? Who will so affirm? Was the doctrine of the apostles, Acts 2:42, the doctrine about the apostles or the doctrine they were teaching? Is the "doctrines of devils" in I Timothy 4:1 the doctrines about demons? Why, to ask any of these questions is to answer them!! Therefore, taking into account all the evidence we have considered and presented, we must conclude, without fear of successful contradiction, that "the doctrine of Christ" in II John 9 refers to the doctrine which our Lord taught, which He is the author of, and which is the standard of truth by which all things in our lives must be tested!!

THE GOSPEL - DOCTRINE DISTINCTION

Having established what "the doctrine of Christ" is in II John 9, I would now like to consider with you the so-called gospel-doctrine distinction some are trying to make. Some today would insist there is a great distinction to be made between gospel and doctrine and while we must have unity in the gospel, they claim we do not have to possess unity in matters of doctrine. Of course, to them, nothing of a doctrinal nature should ever be made a test of fellowship! To them, gospel applies only to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and maybe a few other facts, while doctrine is that part of the revelation of God which applies to other matters, especially those matters which pertain to the Christian's life.

Also, these very same people make a similar distinction between preaching and teaching. They say we preach the gospel and we teach doctrine. They say one can not preach doctrine nor teach gospel, but rather, you preach gospel (and it's exclusively for the world) and you teach doctrine (which is exclusively for the church). In other words, simply put, according to this view the gospel can not be preached to the church, anymore than doctrine can be taught to the world.

To begin with, it must be pointed out that II John 9 really puts these people in a great dilemma! Because what they define as gospel, i.e., Jesus is come in the flesh, (and remember, this is how they interpret the passage), John calls doctrine!! So, these men can not have it both ways! Either they must give up their gospel-doctrine distinction or else they must admit that "the doctrine of Christ" in this passage involves more than just the idea that Jesus is come in the flesh. Indeed, II John 9 places them between a rock and a hard place!!

But is there a great distinction between gospel and doctrine or are these merely different terms which apply to the same message? Well, first, let's define the two terms. It's already been pointed out that doctrine comes from the Greek word *Didache* and it merely denotes teaching. Thayer says it refers to what is taught; it is teaching or instruction.¹⁰ Gospel comes from the Greek word *Euangelion* and Thayer defines it as "A reward for glad tidings" or merely "good tidings". This is the basic and primary meaning of the word. Then, after giving its basic definition, Thayer goes on to discuss how it is used in the New Testament: "In the New Testament specifically the glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up and subsequently also of Jesus the Messiah, the founder of the

kingdom . . . it may be more briefly defined as the good tidings of salvation through Christ; the proclamation of the grace of God manifested and pledged in Christ; the gospel."!!

From these definitions, certain conclusions can be reached: First, the basic idea involved in **Didache** is teaching or to instruct. Second, the basic idea involved in **Euangelion** is good news or good tidings of victory. However, the content of the message is not expressed in the words themselves and, therefore, the content of the message does not have to be different when both **Didache** and **Euangelion** are used!! In other words, the **Didache** could as easily be that of the Nicolaitanes as that of Christ, while the **Euangelion** could as easily be the good news of victory over the Persians as the good news of victory over sin and death. The point is that what we may be teaching is the good news of Christ!!

I want to demonstrate that there is no great gospel-doctrine distinction as some would have us to believe. For instance, when one obeys his Lord in baptism, Paul wrote in Romans 6:17 that he obeys "from the heart that form of doctrine." Indeed, baptism is a part of the gospel (Mark 16:15, 16) and yet Paul says in being baptized we obey a form of **Doctrine**!! Would it not be correct to say, then, that when I preach on the subject of baptism, I am preaching that form of **Doctrine**?

Also, please note the following expressions as found in Acts 13:

Verse 5 - And when they were at Salamis, they preached **The Word of God** in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. (Does anyone really doubt that what they were preaching in those synagogues was the gospel?)

Verse 7 - Which was the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear **The Word of God**.

Verse 8 - But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from **The Faith**.

Verses 9 - 10 - Then Saul, (who is also called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert **The Right Ways Of The Lord**?

Verse 12 - Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at **The Doctrine of the Lord**.

What is the difference in the following expressions: the word of God (gospel), the faith, the right ways of the Lord, and the doctrine of the Lord? Obviously, not a thing!! Here, then, is unmistakable evidence that the word of God which they were preaching in those synagogues, and remember, some say only the gospel can be preached (see verse 5 again), is also referred to as "the doctrine of the Lord"!! To try and make a difference in these expressions would be purely arbitrary.

Let us consider some other verses of scripture: In I Timothy 1:10, 11, Paul writes of "sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Beginning on Pentecost in Acts 2, the apostles preached the gospel in Jerusalem. Yet, in Acts 5:28 the High Priest accused them of filling "Jerusalem with your Doctrine". On Mars' Hill, Paul preached to the Athenians about the resurrection of Christ (Acts 17:18), which is certainly a fact of the gospel, yet in Acts 17:19 this message was referred to as a "new Doctrine". From these scriptures, we must conclude that the distinction some want to make between gospel and doctrine simply will not hold up!! To argue that the gospel is only for the sinner and doctrine is only for the Christian is incorrect! I believe this kind of reasoning only tends to weaken the truth because truth is intertwined together and when we begin to unravel the truth, I think the result is obvious!!

Edward Fudge, a man closely associated with the "Grace-Unity Movement", has given the following explanation in regard to gospel and doctrine: "We should avoid 'pickiness' and extreme positions regarding these terms, yet 'gospel' and 'doctrine' do represent this basic distinction in meaning, and their emphasis should be taken seriously. 'Gospel' generally refers to the good news about Jesus - what God has done to save man. It is of the nature of an announcement and it is 'preached' or proclaimed. 'Doctrine' generally refers to instruction - what Man is to do in response to what God has already done. It is of the nature of direction and is 'taught'." ¹² As far as I am concerned, his definitions really fall short of expressing the truth. He says gospel is what God has done to save man, while doctrine is man's response to what God has done. In other words, he is saying the gospel has to do with God, while doctrine has to do with man. And yet, the Bible speaks of obeying the gospel (Romans 10:16). How can man obey the gospel if the gospel is only God's part? Moreover, if the gospel must be obeyed and yet the gospel is God's part, then perhaps God is the one who needs to obey the gospel, rather than man!! Too, if doctrine only refers to man's response to what God has done, how did the apostles fill Jerusalem with their doctrine and when Paul preached of Christ's resurrection on Mar's Hill, how did he preach doctrine?

But what is the point anyway? What are these men really trying to say? Why is this distinction so important to them? Brethren, do not be deceived! The reason this distinction is so important to them is because they believe the gospel is more important than doctrine! They think what one believes in becoming a Christian is far more important than what one believes in living the Christian life!! That is the point!! To them, doctrinal matters are inconsequential, for there is no point of doctrine a child of God could sincerely violate that would put his soul in jeopardy. They contend we must have unity in the gospel but not in doctrine. That is the point!!

Some would even go so far to suggest the gospel has nothing to do with things but it has only to do with a person and with specific facts about that person. The idea is that when we preach, (or I should say teach, because you can not preach doctrine), on such things as the woman's hair, modesty, or even scriptural worship, we are not preaching the gospel, anymore than one who gives a presentation on natural childbirth or hand to hand combat. The reason is because the gospel has to do with a person and not with "things". Well, the Baptists have been saying that for years!! Baptists claim that baptism is not a part of the gospel because baptism is a "thing" and the gospel only has to do with a person. Now, we even have some brethren in the church chanting the very same tune!! How sad!!

Also, some try to make a great distinction between gospel and doctrine by showing a distinction between preaching and teaching. They say there is a difference between the gospel which introduces us into the body of Christ and the doctrine which tells how one is to live and function as a member of that body, just as there is a difference between preaching and teaching; we preach the gospel and we teach doctrine. Now, let me say that I believe there is a difference between preaching and teaching but I do not believe it is the difference between gospel and doctrine. Rather, it is the difference in how the message is presented, as far as I can tell.

It is interesting to me that some want to quote William Barclay in his comments on I Corinthians 2:6 - 9 in an effort to show this distinction and yet Barclay absolutely says the very opposite of what these men would like to prove, namely, that the gospel can only be preached, while doctrine can only be taught. Notice what Barclay says: "In the early church there was a quite clear distinction between two kinds of instruction. (1) There was what was called Kerygma. Kerygma means a herald's announcement from a king; and this was the plain announcement of the basic facts of Christianity, the announcement of the facts of life, death and resurrection of Jesus and his coming again. (2) There was what was called Didache. Didache means teachings; and this was the explanation of the meaning of the facts which had already been announced. Obviously it is a second stage for those who have already received Kerygma." Notice in discussing Kergma (or preaching) he says this refers to the announcement of the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Of course, all will agree they were announcing the Gospel in announcing these Facts. But notice, in defining Didache Barclay says this was the explanation of the meaning of the Facts!! Facts of what? Why, obviously the gospel!! If Barclay is not saying here that they were teaching the gospel, what was he saying? If these men

find any consolation in these statements of Barclay, they are welcome to it!!

Hence. Preaching is more of a proclaiming of facts or to herald the truth while Teaching is going into more detail and explaining what the facts mean and how they relate to us.

To argue that gospel can only be preached and the doctrine can only be taught is an erroneous idea. In Romans 2:21, Paul writes of those who "preachest (not teach) a man should not steal". According to these men's definition of terms, what does stealing have to do with the gospel? Not a thing and yet here Paul writes of Preaching on the evil of thievery. If it is true that only the gospel can be preached, then we are forced to conclude that when a man preaches against stealing he is preaching the gospel!! If not, why not?

But get this scripture: In Acts 5:42, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Notice the passage affirms that they did not cease to do two things: teach and preach Jesus Christ. If when they were preaching Jesus Christ they were preaching the gospel, what were they teaching when they were teaching Jesus Christ? If it was not the gospel, what was it?

Also, in the great commission Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, 20, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." When Jesus commanded them to go "and teach all nations", what were they to go and teach? Does anyone really doubt that it was the gospel? Of course, I realize that teach here means to make disciples. But how do we make disciples of men? It is by making them learners of Christ! How do we make them learners of Christ? By teaching or instructing them in the gospel. Strong shows that this word includes the idea of instructing and teaching and Thayer says it means "to make a disciple; to teach, instruct."¹³

In answer to the question assigned to me, II John 9 - What is the difference between the gospel and the doctrine of Christ, my response is . . . **NOT A THING!!**

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FOOTNOTES

1. Ron Halbrook, The Doctrine of Christ and Unity of the Saints, page 52.
2. Guy N. Woods, New Testament Commentaries, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, and Jude, page 346.
3. Restoration Review, Volume 9, No. 4, page 79.
4. Restoration Review, Volume 5, No. 1, 1963 pages 13, 14.
5. F. F. Bruce, The Epistles of John, pages 141, 142.
6. J. W. Roberts, The Letters of John, pages 163, 164.
7. Ron Halbrook, The Doctrine of Christ and the Unity of the Saints, pages 10, 11.
8. Ron Halbrook, The Doctrine of Christ and Unity of the Saints, pages 34, 35.
9. Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume 6, page 254.
10. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 144.
11. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 257.
12. Sermons that Strengthen, page 44.
13. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, page 386.

Romans 6:12 What is meant by "sin . . . reign in your mortal body?"

Romans 7:9 When was Paul "alive without the law once?"

Romans 7:14 - 25 Does Paul speak of himself before or after conversion?

By Jimmy Smith

INTRODUCTION:

I shall address these issues in the order of assignment. I really don't know how to address any verse of scripture without first considering the context. Read Romans 6:1 - 13 to obtain the contextual setting.

- A. The major thrust of my assignment is a rejection of the doctrine of Antinomianism. Regarding Antinomianism the Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 2, page 69 says; "(It) is an interpretation of the antithesis between law and gospel, recurrent from the earliest times. Christians being released in important particulars, from conformity to the Old Testament as a whole, a real difficulty attended the settlement of the limits and the immediate authority of the remainder, known vaguely as the Moral law . . . During the Commonwealth period, Antinomianism was found in England under the high Calvinists who maintained that an elect person, being predestined to salvation, is absolved from the moral law, and is not called upon to repent. In less extreme forms, Antinomianism is a feature of those forms of Christianity which lay stress on justification by faith."
- B. It never seems to strike modern advocates that it is inconsistent to restrict the meaning of the word "alone". "Alone" cannot be restricted to such items as the Lord's Supper and Baptism. If it is truly by faith "alone" that men are saved, of course, morality, being something other than faith is also unnecessary.
- C. In this chapter, as throughout Romans, the grand theme continually in view of the righteousness of God's character; and the thrust of Paul's words in chapter 6 is that the truly righteous character of God requires that all antinomian license be rejected by the baptized believers who make up the true body of Jesus' disciples. The righteous God requires that representatives of his kingdom on earth be righteous.

I. LET NOT SIN REIGN IN YOUR MORTAL BODIES!

- A. Having shown in verse 4 that the baptized believer, upon his being thereby united with Christ, is then dead unto sin, Paul at once went a step further by pointing out that Christ arose from the dead to a higher type of life, and appealed to this as an analogy of the Christian's rising from the watery grave of baptism to walk "in newness of life."

Admittedly, "in newness of life" is a reference, not merely to the upright morality and integrity of the Christian pilgrimage, but also to an entirely new status that pertains to him following his union with Christ in Baptism.

- B. Does this newness of life mean that the possessor of it cannot sin? No! The will of man, still free, can reverse the decision. What is the "old man that was crucified" in verse 6? Some say: "Our Corrupt Nature". Whiteside says: "But Paul does not view our nature as corrupt. Besides, our nature is not put to death in the process of conversion to Christ. Read the verse again and you will see that "our old man" and "the body of sin" are the same thing, for certainly "our old man" is not crucified in order that something else might be put to death." "Of himself Paul said: "I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). Paul the sinner died. What was true of him is true of every one who becomes a Christian. The old man, the body of sin, is the sinner. Every time a person becomes a Christian, a sinner dies. We are then no longer the bondservants of sin. When a bond-servant, or a slave, dies, he passed from under his master. His master no longer has dominion over him."

- C. A person is either dead to sin or he is not. If he is dead to sin, he is admonished to so consider himself in verse 11. If we have not died to sin, we cannot in truth reckon ourselves dead to sin; but the person who is dead to sin should so count himself and act accordingly. We are therefore to reckon ourselves alive to God in Christ.
- D. In verse 12 "Paul addressed that part of man which has the control of the body and which is, therefore, responsible for what the body does. The body is a mere instrument to be used by the inner man, the spirit, for good or bad. The spirit is charged not to let sin control the body. Our natural appetites and passions are not evil within themselves. They are God-given, and become evil only when they become the master, and thereby lead us into sinful thoughts and deeds. Now, since we died to sin, we are not to allow sin to reestablish its reign in our bodies. We must control the lusts of our bodies, not obey them. The mortal body, the body which must die, must not be allowed to cause spiritual and eternal death." (Whiteside)
- E. Verse 13 shows plainly that when we sin, the members of our body are mere instruments through which the inner man accomplished its purposed. The instrument used in committing a crime cannot be blamed for the crime.

II' WHEN WAS PAUL ALIVE WITHOUT THE LAW ONCE?

- A. The only time Paul was without law was during the years of his childhood, before he reached the years of accountability. The Cambridge Gk. Testament says "I was living unaffected by law once." Beyond a doubt this has reference to a state of innocence, or unconscious morality, as yet without instruction, and uncondemned, which condition may be assumed as a description of Paul's childhood innocence.
- B. But, after being instructed in the law, i. e. "When the commandment came" sin "sprang to life", and he fell into the deadness of transgression and sin. Whiteside said, Gk. "Sin came much alive", and then he died spiritually. Seizing the occasion of the commandment sin leaped up and thrust Paul through with all manner of violations; as a result of which, he became consciously guilty and subject to the penalty of eternal death, that being the import of "I died".
- C. Paul's life as a child was untouched by numberless demands of law, which accumulated with his moral development; at that period whole regions of his life were purely impulsive; one after another they came under the touch of the law, and with each new pressure of law upon his consciousness, the sphere, in which it was possible to sin, was enlarged.
- D. Obviously, the command came to Paul when he began to realize his own individual responsibility in the matter of obeying God.
- E. Whiteside: "It would be interesting to hear one of those advocates of hereditary total depravity tell us when Paul was alive without the law and when he died spiritually." Because they tell us that a person is born totally depraved—born dead in trespasses and sins.

III. DOES PAUL SPEAK OF HIMSELF BEFORE OR AFTER CONVERSION – Romans 7:14-25?

- A. I affirm that it was definitely before conversion in which Paul speaks of himself. It is Paul's use of the first person present tense here that is regarded as the principle support of the interpretation of this passage (from here to the end of the chapter) that this is a Christian experience—and not a Paul the Jew experience.
- B. But I affirm Paul's thoughts were retrospective, despite the present tense. The author of Hebrews (probably the same author) used the present tense and first person in 6:1 of that

epistle accommodatively, as is undoubtedly done here. ("Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.")

- C. A history teacher's instruction of a class studying the American Revolution might say of Washington's winter at Jockey Hollow: "We are now with Washington's army west of the great swamp in New Jersey. Cold and hunger are our enemies. Disease stalks us; desertion is increasing; and there is even mutiny."

In such a presentation, the first person present tense cannot indicate the present time at all; and I stand convinced that Paul's present condition when he wrote Romans was absolutely not indicated by his use of the first person present tense in 7:14 - 25.

IV. REASON FOR REJECTING THIS AS A CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE!

- A. Paul said, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Are such words as these fit comment of any child of God who has been redeemed by the blood of Christ? To use Paul's word, God Forbid! To refer these words to Paul's status as a Christian, or to the status of any other Christian, is to torture the word of God. If that is the case, why would Paul ever recommend the dis-fellowshipping of the immoral at Corinth?
- B. I believe to apply this to Christians is approaching blasphemy. Paul had just finished saying that Christians are "dead to sin" and alive "unto God" in Christ Jesus (6:11); and to apply these words to Christians is to contradict what had just been stated.
- C. Coffman says: "What was Paul's meaning? The grammatical impossibility of using this verse to cancel 6:11, coupled with the fact that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this chapter . . . provide the most eloquent proof possible that the conflict noted in the following verses resulted, not from any Christian experience whatever, but from the tragic efforts of truly noble souls (of whom Paul himself was numbered) who had diligently sought to please God under the old institution.

Pray tell me how can it ever be accepted as fact that a true Christian, one forgiven of all past sins, endowed with the Holy Spirit, dead to sin, alive unto God, risen with Christ, walking in newness of life, possessing all spiritual blessings 'in Christ'—how can that person be spoken of as 'sold under sin'? Never!"

- D. But there is an even stronger reason for rejecting the application of this latter part of Chapter 7 to the Christian and the construing of these words as a description of the Christian's inner struggle over sin. That reason is grounded in the magnificent scope and sweeping comprehension Paul's reverberating "Now" in that place imposes its antithesis "Then" upon this whole passage. What Paul was speaking of here was a past condition. He was speaking of the fruitless struggle of noble souls under the law of Moses who, despite their efforts, found no justification thereunder. "Then" is the word that flies like a banner over this part of Romans. True, it is not spoken here, but it is more than implied; it is demanded by the antithetical "now" that opens the eighth chapter.
- E. It is not an inconsequential or indifferent matter, whether or not the miserable struggle outlined here applies to Christians or to Jews under the law. It is the basis of much Baptist Doctrine. Example (Charles Hodge, Commentary on Romans: Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1968, page 217) "It is plain, therefore, that Paul here means the 'the law' the will of God as a rule of duty, no matter how revealed. From this law, as prescribing the terms of our acceptance with God, Christ has delivered us. It is the legal system which says, 'Do this and live,' that Christ has abolished, and introduced another, which says, 'He that believes shall be saved'."

In these astounding words of Hodge, the scandal of the "faith only" heresy is concisely stated, including its invariable deduction that even the benevolent terms of the gospel of the Lord Jesus, constituting the ground of our acceptance with God, and delivered by the Christ himself—that even all this is abolished (!) by Jesus Christ. In such views as he illustrated, Christ is represented not merely as abolishing his own terms of entry into the eternal kingdom, but as introducing 'another system'. He that believes shall be saved"! And of course, "If Paul could not keep a law, neither can we; once saved always saved".

- F. How did the Early Christians interpret these passages? During the first three centuries of the Christian era, the "Christian experience" interpretation of Paul's words in this place was practically unknown. Godet summarized the views of ancient commentators thus:

"A large number of commentators, consulting the context more strictly think that the apostle, in virtue of his past history, is here introducing himself as the personification of the 'legal Jew' the man who, being neither hardened in self-righteousness, nor given over to a profane and carnal spirit, seeks sincerely to fulfill the law without ever being successful in satisfying his conscience."

- G. Any thought that the view I'm advocating is novel or unusual is erroneous. It is the view of making this passage a description of Christian experience that is novel and opposed to thought which prevailed for centuries before Martin Luther and the doctrine of justification by "faith only".
- H. How did the change in style of interpreting this passage come about? Godet affirmed that Augustine changed from the historical interpretation to the new position "after his dispute with Pelagius", and then showed how Augustine's view was adopted by Jerome, by the Reformers, and later by such men as Philippi, Delitzsch, and Hodge. Hodge denied that Augustine's change came after the dispute with Pelagius, insisting that it came 'long before the controversy commenced'. Neither Hodge nor Godet named any authority to support their opinion of the time of Augustine's change; but all are agreed that the interpretation of Paul's words in this passage as a Christian experience received its first great impetus in the teachings of Augustine; and thus the interpretation came at a date far too late to be persuasive (Augustine lived 354 - 430 A.D.).
- I. Upon the basis of considerations that I have set forth, the premise I have accepted is that Paul, using the first person present tense, made himself the personification of the legal Jew, of upright intent, who sought sincerely to please God under the law, Paul himself being perhaps the most perfect example of such a person ever to live on earth. Who but Paul could have said that he had lived "in all good conscience before God"?
- J. Romans 7:19 is but a restatement of verse 15. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." The evil things that his mind condemned, the flesh led him to do. That could not be said of Paul as a Christian. Of himself as a Christian he said: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and righteously and unblamably we behaved ourselves toward you that believed" (I Thessalonians 2:10).
- K. Romans 7:22 "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:" This is said to be the verse, beyond all others, which shows that Paul was speaking of Christians in this passage; but a glance at chapter 2:17 - 20 reveals that the legal Jew is still the exclusive subject. The language here is nearly identical with that, where it is said that the man "rested upon the law, gloried in God, knew His will, approved the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law," etc.

"The inward man . . ." does not mean regenerated man, or the regenerated portion of a

man, since it is of unregenerates that Paul here spoke. This usage of the expression was followed by Paul in II Corinthians 4:16 and Ephesians 3:16. (Coffman).

Adam Clarke, page 89 "The inward man here as used means the mind, without regard to the state, whether unregenerated or renewed. To say that the inward man means the regenerate part of the soul is supportable by no argument."

Romans 7:25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord . . ." stands as the answer of the agonizing question of the previous verse respecting delivery from the body of death; and, although it is not framed grammatically as the answer to anything, the quality of its constituting an answer is inherent in the context. If there had been no answer there would have been no reason to thank God; and this outburst of praise, somewhat like a stroke of lightning, illuminates the darkness of this terrible chapter, and permits a fleeting glance of all Paul was about to say in the 8th.

But before proceeding to that, Paul was about to state formally, once more, the conclusion so carefully derived from the discourse in this chapter, namely this, that; regardless of how the regenerated man might serve God with his mind, unless he had found refuge in Christ, he was yet chained to the body of death, and in consequence of that, he would serve the law of sin with his flesh. It is imperative to note that the last sentence of this verse is still dealing with the same subject as the whole 7th chapter, and thus does not apply to Paul as a Christian.

- L. Christians are to put the Lord Jesus (spiritual existence) and to make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires (Romans 13:14). The contrast between a fleshly existence and a spiritual existence is sharply made in Galatians 5:16 - 21 "Walk in the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the Desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would . . . Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity licentiousness . . ."ASV.

"THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT"

By Raymond Fox

- I. "Indwelling": a description of fellowship with the Spirit.
 - A. Fellowship with the Spirit exists between every child of God and the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 13:14.
 - B. The terms "in", "indwell" and "dwell in" describe this fellowship.
 1. The usage of "en" (in) - Arndt-Gingrich: "indicates a very close connection"; Thayer: "of a person to whom another is wholly joined and to whose power and influence he is subject, so that the former may be likened to the place in which the later lives and moves."
 2. God is in us - Ephesians 4:6; John 14:23; II Corinthians 6:16.
We are in God - I John 4:13, 15, 16.
 3. Christ is in us - II Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:10.
We are in Christ - Ephesians 1:3; II Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 3:27.
 4. Holy Spirit in us - Romans 8:9, 10; Galatians 4:6.
We are in the Holy Spirit - Colossians 1:8; Revelation 1:10.
 5. Conclusions:
 - a. Because these terms describe a mutual indwelling, the relation of fellowship (joint participation) is implied.
 - b. Because these terms describe parallel relationships with all three members of the God-head, what is true of our relationship with the Father and the Son is also true of our relationship with the Holy Spirit.
 - c. To "not have the Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9) is to not have fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
- II. The Characteristics of our fellowship with the Spirit.
 - A. Transcendent union.
 1. Fellowship necessitates a joining together of two or more parties. John 17:21
 2. The fellowship is transcendent if it rises above material existence. The only way we can have union with the Spirit is on a spiritual level.
 3. This union begins at baptism. Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 12:13.
 4. Our union with the Spirit is not a mystical union involving direct, immediate contact with the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The point of contact in this union is an abstract, the human heart, representing our intellect, emotions, and will. Galatians 4:6.
 - b. The parallel, our fellowship with the Father and the Son, is not a mystical union. Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 6:16.
 - c. When a mystical union did occur (during the age of revelation) a miracle took place. Examples in the New Testament illustrate Christians, who already had fellowship with the Spirit, receiving the Spirit in a mystical sense. Acts 4:31; 8:17; 13:52; 19:2.
 - B. Harmony, agreement.
 1. There must be harmony for fellowship to exist. Amos 3:3; II Corinthians 6:14-16.
 2. The foundation of that agreement is the revelation of the Spirit. I John 1:7; Ephesians 4:3.
 - a. Our fellowship with the Spirit is not "through" the word (as in "means" or "agency")

but is founded upon the word as the basis of the fellowship. "Agency" applies to function but not to a state or condition such as harmony.

- b. Harmony extends further than written words and what we think about these words. It involves life and existence itself: harmony in the spiritual life.

C. Joint participation.

1. Where there is fellowship, there will be joint participation, a participation in the same things (righteousness, spirituality) and in each other (we accomplish his purposes on the earth - II Corinthians 5:20 and he transforms us into new creatures - II Corinthians 5:17).
2. During the age of revelation, the Spirit's participation in God's people was, in some instances, direct, miraculous power and influence (mystical union). Before the revelation was completed there was no tangible ground for this fellowship. Therefore, direct, miraculous influence was necessary to form this fellowship.
 - a. Inspiration of the revelation - Matthew 10:20; John 14:17; Revelation 1:10.
 - b. Confirmation of the revelation - Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3; Acts 5:32.
 - c. Direct leading by revelation - Acts 10:13 and 2:17.
 - d. Such blessings as comfort, strength and boldness were communicated directly by revelation through the words of the Spirit - Acts 9:31 with 18:9, 10 and 23:11; Acts 4:31; Colossians 1:11.
3. Once the revelation was completed, inspired and confirmed by the Spirit, the Spirit's influence on God's people was through the written revelation (in contrast to the spoken revelation of the miraculous age).
 - a. The Spirit's influence on our character today is through the application of the written revelation. Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10-16.
 - b. Such blessings as comfort and strength are communicated through the words of the written revelation. It is man's responsibility to participate in this word to receive these blessings (Colossians 3:15; I Thessalonians 4:18; Ephesians 3:16 with Acts 20:32 and Ephesians 6:10,11). Circumstances and events in life can only be strengthening and comforting when they are interpreted by the word.
 - c. It cannot be said that every blessing we receive from the Spirit is through the word because of the intercession of the Spirit. But the work of intercession is not something the Spirit does to us but for us.
4. Joint participation illustrated:
 - a. The Spirit revealed Christ and we put on Christ.
 - b. The Spirit revealed the light and exists in the light and we walk in the light.

III. The benefits of fellowship with the Spirit. (Romans 8)

- A. If we have fellowship with the Spirit of God, we will be "in the spirit" and not "in in flesh." Romans 8:9
 1. The meaning of "in the spirit".
 - a. The appropriate contrast to "flesh" is the human spirit.
 - b. In general terms the contrast pictured is between that which is carnal and that which is spiritual. I Corinthians 3:1.
 - c. To be "in the spirit" represents a condition of living in such a way to fulfill the true needs and desires of the human spirit; to live spiritually. Romans 8:4 - 6.

2. Spiritual living ("in spirit") is a consequence of fellowship with the Spirit.
 - a. Spirit can only fellowship with spirit.
 - b. The Holy Spirit revealed what spirituality is (Colossians 3:2) and when we participate in this spiritual life, we have fellowship with the Spirit. The result, therefore, of this fellowship is spirituality.

- B. If we have fellowship with the Spirit of Christ, we will belong to him (Christ). Romans 8:9
 1. The Spirit of Christ is another name for the Holy Spirit. Compare I Peter 1:11 with II Peter 1:21.
 2. When we live in harmony with the Spirit's revelation, we have fellowship with the Spirit.
 3. The Spirit's revelation is the revelation of Christ. John 14:26; 16:14.
 4. Therefore, living in harmony with the Spirit causes us to live in Harmony with Christ. ("Spirit of Christ in you" and "Christ in you" are parallel but not synonymous statements.)

- C. If we have fellowship with the Spirit of God, our mortal bodies will be quickened. Romans 8:11.
 1. The quickening spoken of in Romans 8:11 is the spiritual resurrection of the new birth.
 - a. The general resurrection is not conditional (John 5:28,29) but the resurrection spoken of here (Romans 8:11) is conditional.
 - b. Romans 8:11 is a further explanation of verse 10 where it is said that the body is dead with respect to sin. Verse 11 explains that the Spirit quickens the body (with respect to righteousness).
 - c. This verse is parallel to Romans 6:3 - 13 where a spiritual resurrection to righteousness is considered.
 2. The central thought is that the spiritual resurrection of the new birth affects our mortal bodies. There must be an outward change consistent with the internal change in a child of God. (Galatians 5:24)
 3. The fellowship of the Spirit quickens our mortal bodies.
 - a. The Spirit reveals righteousness and the spiritual life. John 6:63; Psalms 119:50.
 - b. We yield ourselves to righteousness. Romans 6:12,13.
 4. Our outward lives must be consistent with the fact that we are in fellowship with the Spirit. I Corinthians 6:15 - 20; II Corinthians 4:10,11; Philippians 1:20.

- D. Fellowship with the Spirit means we will be led by the Spirit. Romans 8:14.
 1. The Spirit has always led children of God by revelation, whether spoken or written, and never by subjective feelings. Ephesians 3:1 - 5.
 2. Our lives are in harmony with the Spirit when we entirely submit ourselves to his written revelation of Christ.
 3. The opposite of being led by the Spirit is resisting the Spirit. The Spirit is resisted through rejecting his word. Acts 7:51 - 52.
 4. Can we be led by the Spirit by trying to interpret providential circumstances to help us make a decision?
 - a. Paul was not so led. When he was not inspired, Paul did not know whether God's providence was specifically at work or not. Philemon 15
 - b. Our decisions must ultimately be based on the word since we do not have an inspired

interpreter to interpret providential circumstances.

- c. Christians must view every opportunity as if God provided it (because he did either directly or indirectly) and use those opportunities in a way consistent with the word.

5. Are we led by subjective enlightenment?

- a. Enlightenment comes in only two ways: through written or spoken revelation. This revelation is objective in the sense that it is verifiable and confirmed by the miracles.
- b. There is no third form of enlightenment, such as nonverifiable intuition or subjective instinct, described in the Bible. Subjective enlightenment is foreign to Christianity.

E. The fellowship of the Spirit includes the mutual witness that we are the children of God. Romans 8:16

1. The mutual witness.

- a. To witness is to give testimony, to prove or confirm the validity of something; to verify truth.
- b. That the "Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit" suggests that both the Holy Spirit and our spirit together bear testimony to the fact that we are children of God. This is the fellowship of witness.

2. The witness of the Holy Spirit.

- a. Through the word: inspiration. I John 5:11 - 13; I John 4:13 - 16; with I John 2:20 - 27.
- b. Through the miracles: confirmation. Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:2, 3; Acts 5:32.
 - 1.) The seal and earnest of the Spirit was the miraculous verification of the truth of eternal life. Compare Ephesians 1:13, 14 with Acts 19:1 - 6.
 - 2.) The confirmation of the word by the miracles still has an impact on us today as the guarantee of our inheritance. John 20:30, 31

3. The witness of our spirit.

- a. The Holy Spirit does not directly verify individual salvation. Individual salvation is based on the once verified truth of the gospel and needs no other verification.
 - b. We know and can testify that we have followed the Spirit's revelation in the word of what we must do to be a child of God. I Corinthians 2:11; II Corinthians 13:5; I Peter 3:21
4. This then is the mutual witness: The Holy Spirit has testified and confirmed in the written revelation what we must do to be children and possess the inheritance and our spirit can testify that we have done what is necessary to become children.

F. Fellowship with the Spirit includes a joint participation in our prayers. Romans 8:26, 27

- 1. Identifying the correct meaning of "spirit": Verse 26 - "Likewise the Spirit (Holy Spirit) also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself (Holy Spirit) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Verse 27 - "And he (Holy Spirit) that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of spirit (human spirit) because he (Holy Spirit) maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

- a. "Spirit itself" identifies the Holy Spirit. See verse 16.

- b. The Spirit helping our infirmities must be the same Spirit making intercession.
- c. The one making intercession in verse 26 must be the same one making intercession in verse 27 since no new noun is introduced.
- d. In verse 27, "he" that searches the hearts is grammatically connected to "he" who makes intercession.

2. Fellowship (joint participation) in prayer.

- a. Our weakness is our inability to express our needs in prayer (Psalms 77:4). We cannot express inward distress and grief we feel ("groanings which cannot be uttered").
- b. The Holy Spirit is able to search our hearts (I Corinthians 2:10) and discover this distress and grief that we cannot express. The Holy Spirit intercedes by communicating to God this distress and grief.
- c. The Bible does not explain the mechanics for this intercession but it is evident that mystical contact is not necessary nor involved.

Conclusion:

Knowing that we can be one and enjoy fellowship with the Spirit of God is a tremendous source of confidence and strength as is our unity with the Father and the Son.

FACING TEMPTATIONS SUCCESSFULLY

By James D. Orten

INTRODUCTION: The Biblical passages I have been assigned, and the questions on them, are listed below. Please notice that there is a common theme in all of these texts. It concerns facing temptations successfully.

Texts:

- A. Matthew 5:27, 28. Question: Is it wrong to admire a beautiful woman, or does the intent of the admiration determine whether it is sinful?
 - B. Matthew 5:29 (or Matthew 18:8). Question: Is Jesus advocating physical mutilation?
 - C. Matthew 5:42. Question: How far is a Christian expected to go with the "giving" and "lending" commanded by this passage?
- I. Matthew 5:28 says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."
- A. At first glance one wonders why the question from this passage is difficult. Sometime when a question is hard, shifting it and asking a somewhat different one will clarify the problem. Suppose the question were one of the following:
 1. Is it wrong to admire a Christian woman? The answer to that question easily would be "no". There are many women in the Bible that all students admire, for example, Ruth of the Old Testament, and Lydia and Dorcus of the New Testament.
 2. Consider a still different question. "Is it wrong to admire an Ugly woman?" We would not really worry about the man who admired a woman he considered ugly. In fact, we might even admire the man who admired an ugly woman!
 3. These questions are appropriate because Jesus did not specify a particular type of woman. He did not say, "Whosoever looketh on a Beautiful woman to lust after her . . ."
 - B. The complicating factor in the question is the word "beautiful".
 1. Although the Bible recognizes that some individuals would be considered beautiful and others not, it gives no standard for physical beauty.
 2. One who describes a woman as physically beautiful has accepted a worldly stereotype.
 3. Since the object of his admiration is earthly, his actions regarding that object become suspicious.
 4. Consider how different the question would have sounded if it had been, "Is it wrong to admire a beautiful Person?"
 - a. The emphasis here would have been on the personality and the answer an easy one.
 - C. Let us examine some key words in the passage.
 1. Looketh—This word does not speak of a passing or casual glance, but a purposeful stare.
 - a. The same word is used in John 13:22: "Then the disciples looked on one another doubting of whom he spake." They stared into one another's faces searching for a clue regarding who would betray him.
 - b. The word carries the idea of longing or an emotional attachment. Luke 9:62, "And Jesus said unto him, no man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." One who longs for the world is not fit for

God's kingdom.

- c. It carries this meaning in the case of Lot's wife, Genesis 19:26. I doubt that she was slain for a casual glance over her shoulder. She longed for the life she had left behind in Sodom and that was her undoing.

D. Lust—means a strong desire that is ready to manifest itself in action. It carries the idea of yearning.

1. It is the word that is translated "affection" in the phrase "inordinate affection" in Colossians 3:5. Here it means an unnatural craving.
2. It is a mild form of the word used in II Peter 2:14 in the expression "eyes full of adultery".

E. Now let us look at a particular word in the question I was asked to address on this passage, the word "admire". It means to think highly of in a remote and impersonal way.

1. Admire is intellectual and distant as opposed to lust which is close and emotional.
2. The idea can be illustrated by a simple graph. At one end is intellectual admiration, at the other is emotional lust. Somewhere in the middle they fade into each other.



3. Thus, the difference between what is asked in the question and what Jesus is talking about in the passage becomes clear. The Lord is not talking about a casual and remote admiration of feminine beauty, but of a look of lust that is accepted and allowed (in the words of James 1:15) to germinate and bring forth sin. Nevertheless, Christians should cultivate an admiration of beauty of a higher type.

F. We can learn from opposites.

1. Adulteresses of both the Old and New Testaments were depicted as cultivating physical appearances to be attractive to men for immoral purposes. See Proverbs 6:23, 24 and 11:22.
2. Christian women are taught to cultivate a different type of beauty to attract men with different values.
3. I Peter 3:3,4 says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is incorruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."
 - a. This type of beauty is said to win a man to Christ as well as to the woman.
 - b. Another translation says of I Peter 3:3, 4: "Your beauty should not be dependent on an elaborate hairdo, or on wearing jewelry or fine clothes, but on the inner personality—the unfading loveliness of a calm and gentle spirit, a very precious thing in the eyes of God."
4. See the dilemma. If Christian women cultivate inner beauty as they are taught to do, but Christian men admire physical beauty, then Christian women are at a disadvantage to worldly women in attracting Christian husbands.
5. This situation has occurred before. Read Ezra Chapter 9 and 10. Here Hebrew men were attracted to women who looked and acted differently than their Hebrew "sisters". God was angry and the men condemned.
6. Christian girls have complained (with some justification, I am afraid) that if they

- dressed and behaved as Christian men taught, then the men would ignore them and date girls from the world.
7. The case with admiration is similar to that described by Jesus for anger. Matthew 5:22.
 - a. Anger toward a brother creates danger
 - b. Contempt ("Racca") toward a brother creates greater danger
 - c. Hatred ("Thou fool") toward a brother creates great danger
 8.
 - a. One who admires the physical beauty of a woman (other than his wife) may not have sinned, but he is in danger because he is admiring the wrong thing.
 - b. Emotional attraction creates grave danger
 - c. Lust creates sin
- G. Conclusion: In answer to the question: No, admiration of physical beauty is not in itself wrong, and Yes, the intent of the admiration is a determining factor in whether it is sinful. But the object of one's admiration is an important factor too, and Christian men and women need to cultivate an admiration for qualities of heart and mind that promote Christ-like behavior. In the words of the wise man, "Good manners can be faked, and physical beauty will fade; but a man will be glad he married a woman who fears the Lord" (Proverbs 31:30).
- II. The second passage is Matthew 5:29 which says, "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." The next verse makes the same statement about the right hand.

Question: Is Jesus advocating physical mutilation?

Answer: NO!

A. Why not?

1. Cutting off the physical member would not remove the temptation.
 - a. Whatever could be seen and lusted after through the right eye, could also be seen through the other eye.
 - b. Even if both eyes were put out, one could still be tempted through the ears. There is a whole industry in "telephone sex" in this country. The sole medium of temptation here is the ears.
2. Totally blind men can sin. See Matthew 12:22
3. Physical handicaps do not remove temptations. They bring special temptations of their own. Paul referred to his "thorn in the flesh" as a "messenger of satan" II Corinthians 12:7.
4. It is not physical mutilation because the Lord requires something that would be useless if it were a physical cutting off, but is necessary if it is a spiritual or figurative cutting off.
 - a. Jesus said, "cast it from thee."
 - b. It was not enough to pluck the eye out of its socket, or to cut the arm off from the body. They must be "flung" away.
 - c. This expression was used of casting loads overboard from a storm-tossed ship to lighten it.

- d. It sometimes is translated "loss" as in Paul's suffering the "loss" of all things for Christ in Philippians 3:7.
- B. The passage means "cut yourselves irretrievably loose from all advantages of the flesh that are a means of temptation to your spirit."
1. Paul's loss in Philippians 3:7 is a good example. He had human learning, money, positions of honor and power. These were hinderances to his Christian life. He cut them off and cast them away to win Christ.
 2. It is possible to be even more specific.
 - a. The eye represents human learning and wisdom. See Matthew 6:22, 23.
 - b. The hand is representative of skills that serve human needs. This situation is comparable to the mark in the "forehead" or "hand" in Revelation 13:16.
 3. This passage is related to the preceding one. Human cultures have taught us what physical beauty is. God teaches a different type of beauty.
 - a. It worries me to see Christian young people make a mad scramble to date the most beautiful/handsome members of the opposite sex, usually ignoring more important qualities. This is an example of an "eye" that needs plucking out.
 - b. The practice of any skill could become a temptation. Example: A young Christian who is an excellent musician wants to be a rock singer.
 - c. Other examples could be a man whose profession often causes him to be exposed to temptation. A professor or scientist whose human learning causes him to have less faith in God.
 4. Notice that Jesus did not assume that either the learning or the skill would automatically cause one to sin. He said, "If thy right eye . . ." and "If thy right hand . . ."
- C. The principles taught by Jesus are repeated many times throughout the New Testament.
1. Colossians 3:5. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." Many authorities believe Paul had Jesus' statement in mind here.
 - a. Paul tells what the members are: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection. ("inordinate affection" here means homosexuality. Note that Paul says it can be gotten rid of or cured.)
 - b. See also Galatians 5:24 and Romans 7:5.
 - c. Romans 6:12,13 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments or righteousness unto God."
 - 1.) This verse shows excellently the connection between "mind" and "members", and it shows that it is the qualities of the mind, that express themselves through the members, that need cutting off when they go wrong.
 - 2.) McKnight translates "yourselves" into "faculties of your mind" and "members" into "bodily members".
 - 3.) The verse makes use of a figure of speech that is familiar to most of us: Metonymy. In this figure, one thing is named, another, closely connected with it, is suggested.
 - 4.) The physical members, i.e. eyes and hands, are named, the sinful uses to which these members can be put are suggested.

- 5.) Jesus knew that adultery, for example, first takes place "in the heart". For that reason, the cutting off is a circumcision of the heart, Romans 2: 29, and it is made without hands, Colossians 2:11.

D. Thus, Jesus was not talking about physical mutilation.

III. The third passage is Matthew 5:42 which says, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

Question: How far is the Christian expected to go with the giving and lending in this passage?

A rewording of the question helps: Is this demand of the Lord limited or unlimited? If it is limited, what are the limitations?

Answer: It is limited.

A. Limitations

1. By the giver's ability. Christians are not asked to give what they do not have.
 - a. The mother of two of Jesus' disciples asked him for something which the Lord refused. He said it "is not mine to give."
2. By whether the thing asked for is right. God does not grant all of our requests.
 - a. James 4:3 says: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."
3. By the asker's need and ability to provide for himself.
 - a. In II Thessalonians 3:7 - 10 Paul ordered that those who refused to work should not be given food to eat.
 - 1.) These individuals were apparently in need.
 - 2.) Others had the ability to give.
 - 3.) But those in need were not exercising their ability to supply their own needs.
 - b. Paul's command was simply a restatement of God's original principle in Genesis 3:19, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread . . ."

B. What does the passage mean?

1. The account in Luke 6:30 - 35 explains the context.
2. Like most of the principles Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, it was set in the context of and contrasted with the Law of Moses.
 - a. As McGarvey and others point out, the law provided only for borrowing and lending out of need.
 - 1.) Thus borrowing for business or to buy luxury items, was not under consideration in this passage.
 - b. The law made a distinction between Hebrews lending to other Hebrews and lending to Gentiles.

- 1.) Deuteronomy 23:20, "Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury."
- 2.) Lending here was to the poor. See Leviticus 25:35-37 and Exodus 22:25.

C. Jesus was here further preparing people for his coming kingdom, in which all distinctions between Jew and Gentile would be done away.

1. You can be sure that the far reaching significance of these principles was not lost on many of these people.
2. The Lord went further to add a Christian-age doctrine on materialism.
 - a. Being sued at law.
 - b. Having your goods taken away by violence.

CONCLUSION: How far does this giving go? It goes as far as the borrower's real need which he is unable to supply, and the lender's ability to give. Beyond that, as far as this verse is concerned, the matter is left to good judgment.

But both borrower and lender are to abide by the Christian principle that makes material things distinctly inferior to spiritual. Thus, the borrower is not to ask beyond his need. The lender is not to selfishly withhold from those in need. And if the wealthy person has his material goods taken away by violence, he is to respond as one who knows that what was forfeited is of no real value.

Hebrews 10:25 – What is the “day approaching”?

Matthew 18:20 – Does this refer to the assembly of the church?

Acts 20:7 – When did the disciples meet?

By Edwin S. Morris

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
Acts 20:7

The question is “When did the disciples meet?” Did the disciples meet on what would be our Saturday night or did they meet on what would be our Sunday? There are three time periods that we want to consider:

(1) Jewish day --Sunset to Sunset

(2) Roman day --Midnight to Midnight

(3) Daylight hours – John 11:9, “Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

The meaning seems to be “Are there not twelve working-hours in which a man may labor without fear of stumbling.” It is a twelve hour day in contrast with night. The Jews divided the day from sunrise to sunset into twelve equal parts.

Matthew 20:1 -- Early in the morning

Matthew 20:3 --Third hour – 9:00 A.M.

Matthew 20:5 --Sixth hour – 12:00 noon

Matthew 20:5 --Ninth hour – 3:00 P.M.

Matthew 20:6 --Eleventh hour – 5:00 P.M.

Matthew 20:8 --Even was come – 6:00 P.M. The end of the day.

Matthew 20:12 --These last have wrought but one hour.

We can easily see that the period between sunrise and sunset falls under all three times given above. We can scripturally observe the Lord’s Supper in the daylight hours on Sunday. Thus we believe the Lord’s Supper was observed during the daylight hours on the first day of the week.

In verse 7 there are definitely two different days stated namely “the first day of the week” and “on the morrow”. The day they ate the Lord’s supper and the day Paul departed were two different days. This is true regardless of which time we might use. Strong’s exhaustive Concordance defines “Morrow” --occurring on the succeeding day, i.e. tomorrow--day following, morrow next day (After). Thayer defines--on the morrow; in the New Testament the next day, on the morrow. In Matthew 27:62 “Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.”

If Paul spoke on our Saturday evening and they observed the Lord’s Supper on Saturday night he could not have departed the next day. Under Jewish time he would have departed the same day and under the Roman time they would not have observed the Lord’s Supper on the First day of the week. If Paul spoke on our Sunday then he could have continued his speech until midnight and then departed the next day which would be our Monday morning.

Paul’s purpose to leave early the next morning seemed to justify the long discourse. Paul “Discoursed with them” purposing to leave Troas on the following day. The Revised Standard Version reads, “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the morrow and he prolonged his speech until midnight.” Notice John 20:19, “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week.” The evening was in the latter part of the day and not in the first part of the day. The disciples met in the day light hours and observed the Lord’s Supper, Paul discoursed until midnight and then left at daybreak.

In verse 8 perhaps the mention of many lights is designed to intimate that it was a place of public worship, as not only the Jews, but the Gentiles were accustomed to have many lights burning in such places. This does not prove in any way that the Lord’s Supper was observed at night.

The upper room was used for devotional purposes. It was so located as to be retired and free from disturbance. The lights are mentioned by Luke to portray the scene. We need places of worship in our day that is secluded from all distractions.

In verse 11 "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." He had taken refreshment. As this is spoken of Paul only it is evidently distinguished from observing the Lord's Supper. Paul took refreshment and continued his speech. It was a common meal Paul ate in preparation for his expected departure. It is mentioned with particular reference to Paul, not to the worshipping company; hence we conclude that the Lord's Supper had been observed at an earlier period of the meeting on the first day of the week; as they had met for that purpose of that day.

We can scripturally meet within the daylight hours on the first day of the week. I would not meet except in the daylight hours but if I did it would be before daylight on Sunday and not after sunset.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
Matthew 18:20

The question is, "Does this refer to the assembly of the Church?"

No, I do not believe this refers to the assembly of the Church. In studying the context of the preceding verses we learn that verses 7 through 14 has reference to offences in which we are the guilty party. This is when we sin against others.

In verses 15 through 17 it is dealing with what is to be done when our brother sins against us.

In verses 7 through 14 the remedy must be in each individual. He is to be very cautious in his own person.

In verses 15 through 17 the remedy is in the exercise of Brotherly love, and if that fail, the authority of the congregation.

Verses 18 through 20 gives us an exposition of what that authority is.

Now let us notice beginning with verse 15. We are to go to our brother and tell him his fault between the two of us. Such private reproof is hard to do, but it is the way of Christ.

In verse 16 we have the second step. The first attempt of brotherly love is to heal the wound; to remove the offense in secrecy; to cover the sin. But if this cannot be done, the next step is to take two or three. This is still to keep it from being made publicly. This will also prove sufficient legal witness. Take with thee --- Take alone (Para) with (Meta) three.

In verse 17 the third step is given. Tell it to the church. It is the congregation in which you and he are members. Where any collection of believers are spiritual and can decide in such matters.

Notice the steps:

- (1) Go to the brother
- (2) Take two or three witnesses
- (3) Tell it to the church

In verse 18 the same unusual form occurs in Matthew 16:19. There the binding and loosing is addressed to Peter, but is here repeated for the Church or for the disciples as the case may be. When we do this as outlined above it is recognized in heaven. If we do not do it in the order above it is not recognized in heaven. Too many times it is told to others and even to the Church before it is to the brother. We are not promised when we do it that way that it will be binding.

In verse 20 this statement confirms the promise that the prayers of any two of them would be answered, and at the same time it gives us the comforting assurance of the Saviour's presence whenever we meet in his name. This promise implies that those gathered together are really disciples with the Spirit of Christ as well "as in his name". "In my name" literally "into my name"; when 2 or 3 are drawn together into Christ as the common center of their desire and faith. None but God could

say these words, to say them with truth because God alone is every where present; and these words refer to His omnipresence.

"There am I in the midst" must be understood with reference to the special and gracious presence of Christ and must not be confused with his universal presence with all creatures alike. The distinctive feature of this presence is His grace which is effective to guide, direct, keep and bless.

Verse 20 would refer to the above. But remember this must be done exactly according to his instructions. Now, this does not refer to the assembly of the church but it would be the same principle. Two or three can form a congregation and meet regularly but remember there are other regulations. Two or three cannot take a trip and as a convenience take along some unleaven bread and grape juice and have a worship service in a motel room, roadside park etc. This passage of scripture will not uphold such. When we miss the Lord's day worship we are either forgiven or we are not forgiven. If we are forgiven we do not have to make it up; if we are not forgiven it would do us no good to attempt to make it up. If one family can do this why can't every family in the church do it and not even come together at all. Among the digressives some practice taking these to people who were unable to attend services. Again the above applies. We have scripture to assemble regularly to observe the Lord's service but no scripture to uphold observing it to ourselves so we can do other things. We have a similar situation in John 6:53, 54 which does not refer to the Lord's Supper but would include it as being part of the bread of life and the water of life. So remember there are other things necessary in order to observe the Lord's Supper than just two or three being present.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25

The question is what is the "day approaching?" There are at least three different beliefs as follows: (1) The first day of the week (2) The destruction of Jerusalem, and (3) The day of judgment. It is this speaker's belief that it is the day of judgment.

We read in verse 23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)". Profession means let us hold fast the faith which we have confessed and cling to the hope which it ministers. The idea is, that we are still but pilgrims here as all our fathers were. We have not yet reached the goal of our destiny. Eternal life is still with us an object of hope. And hence the necessity of clinging to this hope as the anchor of our souls. Faithful --The eternal life which is the object of our hope is promised to us by him who cannot lie, as he then is faithful who has give us this promise, hold fast the profession of our hope.

In verse 24, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works." Consider--Let us diligently and attentively consider each other's trials, difficulties, and weaknesses; feel for each other, and excite each other to an increase of love of God and men; and, as proof of it, to be fruitful in good works. Provoke--denote a stimulation. It suggests that a mutual spirit of concern for one another is to be cherished, so as to stimulate to love and good works.

In verse 25 not forsaking--In times of persecution there was a great temptation to stay away from the church assemblies, and some had fallen into this dangerous neglect. As the manner of some is--means as the custom of some is. Already some Christians had formed the habit of not attending public worship, a perilous habit then and also now. Exhorting--means admonishing, mutual encouragement. We exhort people today to prepare to meet God at the day of Judgment. We exhort them because life is uncertain and the judgment day is coming. Day approaching--The judgment day. That "Day" indeed in its great final sense, is always near, always ready to break forth upon the Church. It is the Day of days, the ending day of all days, the settling-day of all days, the day of the promotion of time into eternity; the day which for the church breaks through and breaks off the night of this present world.

Caution—verse 26 arising from the mention of that day—which will be, not a day of grace, but a day of judgment—of the fearful peril of falling away from Christ. Notice the verse “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” The case is that of a deliberate apostate—one who has utterly rejected Christ and his atonement, and renounced the whole Gospel system. It has nothing to do with backsliders in our common use of the term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and yet neither renounce the gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary and dangerous, but it is not hopeless; no case is hopeless but that of the deliberate apostate, who rejects the whole gospel system, after having been convinced of the truth of the gospel. To this man there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; for there was but one—Jesus—and this man has rejected Jesus.

The church being in all ages uncertain how soon Christ is coming, the day is and has been in each age, practically always near hence believers have been called on always to be watching “for it is nigh at hand” In II Peter 3:4, “And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Even at this time the return of Jesus and the judgment were kept before them. We do the same today and if the world stands another one or two hundred years the same teaching will be kept before all.

The day which Christians expected was the last day. In I Corinthians 3:13, “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”

I do not believe the “day approaching” was the destruction of Jerusalem. Let us notice in Matthew 10:28, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

- (1) Destruction of Jerusalem—kills body only
- (2) Day of judgment—destroys both body and soul in hell

Why would he warn the people about something that just destroyed the body and could not touch the soul. Today we do not warn people to fear destruction by man with his powerful weapons. That is of least concern. But I assure you that we warn them of the eternity that lies ahead.

The second coming of Christ draws nearer all the time. In Romans 13:11, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The day of death and the day of judgment are both approaching every human being. He who wishes to be found ready will carefully use every means of grace, and particularly the communion of the saints, even if just a few, to come together to worship.

Jesus told the apostles that no man is to know even the times or seasons (Acts 1:7, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.”) To say nothing of the exact day. That He, Himself (in his State of humiliation) did not know the day; but that we must ever see the signs of its approach; ever be ready for its arrival, in constant expectation of it. All the New Testament writers speak accordingly; we do the same today.

Let us make these final observations:

- (1) If the “day approaching” is the destruction of Jerusalem what about Christians at Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Phillippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, etc.
- (2) If the “day approaching” is the destruction of Jerusalem are these scriptures binding on us today? Does it apply to us today “not to forsake the assembling”.
- (3) Did this apply to Gentiles Christians at that time?

I Corinthians 7:15a—Does “depart” mean divorce?

I Corinthians 7:15b—Does “not under bondage” mean “free to remarry”?

I Corinthians 6:15 - 18—What is involved when one is “joined to a harlot”?

By Ron Courter

Preface

The material calls for a word of introduction in the eyes of the writer. There are several reasons for such a perception.

- 1) The subject is not free of controversy.
- 2) The written material was formed from speaking notes, which gives a different copy in form compared to one setting down to write on a given subject.
- 3) People normally wonder how one views other scriptures regarding marriage, when one is asked to express a view of I Corinthians 7:15 on the meaning of the words ‘depart’ and ‘not under bondage’.
- 4) People will exploit the Bible for their own personal likes and dislikes if possible. This is especially true in the area of marriage. Let us realize there is a disposition that is essential and proper to enjoying the kingdom of the Messiah. Therefore, the writer shares a word of caution to the reader. They, who read this material and attempt to justify desertion under any circumstance today can be sure this is not the conclusion the writer intended or entertains from the study.

The writer understands and believes there is a scriptural reason for a faithful Christian to put away an unfaithful mate today in the Lord’s kingdom. The reason is encompassed in the word fornication. The understanding is founded on the teaching of Jesus, as he prepared the people for his coming kingdom. Why do we write these words? Because the writer’s view of what is commonly called “the exception” is important to the reader interested enough to consider the writing here on I Corinthians 7:15.

We desire to go one step further, while not retreating on what we have previously said. People who run for a scriptural reason to divorce in a troubled marriage and cannot wait to get things externally justified do not understand Jesus’ testimony. There has been and will be occasions where a marriage mate continues in illicit sexual activity, until their mate exercises the Biblical teaching of putting away their mate. This is Biblically proper according to the writer’s understanding. To the contrary, let us also realize there are marriages in the kingdom that have overcome unfaithfulness through repentance and forgiveness. It cannot always be so, but it has been more so than many seem to realize or desire to realize today.

Let us not become guilty of an attitude that strains at gnats and swallows camels when we examine the subject of marriage in the Bible. We need to teach all the scriptures teach regarding marriage and not simply focus on the verses of controversial interest. This is true for all who are children of the kingdom. Hopefully, these words will give you the writer’s attitude to wed with his conclusion in I Corinthians 7:15, so we understand one another better and especially the word of God.

“Depart and Not Under Bondage in I Corinthians 7:15”

The focus of our presentation will be to answer two questions regarding the words of the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 7:15. The passage reads, “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” Our purpose will be to determine the meaning of the following:

- 1) Does the word ‘depart’ means divorce, when Paul says if the unbelieving depart . . . ?
- 2) Does ‘not under bondage’ mean free to remarry, when Paul says, A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases . . . ?

There are a number of introductory thoughts that we shall bypass, even though they would be fitting for such a study. But let us share one quotation.

"To understand a writer be acquainted in some degree with his character, the circumstances in which he was placed . . . knowledge respecting the persons to whom he wrote. And the more remote any work is, in point of time or of place, from ourselves, the more diligent attention will be required in the reader, not only to ascertain these circumstances, but to keep them steadily and constantly in view (Whately, page 84)."

Paul helps us in an adequate manner to know the general setting of his remarks by an examination of the Corinthian letters. Still, we are faced with a very sobering and clear fact. A number of passages in the Corinthian letters are difficult to understand. The main reason is due to not being able to assess the background of the inspired remarks. Let us never forget what so many are forgetting today. The acceptance of the Bible literally is to be committed to discovering what the inspired writer intended contextually and not just the definition of a word.

The context of the subject is prefaced by Paul in I Corinthians 7:1. "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me . . ." Paul was about to discuss matters related to a subject they had written to him. Paul continues, ". . . It is good for a man not to touch a woman." We soon learn the subject is marriage and various circumstances facing the Christian at Corinth regarding the marriage relationship.

Paul answers their writing on the subject by beginning with some general statements in verses 1 - 7 on the marriage relationship. He begins in verse 8 to give a series of directives to specific groups in relationship to marriage and circumstances that had arisen.

- 1) Verses 8, 9 -- "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows. . ."
- 2) Verses 10, 11 -- "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord . . ."
- 3) Verses 12 - 16 -- "But to the rest, speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not. . ."

Verse 13 reverses the situation and speaks of a believing wife that hath not a believing husband. The idea to dwell with such a mate in these verses surely refers to marriage.

We have three different categories or groups that Paul speaks to in these verses regarding marriage. Why these different groups are addressed and why we must recognize them plays an essential role in answering the two questions of our attention. Sterling has fittingly said, "It is imperative at this point to simply note that any interpretation which does not do justice to Paul's clearly sketched schema flies in the face of the contextual evidence (page 3)." The point is we have different categories and when we examine what Paul says to the single, the married, and the 'mixed marriage' (believer and unbeliever) the instructions are different for each group.

The group that our verse of interest falls into finds Paul dealing with one relationship under two sets of circumstances. This group involves a marriage where one mate is a believer and the other mate is a nonbeliever (A Christian and a heathen). Verses 12 - 14 includes inspired guidance to a believer who has a heathen mate willing to maintain the marital relationship. We ask in passing, is Paul simply saying in these verses do not separate? Verses 15, 16 includes inspired direction for the believer when the unbeliever is not willing to continue in the marriage relationship. We note in passing, if mere separation is the subject, then the exhortation given is very difficult to understand.

Looking at the groups which Paul addressed we learn the following:

- 1) The unmarried were to remain single, but if they could not contain to marry (verses 8, 9).
- 2) The married were to remain married, if the wife departed she was to remain unmarried or be reconciled. The husband likewise was not to put away his wife (10, 11).

- 3) The believing mate was not to put away or leave the unbeliever. But if the unbelieving mate depart-permit it-you are not under bondage in such cases (12 - 16).

Let us recognize something that we all recognize, but need to be very conscious of as we continue. Words must be appropriately defined. But we need to examine the word under consideration in the light of its context to determine its appropriate meaning in its hierarchy of usage. We should be aware that context is not the source of the primary lexicon definition. This caution is justified when we look at the rather unusual use of words like unmarried, sanctified, and holy in I Corinthians 7.

Now, let us focus on verse 12. "But to the rest speak I not the Lord . . ." The 'rest' refers to another group or category. This is not unusual usage. Matthew 27:47 - 49 reads,

"Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him."

Luke 12:26 reads, "If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest." Luke 24:9 reads, "And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest." I Corinthians 9:5 says, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas."

Note the following verses for the word rest. Galatians 2:13, "And the other Jews. . . ." I Thessalonians 4:13, ". . . even as others which have not hope." I Timothy 5:20, ". . . that others also may fear." Revelations 20:5, "But the rest of the dead . . ." It is interesting, although not highly significant for this study that Paul used this term frequently to refer to unbelievers (Romans 11:7; Ephesians 2:3; I Thessalonians 4:13; 5:6).

The 'rest' focuses on another group at Corinth as suggested by verses 8, 10, 12. Paul makes it clear it is the marriage of a believer and an unbeliever. We do not want to overdo this next observation, but generally speaking when Paul speaks concerning other questions he opens with the words 'now concerning'. This is seen by looking at I Corinthians 7:1 - marriage; 7:25 - virginity; 8:1 - meats and idols; 12:1 - spiritual gifts; 16:1 - contritition; 16:12 - Apollos.

Another factor noting a distinction in groups is Paul saying, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord . . ." here in verse 12. Contrast this with verse 10, where we read, "And unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord." The one has Paul speaking as the source and the other as the Lord. We have an obvious contrast with verse 10.

What does Paul mean? Some say Paul was just offering an opinion. But we recognize Paul is not separating inspired utterances from uninspired utterances. Rather, he is noting between what the Lord himself personally had said when the word was flesh and what the apostle said by the supervision of the Holy Spirit. This is not an unexpected thing to the every-day Bible reader.

"It is essential to correct understanding of the problem to realize that when Paul distinguishes between what the Lord says and what he says, he does not mean to imply that his words are merely good advice to be taken at the discretion of the readers (Harrell, page 125)."

Murray writes, "The distinction is rather between the teaching that was expressly given by Christ in the days of his flesh and the teaching that did not come within the compass of Christ's own deliverance while upon the earth. . . . I am now going to deal with cases on which the Lord himself did not give a verdict (page 63)."

There is much that agrees with the fact that Paul is not sorting out inspired messages from uninspired messages. Observe the asserting of authority, even after a reference of personal expression. Verse 17, ". . . so ordain I in all churches." Verse 25, ". . . as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." Verse 40, ". . . and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." Look at verses

6, 10, 12, 25, 26, 35, 40. Also, we are aware of the words in I Corinthians 2:9 - 16; 11:1, 2 and 14:37.

Sterling writes, "Paul is simply distinguishing between what the Lord expressly taught during his ministry and Paul's own instructions as an authoritative spokesman for Christ (page 4)." It should not seem strange to us that Paul would speak of things the Lord did not speak of during his earthly ministry or reveal information the Lord had not stated on a given subject. Why?

John 16:12, 13 reads, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

These words were spoken while Jesus was preparing the apostles for his departure and the coming reign of the Messiah. We find there are many things stated in general terms during this period of transition, that are handled more specifically when the kingdom became a reality. Probably Jesus anticipated such problems as we face in our study (Matthew 10:34 - 39), but obviously gave no solution at that time.

The fact of noting something the Lord personally spoke is not foreign to the Bible. For example Acts 20:35 fulfills this sense. "... and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Possibly, we observe some of this same usage and sense in scriptures like I Timothy 6:3; Hebrews 2:3; II Peter 3:2; and Jude 17.

Paul leads us to anticipate something different in the teaching of verse 12 - 16 for the following reasons:

- 1) The rest refers to a different group.
- 2) The words are his by inspiration and not a statement from the Lord's own words, as in verse 10. I speak, not the Lord is contrasted with yet not I, but the Lord.
- 3) The married here are identified as a believer and an unbeliever.
- 4) There would be no need to address this third group, if the scriptural advice given to them was simply the same as what was given before. Thomas writes, "The scriptural advice to this group is not the same as to those wedded couples of verse 10, 11, where both are Christians, but is necessarily different instruction, otherwise there would be no point in having this third group-he could have included them as recipients of the instructions of verse 10 and 11 (page 67)."
- 5) Evidently both husband and wife were believers in verses 10, 11. This is not so in verses 12, 13, but one was a believer and one was not a believer.
- 6) The married of verses 10, 11 were not to separate, they were not to divorce. But if they did so, remain unmarried or be reconciled. The believing mate is told in verse 12, 13 not to put away or leave the unbelieving mate, if the unbeliever was willing to remain. But the instructions are not finished for the possibility of the unbeliever not being willing to dwell with the believer is now introduced.

It would seem very ironic and awkward to say the phrase 'pleased to dwell' does not refer to the marriage state. The word 'pleased' means to be willing, consent, pleased. The action suggested is to join in, agree with, approving. Luke 11:48 - ye allow. Acts 8:1; 22:20 - consenting. Romans 1:32 - have pleasure. I Corinthians 7:12, 13 - be pleased. The word 'dwell' refers to live with, dwell. The action suggested is to occupy a house, reside. We find to dwell in, inhabit Romans 7:17; 8:19; I Corinthians 3:16; I Timothy 6:16. The text seems to carry the idea of dwell, live, to cohabit.

Paul in verse 14 gives reasons why the believing mate should not put away or leave the unbelieving mate. Possibly Paul had been faced with a question that grew out of the Old Testament examples of Israel putting away heathen mates. This brings us to verse 15 and the second circumstance regard-

ing the marriage of the believer and the unbeliever. "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases . . ."

What does the word 'depart' mean? Let us note some lexicons. Thayer states to separate, divide, part, put asunder, to separate one's self from. to depart, to leave a husband or wife: of divorce I Corinthians 7:11, 15. Arndt and Gingrich says active is divide, separate something Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9. Passive is separate (oneself), be separated, of divorce I Corinthians 7:10 - abs. verse 11, 15a, b. Robinson reads to put apart, to separate, to sunder. Active lists Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9; Romans 8:35; Hebrews 7:26. We find to separate oneself, to depart I Corinthians 7:10; abs. verse 11, 15.

The basic meaning of the word is clearly to separate, divide, or put asunder. The lexicons speak of it meaning divorce. How is the word 'depart' translated in other passages? Matthew 19:6 reads, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The NIV reads, "So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God hath joined together, let man not separate." Mark 10:9 states, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Does anyone think that a separation would satisfy the sense of asunder in these verses?

I Corinthians 7:10, 11 reads, ". . . Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried . . ." Verse 15 reads, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart . . ." Other verses reveal the following use. Acts 1:4, ". . . that they should not depart from . . ." 18:1, 2, ". . . Paul departed from Athens, . . . all Jews to depart . . ." Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from . . .?" Verse 39, ". . . shall be able to separate us from . . ." Philemon 15, ". . . he therefore departed for a season . . ." Hebrews 7:26, ". . . separate from sinners . . ." It is said of the usage of the word and we quote,

"Originally the word seemed to have reference to mere separation or division of any sort, but by the fourth century B.C. it had come to be used also of marital separation or divorce."

"Adolf Deissmann says of 'chorizomai' that it is used in the Fayyum Papyri as in I Corinthians 7:10, 11, 15 and is a technical expression for divorce (Thomas, page 75)." "The decisive evidence, however is the papyri in which the word is almost a technical term for divorce (Sterling, page 7)."

We understand the word 'depart' in I Corinthians 7:15 to mean divorce. The usage in I Corinthians 7 indicates this conclusion is proper. The word 'depart' in verse 11 means divorce, for it reads let her remain unmarried. Paul certainly is not saying if you are separated from each other, while still married one to another do not marry another during the time of the separation. They would still be married if only separated, so therefore one could not speak of them remaining unmarried.

The word 'depart' is used interchangeably with the word translated 'put away'. Verse 11 tells the husband to not put away the wife. Verse 11 tells the wife do not depart, but if you do remain unmarried. "In verse 11 note the two verbs . . . which apparently have the same meaning, as one is applied to one spouse and the other to the second spouse, with the same significance (Thomas, page 67)." Yes, Paul is speaking of divorce. The word 'depart' and 'put away' are used as parallel synonyms. This is not surprising, since the word 'depart' is translated 'put asunder' in Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9.

The lexicons say of 'put away'. Thayer states to send from one's self. Matthew 13:36 reads, "Then Jesus sent the multitude away . . ." I Corinthians 7:11 - 13 speaks of a husband putting away his wife. Arndt and Gingrich read, let go, send away Matthew 13:36; Mark 4:36; 8:13. They say in a legal sense divorce I Corinthians 7:11ff. Robinson writes to send forth or away, to let go from. Matthew 13:36 to dismiss and in I Corinthians 7:11 - 13 spoken of a wife, to put away. Looking at how the term is translated in other verses we find Matthew 3:15, suffer; 4:11, leaveth; 4:20, left; Matthew 5:24 leave; Matthew 6:12, forgive; Matthew 19:27, have forsaken; Matthew 22:25, left; Matthew 23:23, have omitted.

The context does not suggest any suitable reason against concluding the word 'depart' in verse 15 means divorce. Verse 12 tells the believing husband to not put away the unbelieving wife. Verse 13 tells the believing wife not to leave the unbelieving husband. The term used in both is the word translated 'put away' in verse 11. Divorce is what is being discussed. For the believing wife to leave the unbelieving husband was the same as the believing husband putting away the unbelieving wife in verse 12 and 13. Both words are translated from the word, that is used interchangeably with the word 'depart' in verse 11. The same word 'depart' is found in verse 15.

The evidence is quite adequate that depart can mean divorce. The gospels speak of putting assunder and Paul speaks of it leading to an unmarried state. Therefore, we conclude Paul's intention was for 'depart' to mean divorce.

The comparing of terms involved in reaching this conclusion is commonly done with other terms and subjects. It has the advantage of not misusing a dictionary definition without considering the context. For example look at the word silence in I Corinthians 14. When we compare the word 'silence' in verses 28, 30 and 34 the context delivers a clear meaning and use of the word. This kind of comparison leads to the conclusion in I Corinthians 7 that depart means divorce. "Thus the separation that he has in view in this passage is separation by divorce. We know this because it was a separation that resulted in an 'agamos' or unmarried state." Indeed, it is a legal dissolution of the marriage bond.

Paul states if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. The explicit permission to let the unbeliever go probably arises out of the sudden change of circumstances being discussed. He had just finished in verse 12 - 14 telling the believer do not depart, do not divorce. Now, Paul writes under the circumstances that the unbeliever wants the divorce, permit it. Actually, if just separating was all that was being discussed, there would be no real choice.

Now, the discussion moves to the second question. Paul states, "... if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases ..." Let us address the meaning of 'not under bondage'. Thayer says to make a slave of, reduce to bondage. Properly speaking look at Acts 7:6 and II Peter 2:19. Metaphorically give thyself wholly to one's needs and service, make myself a bondman to him I Corinthians 9:19. Romans 6:18, 22 and Galatians 4:3 to be subject to the rule of some one. Titus 2:3 to wholly give up or enslaved to. I Corinthians 7:15 is be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity in some matter. Arndt and Gingrich says literally of a people in Acts 7:6. Passive to become a slave to someone, of one who is defeated in battle II Peter 2:19. Figuratively, I have made myself a slave to everyone I Corinthians 9:19. Passively to be bound (as a slave) in such cases as I Corinthians 7:15. One enslaved by the elemental spirits - be subject to rudimentary knowledge in Galatians 4:3. Romans 6:18, 22 refers to being God's slave. Titus 2:3 speaks of a slave to wine. Robinson reads to make a slave of, to bring into bondage. The metaphorical use to be in bondage, i.e.; to be bound, to be held subject I Corinthians 7:15; Galatians 4:3.

The passages involving the phrase read as follows:

Acts 7:6	"... they should bring them into bondage. ..."
Romans 6:18	"... ye became the servants of righteousness."
Romans 6:22	"... and become servants to God ..."
I Corinthians 7:15	"... is not under bondage in such cases ..."
I Corinthians 9:19	"... yet have I made myself servant unto all ..."
Galatians 4:3	"... were in bondage under the elements of the world."
Titus 2:3	"... not given to much wine ..."
II Peter 2:19	"... of the same is he brought in bondage."

The phrase 'not under bondage' literally says not enslaved. Ironically, we find that the passages speaking of being in bondage declares who or what is enslaved except in the verse of our study. Did Paul consider it evident from the context? Sterling wrote, "What is striking about its usage is that with the exception of this passage, who enslaves or what one is enslaved to is specifically stated (page 54

7)." The context must determine the case. Paul has already stated for such a case the Lord did not give instructions.

The arguments regarding not under bondage have been many and long. A sample of various interpretations are as follows:

- 1) The believer is not bound to deny the Lord to save the marriage.
- 2) The believer is not bound by the dominical prohibition of divorce.
- 3) The believer is not bound to evangelize the nonbeliever.
- 4) The believer is not bound to maintain or restore the relationship.
- 5) The believer is not bound to the marriage bond.

Contextually, let us ask to whom is the believer enslaved or not enslaved in this circumstance? It would be the unbeliever (the unbelieving marriage mate), but Paul says the believer is no longer under obligation to the unbeliever who is not willing for the marriage to continue. It is indeed very difficult to understand Paul's language of no obligation, if the marriage bond is not the focus of his remarks. Why? When one was married they were not free of responsibilities (1 Corinthians 7:5), and when the divorced believer was unmarried they were told to be reconciled. Paul's language appears rather meaningless, if he is not saying the marriage relationship is dissolved and you are free to live as one unmarried.

Surely, there is a problem of redundancy here to make 'not under bondage' refer to something other than the marriage bond. Paul distinguished between the groups of verses 12 - 15 and verses 10, 11. He definitely did this by saying to the rest speak I and not the Lord. Now, if 'not under bondage' means remain unmarried in verse 15, then the instructions are no different than the teaching in verses 10, 11.

The teaching that is different in verse 15 is when the unbeliever voluntarily departs, then the believer is not under bondage in such cases. We do not have different instructions, if that bondage is something less than the marriage tie. Therefore, we would have a redundant expression that lacks meaning. For example, what would be the sense of saying to the believing mate that is deserted, you do not have to fulfill the marriage responsibilities of bed and board at this time?

The popular optional view that states not bound means you do not have to deny the Lord to save the marriage seems to us a very strained interpretation. How can it be reconciled with the context? It does not fit the times or the background these people would have from any knowledge of the Old Testament or the teaching of the apostles. The words are qualified by under such circumstances. Does the interpretation you do not have to deny the Lord to save the marriage end up implying that under some circumstances such would be permissible? There is no desire to overplay any inference for argument's sake, but surely such an implication is there. What would lead one to think a believer would be permitted to give up the faith for anything? Whiteside wrote this idea:

"That bondage, we are told, is the giving up of Christianity; it does not hold good if the unbeliever departs. If the notion is correct, then the believer would be under bondage to give up Christianity if the unbeliever did not depart. It will not do-that theory (page 106)."

"It sounds too much like saying that, though the believer is not bound to give up his faith for the sake of the unbeliever he would be allowed to do so (page 421)."

The issue is not the maintenance of one's faith in this chapter, but the continuing or dissolving of the marriage tie.

We conclude that Paul is telling the deserted believer you are not under bondage and means the marriage tie. This seems to be the most harmonious to the flow of the context.

- 1) A deserted mate cannot discharge their marital duties.
- 2) A deserted mate that had to make decisions and live, as if married to the departed unbeliever would still be under bondage.
- 3) The marriage tie becomes a bond greater than the role and purpose of marriage, if the deserted mate cannot make decisions because of a heathen mate that departed for religious reasons and did not desire to continue in the marriage. The Christian mate that had been deserted was free of the marriage tie, when the heathen mate departed of their own will for religious reasons and most likely was engaging in the heathen practices of their faith in that day with all of its gross immorality.

The fact that Paul used a word for bondage that is not previously used in reference to the married state does not change that Paul was speaking of the marriage tie. It is very true the word translated 'bound' in Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:27, 39 in speaking of marriage is not the same verb that the word 'bondage' is translated from in I Corinthians 7:15. This has led some to say that Paul is not speaking of the marriage tie. But is this the right conclusion? It is evident that such is not a necessary conclusion from such word usage situations.

The word 'bondage' is said to be a stronger verb and must refer to a greater relationship than the word 'bound' which refers to marriage. Did Paul use the different word because of comparing strength of the two words or to note a difference in the relationship? Paul is stressing if under such circumstances the deserted believer is not free from the marriage tie, you have changed the marriage tie into a state like slavery.

"Deo describes the simple marriage bond, whereas douloo pictures marriage as a state of enslavement if the believer feels obligated to an impossible relationship (Sterling page 7)."

Let us note some quotations on the discussions, even though we realize the quotes are not proofs within themselves.

"A strong word indicating that Christianity has not made marriage a state of slavery to believers. Compare 'dedetai' is bound, verse 39 a milder word. The meaning clearly is that wilful desertion on the part of the unbelieving husband or wife set the other party free. Such cases are not comprehended in Christ's words (Vincent, Volume 3, page 219)."

The Expositor's Greek Testament comments, "The brother or sister in such circumstances is not kept in bondage; cf. verse 39 - the stronger verb of this passage implies that for the repudiated part to continue bound to the repudiator would be slavery . . . (Volume 2, page 827)."

The reverse condition of a weaker verb in place of a stronger verb that referred previously to marriage would seem more fitting and favorable to the advocate of 'not the marriage tie' in this place. It is evident here the weaker verb was used in other verses to refer to the marriage state and if used here would certainly have meant freedom from the marriage tie. We do not see where the stronger verb erases the contextual discussion of the marriage tie, but pictures the change in the nature of the marriage bond if the deserted Christian is still considered responsible for the marriage state. The stronger verb can serve the same function as the weaker term in referring to the married state in this discussion.

It is interesting that Paul in verses 10, 11 specifically stated remain unmarried, but here in verse 15 he says 'not under bondage' in such cases. The use of the word 'such' is used to designate a particular situation, person or thing. Examine the following verses in illustration of the use of the word 'such' (Matthew 9:8; Mark 6:2; Acts 22:22; I Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 5:21; Galatians 6:1).

Let us make some other observations regarding the word 'bondage' that we believe is worthy of consideration.

- 1) It is very possible the word for bondage was derived from the word translated bound. This within itself does not mean anything conclusive for the discussion, but needs to be known.
- 2) The context is dealing with marriage and the dissolving of marriage. If the word does not settle into the context, then it has no contextual sequence. Paul is describing the breaking up of a marriage.
- 3) The fact that the word is not applied to marriage in any other passage is not as significant as some desire it to be. This type of thing in word usage is found on other occasions and in more striking fashion than here. The words 'sanctify' and 'holy' are used very differently from their normal sense in the chapter under discussion.
- 4) The word 'bondage' has latitude like any word in its usage. It does not always mean a pure literal slave state and that only (I Corinthians 9:19; Titus 2:3).
- 5) The word bound does not always refer to the marriage state (Revelations 20:2; Acts 21:33).

We conclude that it appears to us 'not under bondage' means free of the marriage tie. The question of free to remarry is difficult, as an explicit statement free of controversy is not found. We can only state a conclusion on this matter in harmony with our understanding of other teaching on the subject of marriage. Biblically, when one is free of a previous marriage tie on a scriptural basis, then that individual is free to marry. We understand Paul is teaching the deserted Christian was free from the previous marriage tie. This desertion was because of the heathen's abhorrence and aversion to the Christian faith.

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MELCHIZEDEK
By Lynwood Smith

Hebrews 7:3a	What is meant by "without father, without mother, without descent"?
Hebrews 7:3b	What is meant by "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life"?
Hebrews 7:8	Does this passage teach tithing?

The purpose of this study is to explore in depth and state the meaning of the teaching of the above verses of scripture.

Abram, with a little band of three hundred and eighteen persons of his own household and a few friends, had pursued, overtaken, surprised, and discomfited four confederated kings with their victorious army and recovered Lot, his brother's son, into liberty. Upon returning from this honorable, bold, and successful enterprise, he was met by a prince of a very different character from that of those whom he had previously conquered and delivered.

The others were sons of violence, sons of blood. This new personage was named Melchizedek—king of righteousness, king of peace. "He burst forth upon us like the sun from behind a thick cloud; disappeared again as quickly; and is to be discerned only in that tract of glory which he has left behind him." (Sacred Biography; Henry Hienter, 1832)

As we read in Smith's 1983, unabridged dictionary:

There is something surprising and mysterious in the first appearance of Melchizedek, and in the subsequent references to him. Bearing a title which Jews in after ages would recognize as designating their own sovereign, this Canaanite crosses for a moment the path of Abram and is unhesitatingly recognized as a person of higher spiritual rank than the friend of God. Disappearing as suddenly as he came in, he is lost to the sacred writings for a thousand years; and then a few emphatic words for another moment bring him into sight as the coming Lord of David. Once more, after another thousand years, the Hebrew Christians are taught to see in him a proof that it was the consistent purpose of God to abolish the Levitical priesthood. His purpose, his office, his relation to Christ, and the seat of his sovereignty, have given rise to the innumerable discussions, which even now can scarcely be considered as settled.

Although my assignment does not ask that I consider it, an interesting question might be "Who was this man?" Naturally, the only option available to me was to read what men have said. (I certainly would do only a part of that.) Some great minds pronounce Melchizedek as a survivor of the deluge or flood, the patriarch Shem, due to his old age. Shem is said to have lived on both sides of the flood and could easily be this man. A. Campbell leaned upon this position and it is more reasonable than one would first assume upon initial consideration. Some say he was a virtue or influence of God. Some propose that he was the Holy Ghost (now there is a new one). However, we find him to be as human as the king of Sodom with whom Abram dealt.

Mr. Adam Clark tersely states "a thousand idle stories have been told about this man, and a thousand idle conjectures spent on the subject of his short history given. At present, it is only necessary to state that he appears to have been as real a personage as the other kings, though we have no more of his genealogy than we have of theirs."

In Genesis 18, Melchizedek is called king of Salem and the most judicious interpreters allow that by Salem, Jerusalem is meant. That it bore this name anciently is evident from Psalms 17:1, 2, "In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion." From this part of the sacred history by David, Psalms 76:4, and by Paul, Hebrews 7:1 - 10, we learn that there was something very mysterious and at the same time typical in the person, name, office residence, and government of the Canaanite's prince. In his person, he was a representative and type of Christ. His name was King of Righteousness. This name was probably given as a

result of the pure and righteous administration of his government. This is one of the characteristics of our blessed Lord, a characteristic which can be applied to him only as He alone is essentially righteous. The office he held was that of priest of the Most High God, thus representing Christ in His sacerdotal character. In residence he was king of Salem, King of Peace. This is also found in the reign of Christ — "The Prince of Peace."

I now refer to a selection from *Lessons On Hebrews* by R. N. Boles, 1910.

"With the mention of this name begins the discussion of a deep and wonderful subject: "Christ's High - Priesthood—Its Nature and Power." He leads up to it in the fifth chapter. In 5:10 the Lord's penman is ready to open the great theme; and then, it seems, he staggers at the thought of presenting such a deep, spiritual truth to such unspiritually-minded hearers. They are too dull, spiritually, to understand. They are sure to misunderstand unless he prepares their minds as best possible. So he leaves the subject at 5:10 and rebukes and warns and exhorts. If you should drop out the whole text from 5:11 to 6:20, it would not affect the argument in the least. He begins at 7:1 just where he had left off at 5:10

"Let us also prepare our minds. Let us remember that this is meat, not milk. We are entering on yet holier ground. Let us draw near in faith and in reverence. Let us look for God's mind in this teaching, and leave idle, curious speculation to those babes who know not with what they are dealing.

Statements Concerning Melchizedek

"All we know about Melchizedek is recorded in three passages. The first in Genesis 14:18-20, where he mysteriously steps upon the scene, is introduced as priest of God Most High, blesses Abram, and received from him a tithe—a tenth of all Abram possessed, which latter was an acknowledgment on Abram's part of all Melchizedek's claims. Just as suddenly and mysteriously as he appears, he vanishes. Not a trace, not another mention in the course of that history. A thousand years roll by. Then for one moment that name appears again in a great Messianic psalm, where David in the Holy Spirit recorded God's oath to the Messiah: "Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalms 110:4) Another thousand years of silence. Then the Holy Spirit speaks once more of Melchizedek—this time in reference to the Messiah already come, who even now is "the author of eternal salvation, named of God an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Here he gives us the fullest account of that mysterious person. Let us note the items one by one: (1) Melchizedek—King of righteousness; (2) King of Salem—King of peace; (3) without father; (4) without mother; (5) without genealogy; (6) having no beginning of days; (7) having no end of life; (8) made like unto the Son of God; (9) abideth a priest continually. Now who is that? There are many useless theories and speculations in regard to that. God never ministered to the idle curiosity of man. There is one point in all this which we need to know, and that point is that Melchizedek's order of priesthood was greater than the Aaronic, not being limited by time nor by other circumstances; a priesthood not based upon the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Such is Christ's priesthood—never changing, never-ending. "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

"Look over the nine items above which describe Melchizedek. Take any of the theories extant and apply them to this pattern; they will not fit. The fact is, nobody knows who Melchizedek was or is. One man says: "The silence of Scripture as to his genealogy and birth and death is interpreted as proof of how different his priesthood is from that of Aaron and the priests in Israel, where descent was everything." But, plausible as that sounds, the Scriptures say he had no beginning of days nor end of life; and not only is his death not mentioned, but it says he did not die. Note the ninth item. It is the present tense. Note also verse 8: "He liveth." To say he had no father or mother or genealogy in the priesthood explains some things, but not everything. The nine items describe, to all appearance, a being supernatural, greater than man. Is it an angel? That also would fall short. Is it Christ? The description fits him more than any one else. But even then there are obstacles. We simply do not

know, and cannot know, and need not know. Let us content ourselves with the revelation of Christ's great and exalted priesthood, presented under the figure of Melchizedek."

Next, I will refer to an article written by me on this subject from "Proclaimer of Truth" (a paper started by Paul Mackey), April 1, 1958.

"SEEING HE EVER LIVETH"

"The seventh chapter of Hebrews is given to show that the priesthood of Christ is not after the order of the "sons of Levi" and is "not called after the order of Aaron". But it is a different order. In the thirteenth verse we read, "For He of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."

"But if Jesus Christ did not spring from the regular priestly line, of what order was His priesthood?, and why was it so; In chapter six, verse twenty we find these words: "... even Jesus made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." So Christ's priesthood differed from the priest of the Levitical order, and was like that of this man, Melchizedek. But who was this man, who burst upon us in the Hebrew letter? What was his work and what was his priesthood that Christ should be made a priest after his similitude for ever?

"We find he was a king of Salem, and was a priest of the most high God. We see his short but colorful account in Genesis 14. He was a contemporary of Abraham. After Abraham had returned from the rescuing of his nephew and the "slaughtering of the kings", this great king met him, bringing bread and wine to refresh him and his men after the late battle. He also blessed him.

"But the thing most interesting about this great character is that he was typical of Christ's priesthood. Of him the Bible has this to say, and it has given rise to much idle conjectures, "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the son of God, abideth a priest continually." Paul uses this to answer the objection of the Jews against the legitimacy of the priesthood of Christ. Their objection was: If Christ were a true priest, He must come from legitimate stock, as all priests of the law had regularly done. But Jesus of Nazareth had not proceeded from such stock, therefore He could not be considered the antitype of Aaron. To this objection the apostles answers, that it was not necessary for the priest to come from a particular stock, for Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God, and was not of the stock of either Abraham or Aaron, but a Canaanite.

"It is well known that the ancient Hebrews were exceedingly scrupulous in choosing their high priest; partly by divine command, and partly from the traditions of their ancestors. There were certain things commanded of one who would be a priest. In order to become a high priest these things must be kept. It was necessary for one to prove his descent from the family of Aaron; and if he could not, he was cast out. To these Divine ordinances the Jews added some of their own. To prove that they had the qualifications required, they took utmost care to preserve their genealogies, which were regularly kept in the archives of the temple. When anyone aspired to this office, his record was examined and if he did not fit the requirements, he was rejected. Here is the point: He who could not support his pretensions by just genealogical evidences, was said by the Jews to be "without father". In this way, both Christ and Melchizedek were "without father" and "without mother"; i.e., were not descended from the regular sacerdotal stock. Yet Melchizedek, who was a Canaanite, was a priest of the most high God. "This sense Suidas confirms under the word Melchizedek, where, after having stated that, having reigned in Salem for 113 years, he died a righteous man and a bachelor,—He is, therefore, said to be without descent or genealogy, because he was not of the seed of Abraham, but of Canaanitish origin, and sprung from the accursed seed; therefore he is without the honor of a genealogy!" "This sort of phraseology was not uncommon when the genealogy of a person was unknown or obscure" (Adam Clark). All this simply shows that there was no record of Melchizedek genealogy or of his descent, so he was "without father and mother, without descent, having neither beginning of

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days nor end of life; but made like the Son of God, abideth a priest continually."

"His genealogy is not recorded; when he was born and when he died is not known. "His priesthood, therefore may be considered perpetual. In these respects he was like to Jesus Christ, who, as to the Godhead, had neither father nor mother, beginning of time nor ending of days; and has an everlasting priesthood or life, no more than there is of the account of his ancestry" (Adam Clark). So we see that his priesthood abideth forever. So does the priesthood of Jesus Christ our Lord. That leads us to verse twenty-four and twenty-five, which abound with such words and thoughts of beauty, "But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercessions for them."

"When the apostle said, "Seeing He ever liveth—", he was using the strongest point that could be offered for the divinity of Jesus, our high priest. Upon the fact that "he ever liveth" the whole system of Christianity rests. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Corinthians 15:14). What a hopeless pall would settle over us, and make us "of all men most miserable" if Christ be not risen—but glory to God, our victory shout is, "Seeing He ever liveth". Peter expressed this fact as his sound, unfaltering, undying hope, in these words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

---M. Lynwood Smith

I believe this answers the first two points of my assignment. Now we come to the third point. This concerns the particular reference in verse 8 where it says Abraham paid tithes. Does this teach the practice of tithing today? I do not have much to say about this because the scriptures does not say much about it. I have checked all the commentaries I have and I have quite a few. Albert Barnes is the only one who slightly leans in that direction and he is not so open with it. He says it "was regarded as a duty before the appointment of the Leviticus law." I am told that Burton Coffman makes a big case out of this and insists that it be a point for tithing today. Adam Clarke, who was a Methodist and certainly believed in tithing, preached tithing and advocated tithing and did not see anything in this particular verse. I will refer to his comments on the subject.

"It was an ancient custom, among all the nations of the earth, to consecrate a part or tenth of the spoils taken in war to the objects of their worship. Many examples of this kind occur. This, however, was not according to any provision in law, but merely ad libitum, and as a eucharistic offering to those to whom they imagined they owed the victory. But neither Abraham's decimation, nor theirs, had anything to do, either with tithes as prescribed under the Mosaic dispensation, or as claimed under the Christian dispensation."

Most of the other commentaries I consulted did not even mention it or make a point of it whatsoever.

This concludes my comments for, I feel, the points assigned to me have been adequately discussed.

Mark 9:38 - 42 Does this passage justify denominational preaching?
Philippians 1:15 - 18 Does Paul endorse denominational preaching?
Matthew 13:30 Church discipline or persecution of heretics forbidden?
By Johnny Elmore

Mark 9:38 - 42. Does this passage justify denominational preaching?

My interest in this passage was piqued by a brother in the digressive church who referred to it and suggested that maybe God is pleased that people are working in the name of Christ although they may differ widely from what the Bible teaches. My interest was intensified by hearing a sermon on tape which was preached last March by a well-known digressive preacher. In a sermon called "Is Unity Possible?" he confesses that he has taught and exhibited a sectarian spirit. He said: "The restoration movement started out as an appeal for unity of Christians. Somewhere along the line, maybe fifty years ago, we abandoned that theme, and we crystalized, and we became to a large measure what we set out to oppose." Then he introduced this passage in Mark 9:38 - 42, and suggested that there are some in denominational bodies who are our brethren in Christ. He also compared the spirit that John had in forbidding others who followed not with him and the other apostles to those in churches of Christ who do not accept those in denominations.

The digressive brother continues: "Surely there are individuals in practically all the denominations known today who've learned of Jesus, looked to him in sincere faith, turned away from their conscious rebellion against his will and embraced him as Saviour through immersion in his name. And their unfortunate entanglement in some denominational error on some point in no way alters the fact that they are Christians. They have complied with the Biblical terms of admission into the church. They're God's children. And to fail to recognize these people as members of Christ's church would make it proper to refuse recognition to any of us who are in error on any point, or to one of our brethren who has some moral problem or doctrinal misconception. And a posture like that would utterly destroy the New Testament concept of the church and make mockery of the gospel of divine grace. It would reduce salvation to a matter of human merit and knowing and doing every detail of the divine commandments, and such an understanding would make us Old Testament Pharisees rather than New Testament Christians . . ."

One more passage for this digressive brother: "The fact is anybody who comes to the Bible wherever he may be and perhaps in spite of the preaching he has listened to from the pulpit where he has worshipped and learns about the atonement and repents of his sins is born anew—that man is a Christian. He is my brother! And he is a brother to every other man and woman in the world who has followed the same path to the Saviour. He may be worshipping in error; he may hold a false belief; he may wear a sectarian name and to the degree that I understand more of the word of God than he does on those points I am in a position to help him. To the degree that he understands some Biblical topic better than I do, he is in a position to help me. In an atmosphere of respect for one another as brothers, we can both teach and we can both learn and there is the possibility of our being united in Christ . . ."

There is much more to the man's speech, but the thrust of it is that there may be Christians in all denominations, like the man who was casting out demons in the name of Jesus that we don't know anything about, and if we don't receive them, we exhibit the spirit that Jesus rebuked in John.

But I wonder? Are we justified in drawing the conclusions that he draws? Are there Christians in all denominations? Can a person listen to a denominational preacher, and do what denominational preachers tell them to do, and join a denomination and accidentally wind up in the Lord's church?

There is a lot about the man who was casting out demons in Jesus' name that we do not know. We do not know if he may have received a commission privately from Jesus, in the manner that Nicodemus came to Jesus. Some commentators suggest that he may have cast out demons by "charismatic faith," as in I Corinthians 13:2. Lenski says: "This is an instance in which a man so grasped

'the name' of Jesus by faith that he expelled demons by its power. We are not told that he wrought other miracles in the same way. Jesus had not directly empowered this man as he had the Twelve (verse 1); the man attained this power by his own faith in Jesus." Most of us would likely reject that notion, holding that even the exercise of such a faith, as is later found in I Corinthians 12:9, had to be preceded by a commission or appointment by one having authority. We know that this unknown disciple was not one of the twelve, for John said "he followeth not us," (Mark 9:38). It does not appear that he was one of the seventy, for immediately following Luke's account of this, (Luke 9:49, 50), we read: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also" (Luke 10:1). However, Jesus had other disciples, for in Luke 6:13, we read, "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke 6:13). I have to believe that the man was a disciple, who was working in Jesus' name simply as an individual. There is nothing to suggest that the man was simply pretending to cast out demons and I agree with McGarvey that "John should have known that no man could cast out demons in the name of Jesus unless Jesus had given him power to do so: and if Jesus had given him the power it was his privilege to exercise it."

Many commentators have assumed that the reason the disciples tried to stop the unknown disciple from casting out demons was what we might call "professional jealousy". We might infer that, because it is possible that the disciples were still embarrassed over their inability to cast out the dumb spirit from a man's son, described in the first part of the chapter. Jesus told them plainly that it was because of their unbelief (Matthew 17:20). Now they see one who "followeth not us," and he is having success. McGarvey says that when Jesus later took a little child and said: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name," (Mark 9:37), that it "probably suggested to John the incident which follows." McGarvey concurs with several commentators when he says: "This man's action had excited the jealousy of John. Jealousy as to official prerogative is very common." Other commentators dissent. Lenski and Barnes deny that it was jealousy. Lenski said: "John's reason is misunderstood when it is thought to voice the professional jealousy of the disciples. The answer of Jesus does not even hint at such a thought. John and his companion were concerned about Jesus and imagined that only avowed followers of Jesus, not only such as they themselves, the Twelve, but also others who had formally attached themselves to the company of the disciples, had a right to use Jesus' name in doing mighty works. The point in John's statement is the implied question whether he and his companion had acted rightly. They thought so at the time; but John is now doubtful after hearing the general statement of Jesus that whoever does a good act 'on my name' pleases Jesus and his Father (verse 48). They should perhaps not have interfered with this man who was acting 'in thy name'." I think Lenski make a good point.

Note Jesus' answer: "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (verses 39, 40). I believe we have to say that the man was authorized to do what he was doing, in the light of Jesus' answer. The apostle Paul said, "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (I Corinthians 12:3). All we know about Jesus is that revealed to us by the agency of the Holy Spirit.

But what about our question? Does this passage justify denominational preaching? Does it mean that Jesus approves any and all preaching so long as it is done "in his name"? I think not! It is sheer folly to think that anyone outside of Christ's body can be carrying out his work. Remember! The man in question had to be authorized by Christ to do what he was doing. In the parable of the vine and the branches, Jesus plainly says: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). To abide in Jesus is to abide in his body, his church (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18). "He is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). We are baptized into Christ, therefore into his body, the church (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). There are many today seeking to "climb up some other way," but Jesus said they are thieves and robbers (John 10:1). Jesus said: "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in

thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Jesus warned his disciples that even before the fall of Jerusalem there would be false Christs and false prophets (Matthew 24:24). If we could think of any parallel to the modern scene of denominationalism, it would be the incident at Ephesus, when two of the sons of a Jewish chief priest, Sceva, tried to invoke Jesus' name to cast out evil spirits (Acts 19:13-17). These men took a poor, demon-possessed man into a room, and pronounced what they thought was the healing incantation: "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." The demon was not fooled and answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" Luke describes what followed: "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." In view of the many pretenders to Jesus's name today, we probably need to ask: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"

But what lessons can we learn from the passage in Mark 9? One lesson that is obvious is that it is true that someone does not have to have my or your official approval to preach and work in Jesus' name. He does not have to be known by me. In fact, it is my distinct hope that there are thousands of honest men and women who know nothing of us who are simply New Testament Christians, and that our God still has left to him thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. But I believe that if they are truly Christians, they will reach the same conclusions that I have reached about the way of salvation, the way of worshipping God and the way of serving him from day to day. I also believe that you and I should be happy and rejoice when we hear of brethren working in the name of Jesus, even if what they are doing is not our idea, and the work was not started at our suggestion.

But, there is another lesson. Jesus is teaching that there is no neutrality towards Christ. Some have imagined that when Jesus said, "For he that is not against us is on our part," (Mark 9:40), he contradicted what he said in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." But I say that the two statements compliment each other. The two statements taken together declare the impossibility of neutrality. If a man is in no sense against Christ, then he is for him; and if he is not for Christ, he is against him. The statement in Mark is not simply an abstract saying. It applies to men like the one under discussion. It does not apply to men who are merely indifferent to Jesus and are thus not actively against him. Such indifference and coldness as a response to Jesus would be "against" him. To be lukewarm and neither hot nor cold is fatal. We can not straddle the fence. Anything less than active allegiance is opposition to his cause. Paul said: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (I Corinthians 16:22). Do you love the Lord? Do you want to be his friend? Jesus said: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you to do" (John 15:14). Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

Philippians 1:15-18. Does Paul endorse demoninational preaching?

Like the passage we have just studied, some take this passage to mean that Paul rejoiced that "Christ is preached" even if it was by those in denominational error. Does Paul endore denominational preaching?

Some commentators accept this as a conclusion. For example, Barnes says: "When ministers of other denominations preach what we regard as error, and their preaching becomes popular, and is attended with success, we can find occasion to rejoice — for they preach Christ. In the error we should not, we cannot rejoice; but in the fact that the great truth is held up that Christ died for men, we can always find abundant occasion for joy. Mingled as it may be with error, it may be nevertheless the means of saving souls, and though we should rejoice more if the truth were preached without any admixture of error, yet still the very fact that Christ is made known lays the foundation for gratitude and rejoicing. Had all Christians, and Christian ministers, the feelings which Paul expresses here, there would be much less envy and uncharitableness than there is now in the churches. May we not hope that the time will yet come when all who preach the gospel will have such supreme regard for the

name and work of the Saviour, that they will find sincere joy in the success of a rival denomination, or a rival preacher, or in rival plans for doing good? Then, indeed, contentions would cease, and the hearts of Christians, 'like kindred drops', would mingle into one."

It seems to be the consensus of most commentators that Paul arrived in Rome and stood trial, and that the charges against him were found to have no validity, and he was given a measure of freedom for a time, and was able to preach and have his own hired house. However, according to their views, there was already a rival band of Jewish brethren in Rome, and they were jealous and envious of Paul, and they opposed him because of his opposition to Old Testament observances and rituals, and when Paul was re-imprisoned, they preached the gospel, but with their emphasis, to make Paul's chains more galling and bitter.

Obviously, there is nothing in the text to indicate that these were indeed Jewish brethren. Coffman says: "The New Testament does not reveal any of the details concerning those who preached Christ of 'envy and strife'; and speculation leads us nowhere." He continues: "Whether such jealousy arose from Judaizing elements of the church opposing Paul's teaching, or from certain 'leaders' of the church in Rome who found themselves eclipsed by Paul's success and influence through winning many converts in the praetorian guard and even the palace is impossible to determine."

I thought I had found something that would indicate that these who preached Christ "of envy and strife" did not belong to Judaizing teachers. Fields, in his commentary, says: "It is hard for us to believe that Paul could rejoice that Christ was preached when the preaching consisted of demands to keep the law of Moses. Such Judaizing preachers are called 'evil workers' and 'dogs' in Philippians 3:2. The book of Galatians had been written several years before, and in it Paul had passionately condemned the binding of the law upon Christians. All of this makes us feel that the Roman preachers who gave Paul trouble were not the Judaizers, but only certain unknown brethren, possibly Gentiles (since few Jewish brethren were with Paul in Rome; See Colossians 4:11), whose hearts were deeply infected by envy and party-spirit"

I think Fields makes a good point about Paul's unwavering opposition to the Judaizers, but he is wrong of his application of Colossians 4:11, because the passage does not prove that there were few Jewish brethren with Paul in Rome. In noticing Colossians 4:11, we see that Paul mentions three Jewish brethren who had been with him in Rome - Aristarchus, Marcus, and Jesus which is called Justus. Then he says, "These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me" (Colossians 4:11). Actually, as the King James Version has it, it makes it sound as if only three brethren had been of any comfort to Paul. To show the true sense, we look at Phillips' and Beck's translations. Phillips: "Only these few fellow Jews are working with me for the kingdom, but what a help they have been." Beck: "They are the only Jews working with me for God's kingdom. They've been a comfort to me." So, far from proving that these were the only Jews in Rome, it actually suggests the opposite, by saying that these were the only ones who were working with Paul, and who gave him any comfort. It may indicate that the others were the source of the envy and strife.

It think it is possible that those who were preaching Christ "of envy and strife" may have been Jews. However, I cannot believe that Paul could have rejoiced in their preaching if they had been like the ones he spoke of in Galatians. There Paul warned: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6 - 9). It could not have been those who wanted to bind circumcision and other things upon Christians for Paul continued: "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:3, 4). And in the very epistle that we are studying, Paul said: "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in

Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:2, 3).

The commentators are almost unanimous in this. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown quote verse 18, and comment: "From this it would seem that these selfseeking teachers in the main 'proclaimed Christ' not 'another gospel', such as the Judaizers in Galatia taught; though probably having some of the Jewish leaven, their chief error was their self-seeking motive, not so much error of doctrine: had there been vital error, Paul would not have rejoiced. The proclamation of Christ, however done, roused attention, and so was sure to be of service. Paul could thus rejoice at the good result of their bad intentions."

Macknight, in commenting on verse 18 says: "Because truth is here opposed to pretence it does not follow, that preaching Christ in pretence, means preaching false doctrine concerning Christ: For the apostle could not rejoice that Christ was preached in that manner. Truth and pretence here, relate not to the matters preached, but to the views of the preachers. The Judaizers preached the truth concerning Christ, when they affirmed him to be the Jewish Messiah. But they did this, not sincerely to bring the Jews to believe on him, but to provoke the magistrates to put Paul, the chief preachers of that doctrine, to death. Others, however, preached Christ as the Jewish Messiah, sincerely intending to bring both Jews and Gentiles to believe on him. But from whatever motive Christ was preached, according to his true character, it was a matter of joy to the apostle."

Alford says: "Christ is proclaimed (then these adversaries of the Apostle can hardly have been those against whom he speaks so decisively in Galatians, and indeed in our chapter 3:2. These men preached Christ, and thus forwarded pro tanto the work of the Gospel, however mixed their motives may have been, or however imperfect their work)."

Vincent says: "Since Bengel the view has prevailed that they were Judaizing Christians. But this view does not seem reconcilable with Paul's words concerning the Judaizers in this very epistle (3:2), and in the Galatian and Second Corinthian letters. Nowhere in his epistles does Paul speak of the Judaizers as preachers of Christ unless it be 'another Jesus' (II Corinthians 11:4). Although they accepted Jesus as the Messiah, in their preaching he was thrown into the background behind the claims of the law. Paul found worse enemies among these Christians than among the heathen; yet here he virtually sanctions their preaching, and rejoices in it. To say that they are shown to have been Judaizing Christians because they preached Christ of envy and strife, is to argue in a circle. The attempt to solve the difficulty by assuming that the form of Judaistic opposition was milder in Rome than in the East seems like a desperate resource." Vincent continues: "I incline rather to regard them as Pauline Christians who were personally jealous of the apostle, and who sought to undermine his influence. It may be, as Weiss suggests, that as the Roman church before Paul's arrival had no definite leadership, it was easy for ambitious and smaller men to obtain a certain prominence which they found menaced by the presence and influence of the apostle."

Whoever these men were, they preached Christ, although from wrong motives. It might be appropriate to ask: "What is involved in preaching Christ?" What do we include and what do we exclude? We may be certain of one thing, and that is that preaching Christ includes more than what we hear in the great campaigns on television in our time. It is said in Acts 8:5, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." We are not given the exact words of Philip's sermon, but we are given some insight into what "preaching Christ" included, for Acts 8:12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Obviously, three things included in preaching Christ is things concerning the kingdom or the church, the name of Jesus Christ, and baptism. I submit that these three things are enough to cast a coldness over any great television campaign. Later in the chapter, we are told that Philip met the eunuch, "and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:36). The result of that preaching was the baptism of the eunuch. Any attempt at preaching Christ which does not inform the hearer of his need to obey the commandments of Christ, be added to his spiritual body, and wear his name, may be put down as a failure. And I think it is high time that some of our thin-skinned brethren, who do not want any kind of preaching that would show the

difference in denominationalism and New Testament Christianity, and who have a wishbone instead of a backbone, should wake up and smell the coffee!

But is there a lesson in this text for us? I surely believe there is. First, there is a lesson to us on the importance of being sincere in our preaching. Paul said of his opponents in Rome: "The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Philippians 1:16). It has been pointed out that the word "sincerely" means "without wax". Clarke says it is used to describe the pure honey of the beehive, when none of the honey is marred by the presence of the wax of the beehive. Think about it, brethren! It would be terrible to convert multitudes to Christ and yet be lost ourselves, because our motives were not sincere. These foes of Paul in Rome were preaching Christ, but they were motivated by envy. It is possible for members of the church to become envious of one another. The one talent man can become jealous of the five talent man. A brother can be envious of another brother who is receiving just recognition and praise for a job well done. Preachers can become envious of one another. It is possible to envy the success of another preacher, his success in baptizing many, reclaiming others, or his ability in promoting the work of the church. The envious-hearted preacher will be tempted to defame the character and jeopardize the influence of his envied brother.

It is possible too, to be lost ourselves, while winning souls to Christ. I know people who were converted by a preacher, and it was later learned that the preacher was not what he should be. Paul leaves us a wonderful example to teach us that we should rejoice when another preacher has success, even if that preacher does not like us, or even if he does it from bad motives. Let us rejoice that Christ is preached.

Matthew 13:24 - 30. Is church discipline or the persecution of heretics forbidden?

Somehow when Don and I were working on this study earlier in the year, this passage seemed to fit in, and I entertained the idea that it could be easily explained. Now I find that my topic on this reminds me of giving a party -- the conception is far more fun than carrying out the details. The passage I have chosen for myself is probably one of the most disputed passages in the New Testament.

We are fortunate that the disciples of Christ asked Jesus the meaning of the parable of the tares after he had sent the multitude away, and that Jesus explained some of the details. Even with his explanation, men still do not understand it all. Think how mysterious it would be if he had not explained it. As a preliminary, we are told that the field in which the seeds were sown represents the world of mankind; the man who sowed good seeds represents Jesus; the enemy who sowed tares, the devil; the good seed, Christians; the tares, wicked persons; the harvest, the end of this world; the reapers, the angels.

Jesus said in verse 40, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world." This is the point of comparison, and Jesus states in plain language how it will be in the end of the world. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Thus, the final separation of the wicked from the righteous, and the destruction of the wicked in fire is the burden of this teaching.

But what is meant or prohibited by Jesus' answer to the question: "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?" (verse 28). Does he refer to all the wicked in the world, or only to those in the church. Usually, we presume the term "kingdom" to be limited to the church, and the wicked are to be gathered by the angels "out of his kingdom". However, as McGarvey points out, since Jesus is given "all power in heaven and in earth," (Matthew 28:18), his kingdom in reality includes the whole earth. In the parable of the pounds, Jesus uses the term to include both his willing subjects, and those who "will not have this man to rule over them" (Luke 19:12 - 27). This leads us to the conclusion that the broader term for kingdom is also used here. Note that the field in which the seeds, both good and bad were sown, and the kingdom out of which both were gathered are the same; but the field is

the world -- therefore, the kingdom is the world. Also, the good seed represent "the children of the kingdom," i.e., those who accept and submit to the reign of Christ over the world, and the tares represent all of the children of the wicked one in the field, which is the world.

Some take this to be a lesson on caution in church discipline. But authority for church discipline does not require support from this parable. It is mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. Besides, gathering tares into bundles to burn them is far too strong a figure for church discipline, as McGarvey notes. Some understand this to forbid excluding people from the church only in doubtful cases, but this is condemned by the simple fact that it was not until the tares were unmistakably known as such that the question about plucking them up was raised. If this teaches exclusion of any from the church, it must be those who are known to be children of the wicked one. There are two great difficulties in this view of church discipline: (1) Who are the servants of the householder? They were the reapers of the harvest, not officers of the church, but angels of God - "the reapers are the angels" (verse 39). (2) Also, Jesus passes by this prohibition. He gives it no part in the meaning of the parable. It is true that the gathering out of the tares will be at the end of the world, and that implies that they will be allowed to grow until that time, but it implies nothing as to whether they can be excluded from the church.

Now a former parable, the parable of the sower, describes the planting of the dispensation, and this parable describes its struggle with evil in the world until the judgment day. While probation lasts, wickedness is permitted to develop. There is to be no organic destruction of wicked men by God or angels; there must be no persecuting them to destruction by the servants of God; they must be allowed to live and work their destiny. But at the end of the world, the final separation of good and evil will take place, by the command of Christ, and the execution thereof by the angels.

Surely, it is hard for us to understand why God permits wickedness to thrive and prosper, but we are encouraged by the teaching of this parable that wickedness shall have its punishment. McGarvey tersely says, in the Fourfold Gospel: "The field is not the church, but the world, and the teaching of the parable is that we are not to attempt to exterminate evil men. Any who attempt to exterminate heretics in the name of Christ by physical force are condemned by this parable."

We can learn several things from this parable: (1) There is a contradiction in it of the millennial theory that there are two resurrections, one of the righteous, another of the wicked, a thousand years apart. (2) There is condemned the idea that God will first destroy the wicked, and allow the saints to reign on earth a thousand years before the final judgment. The wicked and the righteous will both continue undestroyed during the time of probation. (3) This parable does not contradict the idea that men will be converted for ages before judgment. It is destruction, not conversion, that the parable intends to deny. (4) Let us understand from this parable the divine government and never wonder at the sparing or even the prosperity of the wicked. This is the season of probation, but the day of judgment will show a different state of things. Truly there is a just God over all.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS 3

By Don L. King

My questions under consideration are: (1) What or who are the principalities and powers of Ephesians 3:10? (2) What is the fellowship of the mystery in Ephesians 3:9? (3) What is the function of the church in Ephesians 3:10?

INTRODUCTION

Some things I believe: (1) Principalities and powers refer to angelic or spirit beings in heaven itself in Ephesians 3:10. All the Lexicons I personally have so state. (2) The fellowship, or administration, of the mystery in verse 9 was the demonstration and clarification of how the Gentiles could become joint heirs, or participants in common, with Christ by their obedience to the Gospel. (3) The function of the church in verse 10 was to serve as edification, or a learning experience, to the angels in heaven at least during the time God was revealing the church by the inspired teaching of men through the Holy Spirit. The angels' knowledge of God's plans for the salvation of men was dependent upon the development of the church. God chose to keep them ignorant of His plans for many years though they were very curious according to I Peter 1:12. This set forth my understanding of the questions today. In hopes that you may come to share my view of these points, let us consider together the apostles' logic in Ephesians 3.

THE REVEALING OF THE MYSTERY

Notice first of all that Paul received a "revelation" (verse 3). Paul also spoke of receiving a revelation in Galatians 1:11, 12, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." What is a "revelation"? It was a disclosure of manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It was something which had been revealed or uncovered. What was this "revelation"? It was "the mystery". (verse 3). The content of Paul's revelation had not previously been clearly revealed. The prophets had written and spoken of it but always in pretty obscure terms. People, indeed even the prophets, did not clearly fathom the meanings. Consequently, the contents of Paul's revelation was styled as a mystery because it had been previously obscure or hidden.

What was "the mystery"? It was the gospel according to verse 6. In particular, it is the good news that Gentiles can now be fellow heirs and of the same body with Christ. In other words, they can now be called children of God. In Paul's letter to the Colossians (chapter 1:27) he speaks of their salvation (Gentiles) and that Christ dwells in them (by faith Ephesians 3:17) calling it their "hope of glory" or heaven. The apostle declares this concept is the "riches of glory of the mystery." The mystery, then, is the gospel of Christ and its riches were to be especially appreciated by all Gentiles, which includes us. By the gospel, all men, even Gentiles, may have Christ within them and thus have a genuine hope of heaven. They had, perhaps, had a desire for such blessings as heaven for many years. However, they had no expectation of receiving it until Jesus came, died and made possible the plan of salvation by which all may be saved. Jesus changed their desire or dream into expectation, you see. The word "hope" as used in Colossians 1:27 means an expectation or confidence. Hence, they (and we) now had confidence in obtaining heaven. We have this hope in Jesus as His fellow or joint heirs.

What did Paul do with the mystery received by revelation? He wrote it down! (Note verse 3: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, . . .") This is a great blessing indeed, for we live in an age that the mystery is not a secret anymore. The gospel which is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16) is now written down for us to read and understand, hence, obey. Thank God for the written Word!

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MYSTERY WAS HIDDEN UNTIL OUR PRESENT AGE

This "knowledge" (see verse 4) was not always available as Paul says in verse 5: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles, and prophets by the Spirit." The use of the word "now" indicates the present time of Paul's writing which, of course, places it in the early time of the Christian Dispensation. The mystery has been revealed in our time or age. In order to better understand verse 10 when we get to it, notice with me I Peter 1:9 - 12. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." Peter shows, in this passage, that the prophets were very interested in our salvation. They tried, unsuccessfully, to discover how and when this would all come to pass. They were allowed to know only that the salvation of all men would be made possible at a later time than theirs. (verse 12) Notice, too, that Peter says the angels were curious and desired to look into the matter. Little wonder then, that Paul calls this subject a mystery! (Ephesians 3:3) Men, prophets and even angels had been puzzled about it for many ages. What a blessing to live in a time when this great secret has been made public through the revealed, written Word of God. Little wonder Paul wrote: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." (I Corinthians 4:9) Scholars tell us the idea seems to be that of a great stage in which the mysteries of the ages are unfolded to us the audience by the men or the apostles. Even angels were to learn from them.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY (Verse 9)

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 3:9) The word "fellowship" used here is translated from the same Greek word from which we also get "Stewardship". Hence, the term means, in this verse, "administration" or "care of". Paul has reference to his own responsibility of "stewardship" in taking the gospel which he received by revelation to "all men". This idea is borne out by the context in verses 8 and 9. He obviously refers to a wonderful work he has been charged with of preaching to the Gentiles the gospel of Christ. Remember too, that the great secret, or mystery, which has been hidden for so long is that Gentiles can now be united with Christ, participants in common with the Son of God Himself! Paul says this has been hidden from the beginning. One can only imagine Paul's pleasure at being a part of the revealing of God's great secret. The plan is finally public now through Paul's written word.

UNTO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS (Verse 10)

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Ephesians 3:10) Now, the secret is out. It is no longer hidden in God. The world and even these great personages called "principalities and powers" may now know of it. Notice the wording of the Spirit just here: He says, "to the intent" or as it is rendered in the Greek Interlinears "in order that". Whoever these personages are Paul says he has been given the charge, or responsibility, of carrying the gospel to all men in order that even the principalities and rulers in heavenly places can know, through the church, the great wisdom of God. The church is to play a part in their learning experience. In some way they are to know of God's wisdom by it. They could not know it before this time, for it was hidden in God. It was a great secret! Now they can. Who are these great personages? They are translated "rulers and authorities" in the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by Alfred Marshall, page 765. Hence the rulers and authorities are to learn by the church. W. E. Vine says of the word "Principality" (Volume 3, page 213) "Beginning, government rule, is used of supramundane (literally those who are above the earthly DLK) beings who exercise rule called 'principalities.; (a) of holy angels, Ephesians 3:10, the church in its formation being to them the

great expression of 'the manifold (or much varied) wisdom of God; . . . ' Of the word "power" he has much less to say. However, on page 196 of Volume 3 under No. 2 he remarks in part, "Angelic beings are called 'powers' in Ephesians 3:10" Other works could be cited but it seems useless. I believe Paul has reference to angels in heaven, not great political powers on earth. He used the terms "Heavenly places" in the King James Version. The Interlinear by Marshall renders it simply "heavenlies". Thayer says this means "the heavenly regions, i.e. heaven itself, the abode of God and angels: Ephesians 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10;" NOTE: He further adds that the same words are referring to the lower heavens, or the heaven of the clouds in Ephesians 6:12 where evil spirits are referred to also as "principalities and powers". As usual, the context determines whether good or evil spirits are designated.

The angelic beings were to have their knowledge made complete by the church. The Greek text has "through the church". Literally, Paul is telling the Ephesians that the gospel which he received by revelation from God, which exposes the long-held secret of salvation even for Gentiles, is now evident to all men. He has written it down for their careful study and now for the first time in all the ages, the angels in heaven itself are able to learn by (or through) the church the tremendous heights of God's wisdom. I think I can imagine the angels' great amazement upon the Gentiles entering into the kingdom. I can almost hear them as they must have said, "Oh, now we see the solving of the puzzle; now the mystery is unfolded!" "Now we see how the Gentiles are to be saved. It is through the church and their obedience to the gospel of Christ which Paul has written for all men to read and study." Paul says in verse 11, this is in keeping with God's eternal purpose in Christ. God always intended for the "rulers and authorities" in heaven to learn of His plans, His wisdom, through the Christ and His bride, the Church.

THE BREADTH, LENGTH, DEPTH AND HEIGHT

The revealing of the mystery spoken of in Ephesians 3 is complete enough, Paul says, that we may be able to comprehend, or understand with all saints the subject. The days of only partial light are over. The whole subject is exposed from start to finish. The great plan of God is marvelous. From all the many types of Christ, the animal sacrifices, the constant shedding of blood as to the final, actual shedding of Christ's own innocent blood. The great scheme of redemption is complete and fully revealed. The mystery is over.

IS IT SOMETIMES RIGHT TO DO WRONG?

Mark 2:25, 26 Is it sometimes right to do wrong?

Hebrews 11:31 How explain in the light of Joshua 2:3 - 6?

II Peter 2:8 How explain in the light of Genesis 19:8, 36?

By Paul Walker

Sometimes when I watch the evening news and see a flock of reporters swarming around the President, I think about Jesus and the Pharisees. They swarmed around our Lord constantly --at every street corner in Jerusalem; down dusty, country roads; at banquets and weddings and according to Mark's gospel--even in corn fields. Why were the Pharisees always at Jesus' heels? So that they might once more provoke Him and try to again tangle Him up and topple Him over.

Mark's account of the cornfield incident is recorded in chapter 2:23 - 28, "And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath." I can see them now! With their long and learned faces peeking over the stalks of grain, they once more come at Jesus with their burning question. This time they, with their very own eyes, had seen the disciples plucking ears of corn and rubbing the grain in their hands. "Why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful . . .?" So, the question was about what Jesus had allowed the disciples to do on the sabbath day, but Jesus had done no harm. He certainly was not a sabbath breaker. To do good was made lawful by Moses without distinction of days, but the Pharisees had denied its lawfulness on the sabbath. It was true, of course, that "reaping" on the sabbath was unlawful: Exodus 20:10 "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work . . ." Reaping would have been unlawful for it would have been work. The Pharisees took issue with Jesus on the legality of picking grain on the sabbath, though the disciples were tired and hungry and used the grain for their own immediate consumption. But to the Pharisees, the sin was done, for they had reaped -- if only on a small scale. Yet, the action of the disciples was lawful, for according to Deuteronomy 23:25, "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto the neighbor's standing corn." So the accusation was: "Thy disciples did that which was not lawful," but Jesus challenged the accusation by terming their action "guiltless". (Matthew 12:7) The conflict, you see, stemmed from a Pharisaic interpretation rather than disobedience on the disciples part.

Christ pointed back to their own law and reminded them of David, a man they loved and revered--"Have ye never read what David did? When he had need . . .?" What did David do? He and his men ate of the shewbread that was hallowed. The incident is recorded in I Samuel 21:1 - 6. Jesus, in bringing up the subject of David and the shewbread, is simply pointing out to them that within the realm of their own reasoning about the "unlawfulness" of His hungry disciples eating grain, they had better remember David and his hungry men who ate shewbread that was hallowed. He wanted them to know that it was unlawful to eat shewbread, but David and his men ate anyway. The shewbread was for the priests only. Now if they were so concerned over the "unlawful" why had they not emphasized the disobedience of David? Let's look again at what Jesus said about David: "have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the High Priest, and did eat the shewbread which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?"

Note here that Jesus points out to them, that in the case of David, "human need" was present; and, human need, especially exceptional need, is a Christian principle. The obligation of the Sabbath is admitted, but the question of exceptions is raised and in case of "exceptional need," the right thing

was for David and his men to eat the shewbread and the right thing was done by Jesus' disciples. In both cases the right thing did no violence to the sabbath law for the sabbath was a gift of God to be utilized for spiritual and moral benefit, so that people might render their best and highest service to their God and fellowmen. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," were the words of the Master Himself.

The multitude of silly and binding rules of the Pharisees must have been extremely obnoxious to Jesus and he wanted desperately to show them that love, justice and mercy were greater than their mountain of little laws! Jesus declared himself to be Lord of the sabbath; meaning that he was not only the Lord of the sabbath, but the "truth" and "completion" of it. He declared the wonderful truth of the matter when he said, "I am the way, the truth and the life . . ." (John 14:6) And he said (Matthew 5:17) "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill." When men and women watched Jesus walk among them, they saw God in action; therefore, they saw love, mercy and justice abounding and bringing joy to the heart of mankind. Jesus said to Phillip, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me . . .?" (John 14:10, 11)

Jesus did not abrogate the Law, but he did claim the right as the representative man to administer it for man's good. The pious Pharisees had fastened heavy burdens to be borne upon the people. They lacked mercy; love and compassion; they failed to practice! Much of their hard teachings were partial law mingled with the traditions of the Rabbis. Therefore, lacking mercy, justice and sympathy in their dealings with others, Jesus found them hard to swallow. Their hypocritical piety stabbed at the compassionate heart of Jesus. The Pharisees taught such a stern adherence to the "letter of the law" that its remarkable character—as a pointing forward to something higher than its letter—was completely overlooked and its moral precepts, intended to elevate men, were made rather the instruments of contradicting and debasing their ideas of morality. While it was the aim of Jesus to call men to the Law of God itself, as the supreme guide of life, the Pharisees multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to such an extent—upon the pretense of maintaining it intact—that the children of Israel were hemmed in and burdened on every side by instructions so numerous and trifling that the Law was almost, if not wholly, lost sight of. Jesus was referring to that fact when he said, Matthew 23:23, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." It was a leading aim of the Redeemer to teach men that true piety consisted not in forms, but in substance; not in outward observances, but in inward spirit; not in great rules of small men, but in great rules of life! The whole system of Pharisaic piety led to exactly the opposite conclusions. Under its influence, the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith," were undervalued and neglected. Religion lacked heart—"your heart is far from me," Jesus said to them on more than one occasion.

We come now to the question: Is it sometimes right to do wrong? Many consider the incident we are discussing as proof that it is sometimes right to break the law and allow love to replace law and veto truth. They say that Jesus broke the sabbath law for the superior good of self preservation. I think the situationist today must think back upon Jesus as a type of maverick on a freedom march who took twelve men and walked through town, over Galilian hills and through corn fields boastfully asserting his freedom to violate the sabbath law! That was not the case. This is not the picture drawn of him by the brush of inspiration when we see the whole scope of revealed truth. Certain "pop" artists of our day have succeeded in painting Jesus as a coky revolutionist, wearing a smurky smile and with an uplifted hand as if to say, "Away with rules and silly regulations! Away with law—eat, drink and be merry and let love shine on!" And many situationist have bought that idea of Christ Jesus. But it is an unreal and unfair picture of the Son of God who came to earth as God's representative and who was the "way, the truth and the life."

The narrow way we walk in is paved with truth. But the liberal situationist, instead of looking for the road paved with truth, looks for cracks in the pavement. Instead of admiring the beauty of

global truth, he is more concerned with pouring over the exceptions with its "ifs" and "buts". That's exactly what the Pharisees did. Jesus did not exclude the law that was laid down, he simply tried to pour life into it—to balance the total teachings of Scripture. They took their teaching to the extreme, while Jesus was trying to show them that there was a very beautiful balance to all Scriptural teaching. Where they squeezed the life out of law, Jesus was there to give life and meaning to it. We are not surprised, then, to hear Jesus say to them, "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

We cannot overemphasize the fact that in the law of God, there is a very beautiful unity and harmony of truth. Jesus, in suggesting that had they considered the balance both "sacrifice" and "mercy" they would not have leaped to the wrong conclusion, was showing them something they—and we—need to hear. The very fact that religious teachers today suggest that it is sometimes right to do wrong, shows quite clearly that they have not appreciated the rare and radiant beauty of the whole scope of our Lord's teachings.

The Pharisees, if you will pardon my crude analogy, were riding a one-sided seasaw whenever it came to the law of the sabbath. They were seated stubbornly and firmly on one end of the plank but the other end was empty. Jesus was patiently attempting to balance the seasaw. He was anxious to show them that mercy, as well as sacrifices, was important. He was not, though, teaching that one canceled out the other. The Prophet Hosea, whom Jesus quoted, had said it this way, (Hosea 6:6) "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Hosea was not teaching that sacrifices and burnt offerings were things to be trampled underfoot in order to grasp mercy and knowledge; but, he was showing rather, that when considered as a whole they both were necessary. Hosea denounced, not sacrifices as such, but the notion that a formal and dead adherence to a religious system is enough to please God. Jesus was quite in agreement with the Prophet. In referring to Hosea, Jesus brings to our attention a mode of speaking which the Hebrews often used in their teachings and writings where two things were used or listed in comparison, but not in violent opposition to each other. That type of comparison was done to teach a well-balanced truth. For example: In Matthew 10:37, Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Jesus, we must understand, is not suggesting here that one should forget family ties and trample underfoot parents, brothers and sisters in order to better cling to him. He's simply showing that He must come first in the priority of things and whenever that happens, even greater love and devotion can be shown family. You see, had Jesus meant to convey the idea that devotion to him canceled out love and obligation to one's family, he would have been in direct conflict with the whole scope of Biblical teaching concerning family relationships—such as, ". . . Honor thy father and mother," or "husbands, love your wives . . ."

Another example of the mode of Hebrew teaching on "comparisons" is found in John 6:27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life . . ." Two kinds of "labor" are named here but they do no violence to one another; one does not cancel out the other. Jesus was not discouraging work, for manual labor is honorable, according to the whole truth on the subject. Jesus was simply showing that to labor for spiritual food was the supreme thing to do. And when a man labors honestly for physical bread and for spiritual he has indeed found a beautiful balance in practical Christian truth!

In these and other examples, there is no violent rupture of truth, but a lovely blending and balance of truth. That is exactly what Jesus wanted the Pharisees to see and practice. It is easy to see then what the prophet meant and why Jesus pointed the Pharisees back to Hosea. He wished that they would know and understand the real meaning of total truth!

Ethics envelopes the idea of a standard for conduct and moral judgments. Discerning between right and wrong is the challenge with which ethics wrestles. We, of course, believe that God's word unwaveringly stands as absolute, objective truth. Paul said it so well in his letter to Timothy in II Timothy 3:16, 17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The holy scriptures, we believe, are to be used as our sole standard for knowing what is right and wrong. Hebrews 4:12 enforces clearly that fact: "For the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 5:14 supports the word of God as our source of spiritual strength by stating: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

In our day of modernism and liberalism we have a grave responsibility to cling to truth and divine wisdom found only in God's word. It is a sad day when men and women turn from God's word and follow after vain teachings of men who have set their minds to seek for hairline breaks and flaws to gain a following to sell a book. Paul's earnest prayer to the Philippians is still true today as it was when he wrote it so long ago, (Philippians 1:9, 10) "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ . . ." The full knowledge which these brethren in Paul's message needed to gain by daily experience was a better understanding of God's word. Paul spoke of our love abounding in "all judgments,"—words translated from a Greek word referring to "a sensitive moral perception; a quickness of ethical tact." These things can be ours, if we will be more sober and diligent in Bible study and prayer.

No, Jesus did not break the sabbath law and neither did his disciples break it. Yes, they did eat the kernels of corn, but in so doing they did not break the law of the sabbath; they only offended the Pharisees who had misinterpreted the law.

We turn our attention now to the second part of my lesson: Rahab, the harlot. I read from Hebrews 11:31, these words, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." Five points are made in this short verse which tell us much about the story of Rahab: What she did, she did by faith; she was an harlot; she lived in a city of disbelievers; she received and hid spies and she did not, because of her faith, perish when Jericho fell.

Rahab's story is found in Joshua 2: 1 - 6. (Please read those verses for a better understanding of this article.) It has been my observation while studying Rahab's story, that many people have missed the real meaning of her story—which is a story of sincere faith—because they become sidetracked by the term "harlot" and by the "lie" involved in regards to the spies. Many have tried to do away with the fact that she was an harlot. They try to make the word "harlot" mean "inkeeper" or "a seller of food," rather than a woman who ran a house of ill-repute. In Joshua 2:1, the record is clear that the two spies went to Rahab's house which is called "an harlot's house". It is equally clear that they "lodged" there. It is quite reasonable to believe that the house of Rahab was an excellent place for Joshua's men to go into while on a spy mission. There is no reason, though, to believe that they were wild, young men, in town that night to have a good time; no reason to believe that Joshua's men went to the harlot's house for purposes pertaining to her profession. I highly suspect that in the execution of His purposes, God used Rahab to play a part in the fulfillment of His divine plan; just as He had used other people of no reputation to accomplish His will. But someone says, "But why did He direct them, if He did, to the harlot's house?" Well, keeping in mind their spy mission, what better place to go? Would it not seem reasonable to think that at such a place of lodging and entertainment there would be questionable characters present with loose tongues, after one too many drinks, who might unwittingly divulge important information that a military leader, like Joshua, might like to know; Yet, many cannot appreciate the fact that such a woman as suggested here in Joshua, chapter two, could be saved. But did not Jesus Himself say to the elders and chief priests that "harlots would go into the kingdom of God" before them? (Matthew 21:31) Rahab, remember, was saved—not because she was an harlot—she was saved because of her genuine faith in God.

The second thing that hinders many in really appreciating the story of Rahab, is the "lie" she

told the king's soldiers. In Joshua 2:5, it is very clear that she lied to the soldiers. When asked the whereabouts of the spies, she said, "Whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them." In the language of the cowboy of the old west, she simply said, "They went that-a-way!" And the very next verse says: "But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them." I hear some saying that Rahab did not lie---she simply told a non-truth. I believe she lied because her motive was to deceive the soldiers into thinking the men were riding away from the city when all the time she actually had them hid upstairs. Commentaries generally agree she told a lie. But she is not listed with the greats of the Bible in Hebrews, chapter 11, because she lied, but because of her great faith in Israel's God. God did not save Rahab because she lied: He saved her in spite of her lie.

It is worthy to note, I think, what James said about Rahab. James 2:25--"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" It appears that James, instead of attempting to justify her lie, is saying that God approved of her works because she was obedient to His will---and God never approved of one who is disobedient! She simply showed by her act of kindness toward the spies that her faith was genuine, that she truly believed in God. What she did for the spies---and for her loved ones---was her faith in action--and from a Christian point of view, that's how works are always accomplished by faith in action!

Inspiration, like it or not, chose to put Rahab's name right along side such great names as: Noah, Abraham, Sarah and Moses. Not only that, but Inspiration chose not to include her name without adding the term "harlot". But that's the way the Bible reads. And it is not my aim to get down to the chalkboard and cover it with round figures and prove to you that she was not an harlot and that she was not a liar---I believe she was both. The Bible, because it is God's word inspired, shows men and women as they are. But we, because we are human, desire to cover up or erase sin and pretend that it isn't there. The case of Rahab hiding the spies and lying about it should not, in my opinion, be drawn out of the Old Testament history as an example of a "necessary lie"; an example to be followed by Christians today. Is it ever right to lie? No! Let us look at what God's word says about it.

The Bible opens with a picture of the first pair in paradise, in the Garden of Eden, to whom God tells the simple truth, but Satan, the enemy, tells them a lie. And we know what that lie did in bringing about the ruin of mankind. The Bible closes with a picture of Paradise, into which are gathered the lovers and doers of truth, and from which is excluded "everyone that loveth and doeth a lie." (Revelations 22) "All liars are to have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8) In the Old Testament and in the New, God is represented as truth, to whom, by His very nature, the doing or the speaking of a lie is impossible. Satan on the other hand, is represented as a liar and as the father of lies. (John 8:44)

While the human servants of God, as represented in the Bible, are in many instances guilty of lying, their lies are clearly contrary to the great truthful nature of God. Since God cannot lie, (Titus 1:2) a lie is therefore always wrong and cannot have justification in His sight. The idea of the Bible record is that God is true, through every man a liar! (Romans 3:4)

Many claim that Rahab told "a necessary lie" because of her love for God; God, therefore, approved of the lie, because lying was the most loving thing to do in her peculiar situation. But the whole sweep of Bible teaching is opposed to lying all along the Bible narrative from Adam to Ananias and Sapphira! Paul admonished, Colossians 3:9, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds . . ." He further encouraged us to truthfulness in right living by stating, in Ephesians 4:24, 25, " . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every one (man) truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another." There is no place for a lie in Bible ethics, under the earlier dispensations or in our own Christian Age! And the man who searches God's holy word looking for an excuse or example to justify his lying, is a man who is concerned, not with the solid pavement of truth underneath his feet, but is rather concerned with finding potholes here and there.

I freely admit that the way God dealt with Rahab, the harlot, was a thing of rare and radiant beauty. I will admit that when He found her in the dark recesses of sin back there in the city of Jericho and lifted her up and forgave her and placed her in the New Testament's Hall of Fame—alongside the giants of faith—He did one of those rare miracles He liked to do so well. And I could not help but think, as I studied Rahab's case, about another rare miracle, of sorts, that God once did near Rahab's Jericho when His Son Jesus met Zaccuas at the sycamore tree and right there in the middle of the road—right before everybody's eyes—God, through Christ, allowed the camel to squeeze through the eye of the needle. For the divine record states that salvation came to a rich man's house that day!

Why did God pick Rahab for that great bouquet of beautiful flowers we see clustered together in Hebrews 11? For the same reason, I think, we pick that one beautiful wild flower that lifts its head above the muddy marshland when we're walking in the woods and fields. We pick the wild flower because we're all poets sometimes and believe that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever". Why did God pick Rahab, the harlot, out of the mire of sin deep in the heart of Jericho? Because He saw in her great faith and to His eyes, great faith is a thing of beauty and joy forever. Thus, the name Rahab is forever etched in the golden record known as Hebrews 11! And the beauty of that fact is surpassed only by the beauty of the fact that your own name and mine are forever etched in the Lamb's Book of Life! Because we all, like her, are sinners—redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; which makes us want to leap for joy and shout with the apostle Paul, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift."

The third and final part of my lesson is the story of Lot. Naturally his life's story would be noted in studying the question: "Is It Sometimes Right To Do Wrong?" Let us take a close look at Lot and his family.

Many broad events and many people were involved in the slow process of striking root in the promised land. Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was one of the individuals who played a role in that process but his story is merely a subplot in the history of father Abraham. It is hard, though, to think of Abraham without thinking of Lot. By taking advantage of his uncle's kindness and staking out his fertile plain for himself, Lot became an unwitting accessory to Sodom's guilt. His story, in part, is found in Genesis, chapter 19. I hope you will take the time to read that chapter.

Lot left his footprints in the sands of ancient history, then quietly disappeared from view, only to reappear—as Rahab did—in the New Testament record. Many men who write commentaries, I've discovered, are disappointed that Lot was reserved a place in Peter's writings. They wished his name forever silenced after the shameful thing he did in the cave with his two daughters. Many write him off as a kind of fickle country boy who left his uncle's righteous influence for the wild city life where he got himself and his family in trouble; therefore, is not worthy to be mentioned in the light of New Testament teachings. But, God was not about to let Lot's record be swallowed up by the "goings and comings" of Old Testament events. Thus, He added a footnote to Lot's strange life, that we might better understand the man. The footnote we examine in II Peter 2:6, 7, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful acts;)"

We tend to shutter at the thought that Lot could merit such descriptive terms as "just" and "righteous" in light of his conduct we find recorded in Genesis 19. How can we make any sense of it all? First, we look again at verse 8 of chapter 19. To the men of Sodom, Lot said, "Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as it is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof."

The key to understanding how Lot could offer his daughters to the men of Sodom, is found in the latter part of this verse—"Only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof." Lot, true to the unwritten code of the East, was willing to stop at nothing in his effort to protect his guests. To shield and protect his visitors, to him, was more important than protecting his own family. But the more he pleaded with the wicked men--Whose sin had become epidemic--the more they acted like a pack of hungry wolves. He tried to reason with them; he pleaded the laws of hospitality but he might as well offered reason to a herd of roaring lions. They were governed by lust and passion and only a blinding flash of light from heaven stopped them.

Nothing can be said to excuse this good man--except that he was human--and being human meant that the hurry of spirit and confusion of mind at such a sudden turn of events, not knowing what to say or do to prevent the base design of the evil-minded men, made him act out of fear rather than from sound judgment and principle.

The second point of difficulty in Lot's story is found in Genesis 19:36, "Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father." The great sin that Lot and his daughters were guilty of, when they were in the desolate mountain, is a sad story. One man was led to say, "The last part of Genesis 19 is so vile that it is seldom used in children's Bible lessons." Yes, it is sad. But let us take a closer look at the peculiar situation Lot's daughters found themselves in after the destruction of Sodom. These young women, now living alone with their father in a mountain cave, deserted by their fiances (who now lay buried in the ruins of Sodom) were no doubt thinking they would never find husbands. Thinking that all hope of children to protect them and their father after they'd grown old was gone--unless they did something. Thus, they devised a plan, a scheme. They got their unsuspecting father drunk and conceived sons by him.

In this verse, we see an example of the problem found over and over in the Old Testament--the problem of securing children to care for adults in old age--to care for their graves and to carry on family traditions. No doubt, that day in the cave, the daughters of Lot were thinking about who would care for them when they were old. And, for whatever it may be worth, let us remember, that as far as we know, Lot had no accurate knowledge of what took place those two nights in the cave. He was not, therefore, drawn away by his own "lust and enticed". Deceived by the strong wine? Yes. But not, in my judgment, guilty of the crime of lust. I don't think Lot had sensual, evil motives in the matter.

History, in many ways, shows Lot to be a weak man but he also had a general character of uprightness and sincerity; history does not overlook those things either. Thus, the New Testament calls Lot "righteous" and "just". We thank God for Lot's righteous spirit. His righteous soul was "vexed"--meaning that his heart was pained to see such wickedness that went on around him day by day. The word "vexed" in the original language suggests that there was something active, on the part of Lot, which produced such agitation and distress within his spirit. He found the awful crimes around him hard to bear, for it was a constant, perpetual burden to be borne. He saw and heard their filthy conversation, their unlawful deeds--day in and day out--and it all became a strong mental exercise that weighed heavy upon his weary heart. In the language of modern day psychobabble, he was so paranoid by what he saw and heard, that by the time the angels reached Sodom, he was on the very verge of a physical and nervous breakdown.

But Lot was willing to stay in Sodom and endure that kind of vexation of spirit, so that he might, in some way, prevent their evil conduct or, at least hold back the time of God's fire of vengeance, which he knew would soon fall upon their heads if they failed to repent.

In the three segments of this lesson: the corn field meeting between Jesus and his disciples and the Pharisees; Rahab and Joshua's spies and righteous Lot, all raise the question--"Is it sometimes right to do wrong?" The answer to that question is, of course, NO! It is never right to do wrong. Sin is sin and most Christians know when they sin and know that unless they repent of sin, they will be lost.

Rahab's lie was a sin; her bad reputation involved things that were sinful and are sinful today when others do them. And we must remember that God did not, for one moment, overlook or condone her sins. What Lot did was unwise and we know, in light of total scripture, that his daughters greatly sinned. God did not wink at their sins, though. Rahab and Lot were sinners—no sane person will doubt that—but their sinning was in no way mentioned in God's word to give us an example for sinning! Instead, their stories are given to show us their love for God and their genuine faith in the Living God. And if men must go back into the Old Testament to try to find examples to justify their own sins, they had better take time to see the real message in the lives of Rahab and Lot—the message of devoted love and deep faith.

PREDESTINATION

By Billy Orten

The purpose of this discourse is to present what the great apostle Paul taught on the subject of predestination, foreordination, and election. Three questions have been presented to me for discussion.

"Does God foreknow and predestinate individuals from all eternity?" Romans 8:28 -30.

"Does God arbitrarily show mercy to some individuals?" Romans 9:10 - 16.

"Does God's sovereignty overrule man's free will?" Romans 9:20 - 23.

Before beginning a study of these questions and the scriptures from which they are taken, let us establish a base from which to study.

MAN IS A FREE MORAL BEING

Man not only has the ability, but also the responsibility, of choosing the kind of life he wants to live. I am not responsible for that over which I have no control. But I am responsible, and will give an account, for that which is under my control. This is clearly taught in Romans 14:12, Galatians 6:5, I Peter 4:5, and other verses.

Moses told the Israelites they could choose between life and good or death and evil in Deuteronomy 30:15 - 20. Also in Deuteronomy 11:26 - 28, they were warned of a blessing or a curse that would be the result of their own choice. They had a choice in their destiny as a nation. We have a choice in our destiny. Every responsible person is living the life of their own choosing, and is thereby deciding their own destiny. The following scriptures are offered as proof: Matthew 11:28, John 6:37, John 5:40, John 1:11, II Peter 3:9, Acts 10:34, 35, Mark 16:15, 16.

ROMANS 8:28 - 30

The key word in understanding these verses is the word "purpose" in verse 28.

The gospel reveals God's purpose to redeem, justify and glorify those who accept Jesus Christ. This purpose was in the mind of God before man fell in the Garden of Eden. God foreknew man's fall and he also foreknew his plan to redeem man. God set the entire plan before his mind so as to distinctly see each step. This fact is well established by the following scriptures: I Corinthians 2:7, 8; Colossians 1:26; Ephesians 3:9; and 1:7 - 9.

Note the five steps in God's plan as presented by the Apostle in Romans 8:28 -30.

1.) God's foreknowledge: "For whom he did foreknow—". God knew in advance all that would happen. He knew man would sin and he knew the plan he would give to redeem man.

Some argue that because God knows something will happen, this makes him the cause of it happening and leaves no room for human will. They argue "If God knows I am going to be lost, than I have no choice in the matter."

Such a supposition is incorrect. I may say of one of my children, "I know what he will do in a certain situation." I am not the cause of his actions. I may even wish he would do otherwise, but because of my knowledge of him, I can say I know what he will do." There is an example of this in Genesis 18 - 19. Abraham exercises his own will in this case, but God says, "I know what he will do."

2.) God predestinates: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate. The predestination of God refers to the fact that God predetermined the class of people who would be saved.

God willed that all men should accept his son, Jesus Christ. (I Peter 3:9, Titus 2:11, I Timothy 2:3, 4). But all men will not come to Christ (John 5:40) Therefore, God predestined that those who do come would be justified and glorified.

3.) God calls: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, Them he has also called--". God calls men by the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation.

Twice Paul tells the Thessalonians they were called by the gospel. (I Thessalonians 2:13, 14 and II Thessalonians 2:13, 14) It is called a "Holy Calling" in II Timothy 1:8, 9, a "Heavenly Calling" in Hebrews 3:1, a "High Calling" in Philippians 3:14, "His Calling" in Ephesians 1:18, and "Your Calling" in II Peter 1:10. The Greek word for calling in Romans 8:30 is KLESIS. W. E. Vine says the idea of an invitation is implied. An invitation can be accepted or rejected. Man has the choice of accepting or rejecting the calling of God.

4.) God Justifies:: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them He also justified--". This means God pardons the sins of those who accept Jesus Christ and he makes them fit for an abode in heaven.

5.) God glorifies: " --and whom he justified, them He also glorified." The final step in God's purpose for man is his glorification. He has honored and dignified us now with the highest blessings and privileges as His Children. However, the word has a specific reference to the Christian being transformed into the image and likeness of Christ. Read carefully I John 3:2 and Philippians 3:21.

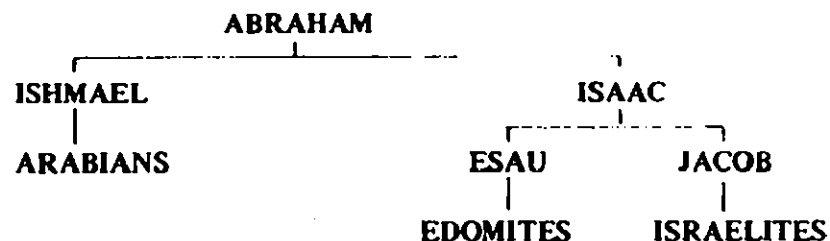
Question No. 1. Does God foreknow and predestinate individuals from all eternity? No, God wants all men everywhere to be saved, but he does predestinate that all who come to Jesus will be saved. The whole of Romans 8 is conditional upon man's obedience.

Question No. 2. Does God arbitrarily show mercy to individuals?

ROMANS 9:13 - 16

The grand theme of the apostle in this chapter is the righteousness of God in calling the Gentiles into the kingdom of God. The descendants of Abraham thru Issac and Jacob had been the chosen of God for centuries. They did not want to accept the fact that Gentiles were accepted into the kingdom of God on the same terms as the Jews.

The Jews are not excluded from the kingdom of God. The only injury to the Jews is the destruction of their foolish and sinful pride in thinking they were the only people God would ever accept. Romans 9:10 - 13 places a restriction on who were the children of Abraham. Note the drawing below:



Abraham had many other descendants other than the Israelites, yet the Israelites were the only ones favored by God. First, there were the descendants of Ishmael, the Ishmaelites. The Apostle said, "It is written, that Abraham had two sons--" (Galatians 4:22). Of course, the Jews rejected the descendants of Ishmael on the grounds that he was not a legal son, but the son of the bondwoman, Hagar. The Apostle introduces Jacob and Esau in Romans 9:10 - 13 to show the Jews that God had not favored them as a people because of natural descent alone. The descendants of Esau, the Edomites, were

just as much the seed of Abraham as the Israelites were. Yet the Israelites were favored and the Edomites were slighted. This is the meaning of Romans 10:13, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated." The word "hate" here means to pass over or slight. (See Genesis 29:30, 31) But why did God respect Jacob and slight Esau? Two things need to be noted here: First, God was not talking about Jacob and Esau when he made the statement. Rather, he was referring to the two nations these boys would be the progenitors of. Note carefully the reading of Genesis 25:23, "And the Lord said to Rebecca, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels—." The two nations in the womb of Rebecca were the Israelites who sprang from Jacob and the Edomites who sprang from Esau. God favored the Israelites and slighted the Edomites.

Next, was the favoring of Jacob and the slighting of Esau arbitrarily on the part of God? The answer is an emphatic "NO". God purposed that his son would be born of the blood line of Abraham. He had to choose which one of these boys and their descendants would be the blood line of Jesus. In view of God's foreknowledge of the boys and the nations which sprang from them, he had to choose Jacob. God knew that Esau and the Edomites would not be the kind of people to fulfill his purpose. Esau was a wicked and profane person (Hebrews 2:16, 17) and the Edomites were so sinful they received the denunciation of the prophets. (Malachi 1:4, Jeremiah 49:17-20, Ezekiel 25:14). God favored Jacob and slighted Esau on the basis of the character of the man and the nations which came from them.

But take a closer look at these passages: They strike the death blow to the Calvinistic view of predestination. Jacob and Esau were twins, but Esau was the first born, therefore he had the birthright. The birthright bestowed several blessings on a person. In the family of Abraham the firstborn was to be the one through whom the Messiah would come. Esau had the birthright but he lost it. Jacob did not have it, and he gained it. Esau sold his birthright (Genesis 25:27-34) for a dish of pottage, because he was a profane man. A profane person is one who cares nothing for spiritual things. Genesis 25:34 says, "Esau did eat and drink and rose up and went his way: thus did Esau despise his birthright." Of his own free will Esau sold his birthright and it passed to Jacob.

ROMANS 9:15

What about Romans 9:15 which says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." This is a quotation from Exodus 33:19 where Moses asked God to let him see his face. God answered Moses by saying, "Your request is not proper for no man can see my face and live, but I can show mercy (a favor) to whomsoever I want to, so I will pass by and let you see my hinderparts." God has the right to deny our request, but he can show mercy when he wants to. But let God tell us to whom he wants to be merciful. Read carefully the following passages: Exodus 20:5, 6, Nehemiah 1:5, Deuteronomy 7:9, Daniel 9:4. In each of these references it is said that God shows mercy to those that love him and keep his commandments. This answers our question, "Does God show mercy arbitrarily?" God's mercy is conditional upon our obedience to His will.

What about pharaoh? If God hardened Pharaoh's heart to cause him to rebel, does that not make God responsible for what he did? Most careful attention should be to what Paul did not say in Romans 9:17, 18. Paul did not say God made Pharaoh rebel against God. Pharaoh rebelled against God of his own free will. The student of this topic is urged to read the fifth thru the twelfth chapters of Exodus. When Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh with the message from God, "Let my people go," Pharaoh was free to choose to obey God or rebel against him. What was Pharaoh's choice? Look at Exodus 5:2. Pharaoh answered Moses, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Pharaoh hardened his own heart against the Lord.

When Moses began bringing the plagues on the Egyptians, Pharaoh would call in Moses and Aaron and promise to let the people go, but as soon as the plague was lifted, he would harden his heart. This happened no less than seven times. Seven times Pharaoh trifled with God, agreeing to let the people go and then breaking his promise as soon as the plague was lifted. Please read: Exodus 7: 82

19-25, 8:15, 8:19, 8:21 - 22, 8:28 - 32, 9:7, 9:34 -35.

After Pharaoh had hardened his own heart to rebell against God seven times, the record says in Exodus 10:20 and 10:27, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." God gives the reason in Exodus 11:9, "—that my wonders may be multiplied in all the land of Egypt. God simply took a wicked man that had repeatedly rebelled against him and used him to show his power in all the land of Egypt. There is nothing in any of these verses that negates the freedom of choice God has given man. The mercy of God is conditional upon man's obedience.

DOES GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVERRULE MAN'S FREE WILL?

The third question I have been asked to study deals with Romans 9:20 - 23. "Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" The lump here represents the whole of humanity, Jews and Gentiles. Notice that Paul did not say there are two lumps of humanity, an elected lump and a depraved lump. But that is what the Jews wanted. They were saying "We are the honorable vessels, honorable and dishonorable, made from the same lump of humanity is extended and explained by Paul in II Timothy 2:19 - 21. (Please read these passages before going further) Notice Paul says, "In any great house, there are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor—". The great house refers to the whole system of Christianity and the different kinds of vessels are the different kinds of people.

But what makes one a vessel to honor and another a vessel to dishonor? Is that wholly a work of predestination as some say? Paul answers that in II Timothy 2:21, "If a man shall purge himself of these, he shall be made a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." Note Paul's statement, "If a man shall purge himself of these, he shall be made a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use." Note Paul's statement, "If a man shall purge himself—". Clearly the responsibility is on man. Anyone who elects to can be a vessel unto honor.

Paul leads up his grand final argument in Romans 9:22 - 33. God had shown almost endless patience with the repeated rebellions, departures, and idolatries of the Israelites. They had murmured against Moses, fainted in the wilderness, gone whoring after false gods, stoned the prophets, despised his mercies, and finally killed his only begotten son. Yet, God had stuck with them as his chosen people until Jesus come because of his promise. But now that Jesus had come and they had rejected him, there was no justification whatsoever for God to favor them as a people. Therefore, God had brought in the Gentiles as heirs of salvation on the same terms as Jews, the acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God.

Yes, God is sovereign and his will stands, but he has never done anything that takes from man the freedom to choose his own destiny, Acts 10:34, 35, II Peter 3:9, Deuteronomy 11:26 - 28.