



1988
Preachers'
Study Notes

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Practical Advice For Bible Study In The Home

by Allen Bailey

The Bible is the most wonderful book ever written. It is full of spiritual truths and interesting stories, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. These truths have been told over and over again for thousands of years, yet they are new and fresh and fascinating to every generation. They need to be retold today, so the boys and girls of the twentieth century may see their beauty and catch their inspiration.

It is one of the strangest paradoxes of our time that just when the Bible is enjoying its widest circulation, millions of copies being sold every year, fewer people than ever seem to be reading it. In countless homes family worship and the reading of the Bible have been neglected, and parents themselves seldom open its pages. A whole generation is growing up with little or no knowledge of this wonderful book.

Most modern children have heard little or nothing about the great Bible characters of ancient times, so familiar to their grandparents. Their heroes are not Daniel, Paul, and Peter; but He-Man, Hulk Hogan, Star Commander, and the Incredible Hulk. They have never heard of the love of Jesus, and thus have been robbed of the greatest treasure their minds could possess. No wonder there is such juvenile delinquency, vandalism, and lawlessness.

In my opinion no greater contribution could be made to the welfare of society and peace of the world than to lead children to love the Bible, enjoy its stories, appreciate its teachings, adopt its standards, and find its God.

The over-all purpose of this speech is to provide what might be called "A Revival." A revival for parents to begin regularly teaching their kids in the home about God's love for man; a revival to reestablish the importance of Bible study in the home. Revival to impress upon your children the vast difference between right and wrong, God and the devil, heaven and hell, benefits of serving God and consequences of serving the devil. Public opinion polls report that the average person's knowledge of the Bible is extremely limited. Few of those questioned could name a dozen of its leading characters. Fewer still could list the books of the Bible. Many had only a vague concept of its origin or purpose and were utterly confused about its teachings. They could not distinguish the books of the Old Testament from those of New and were at a complete loss to find a familiar text.

How is it with you and your Bible? Do you read it? Do you enjoy it? Some people start out in earnest to read the Bible, only to give up after

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glancing at the first few chapters. Unable to find anything of gripping interest, or bored by some unfamiliar phraseology, they set it aside as if it were completely beyond their understanding.

There must be millions of Bibles lying around in Christian homes, unopened and unread, save possibly on special occasions such as weddings and funerals.

Yet, down through the centuries the Bible has proved itself to be a book of high spiritual potency. Many of the finest men and women known to history have drawn their inner strength from its pages. Time and again it has changed lives, enriched the mind, enlarged the vision, and transformed desires. Great preachers have found it to be a treasure house of truth, while statesmen, teachers, and writers have never ceased to mine its literary riches.

Here, then, is the strange paradox. We have a book that everybody is willing to admit is the best, the greatest, and the most wonderful book ever written; a book that has lasted longer than any other, a book that has been circulated more widely than any other, a book that has done more good than any other; and yet one of the least read of all books published today.

What can be done to change this situation? How can people who possess this book be lured, enticed, persuaded, to open and read it, to discover for themselves the precious blessings stored within its pages. The purpose of this speech is to attempt to answer these questions.

Study With Your Own Children At Home

We are so concerned over cooking food for our children, making sure they are properly clothed, making sure the house is in good shape, maintaining good school grades, and the list goes on and on. These things are certainly necessary and obviously should not be neglected; but when these type of things consume all our time and energy, we have truly lost our sense of values. Material things will pass. They may be taken from us in an instant on this earth. We will leave them when we enter into eternity. The only thing we can take with us is another soul, whether its the soul of a child, a husband, a relative, or a neighbor. How little time we spend on the one thing that is truly lasting!

The story of Eunice and Lois is an example of how effective home Bible study can be. In spite of an unbelieving father, young Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother.

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Acts 16:1 "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek."

2 Timothy 1:5 "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

Every time we read God's instructions to the Israelite parents, we should hang our heads in shame. Please consider Moses' admonition to the people:

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Please notice as an added reminder, they wore frontlets containing God's Word on their foreheads and wrote the commands on their doorpost and gates. Deuteronomy 6:8-9 reads, "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."

Instead of talking of the Word of the Lord when we "sit in our house" we often watch television. We seldom "walk by the way," but how many times do we teach our children as we are driving to school, store, or on a trip. Frequently, when night time comes, and we "lie down" we are so tired from all our other activities, that we skip the time we meant to study the Bible together. When we "rise up," kids are off to school and dads off to work with no time for studying the Bible in the home.

Yes, we know the command! We can quote Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go." Our intentions are good, but we cannot seem to get around to studying the Bible in the home. The responsibility of this task is laid squarely on the shoulders of the father. God has given man the position of head in the family. He needs the support and cooperation from the wife as well, but the responsibility starts at the top and works its way down.

Christian friends, when we are overflowing with zeal to study God's Word ourselves, teaching our children becomes second nature. Just like the Israelites were commanded in Exodus 13:8 to explain their observance of the Passover to their children.

Yes, it will take a great amount of effort to succeed at reworking your daily activities. But, if your priorities are properly laid out, then it will not be a problem for you to decide now, this very moment, that teaching your

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children God's Word is one of the most important things that you can do. If you do not know the Bible, then learn it, so you can teach your children. It may mean getting less sleep at night, not volunteering to work overtime on the job, or watching less television; but the rewards astronomically outweigh such sacrifices.

General References to Religion in the Home

1. Joshua establishes religion in his home (Jos. 24:15).
2. Job sanctifies his children (Job 1:5).
3. The healed demon was told to tell others about God (Luke 8:39).
4. Mary sits at Jesus' feet in her home (Lk. 10:39).
5. Andrew leads his brother to Christ (Jn. 1:41).
6. The entire family of the nobleman accepts Christ (Jn. 4:53).
7. Lydia and her household was converted (Acts 16:15).
8. The Phillipian Jailer and his family are baptized (Acts 16:33).
9. Home is the best place to show piety (1 Tim. 5:4).

Devout Fathers In the Bible

1. Abraham exerts a spiritual influence upon his family (Gen. 18:19).
2. Isaac blesses his son (Gen. 27:26-27).
3. Jacob commands his household to put away idols (Gen. 35:2).
4. Manoah prays for instruction in regard to his coming child (Jgs. 13:8).
5. David gives godly advice to his son Solomon (1 Kgs. 2:1-4).
6. Zechariah was the godly father of John the Baptist (Lk. 1:67).
7. Cornelius was the head of a religious household (Acts 10:2).

Devout Mothers In the Bible

1. Sarah (Gen. 21:6) The mother of Isaac.
2. Hannah (1 Sam. 1:22) The mother of Samuel.
3. Elizabeth (Lk. 1:41) John the Baptist's mother.
4. Mary (Lk. 1:46) The mother of Jesus.
5. Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5) The mother of Timothy.

Parental Prayers

1. Abraham for Ishmael (Gen. 17:18).
2. David for the life of his child (2 Sam. 12:16).
3. David for Solomon (1 Chron. 29:19).
4. Job for his children (Job 1:5).
5. The father for the demoniac (Mt. 17:15).

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Examples of Good Children

1. Isaac "Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here." Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Gen. 22:7).
2. Samuel "And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men" (1 Sam. 2:26).
3. John the Baptist "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Lk. 1:80).
4. The Boy Jesus "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Lk. 2:49).
5. Timothy "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Tim. 1:5). "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

Practical Advice For Home Bible Study

1. Ask Your Children Questions Based on the Bible.

These questions should be centered around major events, characters, or perhaps the life of Jesus Christ. Ask them: "What is the plan of salvation?" or "What are the items of worship?" If your children are old enough to know these answers and they do not know them, you are behind and have some great catching up to do!

Many times we were riding down the road and mother or daddy would start asking us Bible related questions. Questions and answers spark a great amount of interest in children. Recently, we listed to several children, ages five to nine, asking each other Bible questions. This can be really fun, educational, and rewarding to a family. Following are different ways we studied and discussed the Bible as a family.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| —Who was the wisest man who ever lived? | Solomon |
| —Who was the strongest man who ever lived? | Samson |
| —Who was the oldest man who ever lived? | Methuselah |
| —What is the shortest verse in the Bible? | John 11:35 |
| —What is the shortest chapter in the Bible? | Psalms 117 |
| —What is the longest chapter in the Bible? | Psalms 119 |
| —Who can name the 12 apostles? (5 J's: James, James, Judas, Judas, John;
2 P's: Peter, Phillip; 3 that rhyme: Andrew, Matthew, Bartholomew; S: | |

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Simon; and T: Thomas)

2. Read Bible Stories to Them.

- Mrs. Lee's Stories About Jesus (questions provided on each story)
- Mrs. Lee's Stories About God's First People (Questions provided)
- The Bible Story (Maxwell) (Excellent material, Beautiful pictures)

Note. These books by Maxwell are put out by Seventh Day Adventist, but other than mentioning the Sabbath Day frequently, no other doctrines are taught that I have read thus far! I have not read all ten books however. It makes mention of Seventh Day in this sense: The Sabbath was given to people in olden days and we should keep it to! Proper explanation is in order, but as a whole this is a good set of books!

- Read Bible stories directly from the Bible and discuss them together.

3. Discuss Famous Bible Characters

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| —Adam and Eve | —Phoebe |
| —Cain and Able | —Priscilla and Acquilla |
| —Noah and the Ark | —Annianias and Sapphira |
| —David and Goliath | —Stephen |
| —Daniel and the Lion's Den | —Dorcas |
| —Jonah and the Whale | —Peter (Good and bad points) |
| —Moses | —Judas Iscariot |
| —Elijah | —John the Baptist |

4. Cases of Conversion

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| —Jews, Acts 2 | —Cornelius, Acts 10 |
| —Samaria, Acts 8:4-13 | —Lydia, Acts 16:13-15 |
| —Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:26-39 | —Phillipian Jailor, Acts 16:23-34 |
| —Paul (Saul), Acts 9:1-20, 22:1-16 | —Corinthians, Acts 18:8 |

5. Cases of Non-Conversion

- Felix, Acts 24
- King Agrippa, Acts 26

6. Religious Journals

- The Christian Expositor
- The Old Path Advocate

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- Church Bulletins
- Notes from Preachers Studies
- Old Paths Pulpit I, II

7. Tracts. Hundreds of good tracts are available.

8. Bible Correspondence Courses

These are normally well organized, scriptural references provided, a text to read and questions to answer! This is an excellent way to study the Bible as a family and easy to organize while following the prescribed course!

9. Study Aids, Reference Material, Bible Helps

- Concordance
- Bible Dictionary
- Reference Bible (Thompson Chain Reference, Nave's Topical)
- Commentaries (Gospel Advocate is a good basic commentary)

10. Attend Special Meetings

Nearly every month of the year there is a special meeting going on somewhere! While you probably couldn't go to all of them you could arrange to take the family and go to some of them. Going to these meetings are very spiritual uplifting, helpful in getting acquainted with other Christians. Yes, there is some expense involved. I remember that we use to save dimes from one Sulphur Meeting to the next, and that is how we went to the meeting. It was a real treat to save the dimes, roll them up, and pack our bags (however due to inflation, I would suggest that you save quarters).

February	Wichita Kansas Young People Meeting
March	Ada Oklahoma Young People Meeting
April	Tulsa Oklahoma Young People Meeting
May	Memorial Day Meeting
June	Fourth of July Meetings Begin
July	Sulphur and Lebanon
September	Labor Day Meeting
November	Thanksgiving Meeting
December	Preacher's Study and New Year Meeting

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12. Individual Bible Reading Program

Establish a good Bible Reading Program to fit your daily schedule. Read four chapters daily to complete the Bible in less than a year. Read three chapters daily and five on Sunday with the same result. For a New Testament monthly schedule, read one book a day. There are only ten books of the New Testament with ten or more chapters. So, there will be only ten days of extensive reading per month; the other seventeen books can be easily read in a few minutes! Just establish for yourself some type of schedule and stick with it!

13. Different Techniques for Family Bible Study

Read a chapter every morning at breakfast before breaking up for daily routine, and also in the evening have family prayer.

Practice question and answers after sermons while riding home from church.

Purchased Bible Workbooks for family to use and study more extensively.

Have your children read one chapter a day, while listening to the Bible on cassette tape.

Read a Bible story, sing a couple of songs, and let each family member lead a prayer.

Conclusion

Please re-evaluate your daily routine. Stop and see what need to do be done in order to have quality time spent with your children. Your children will not be small forever. They are willing to be taught now, so do not lose this golden opportunity. God bless you in all your efforts to instill in your children the love of God and the desire to learn more about Him. 905 Grauwylar Rd., Irving, TX 75061

"Swear Not At All"

by George Battey

³³Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: ³⁴But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: ³⁵Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. ³⁷But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil (Mt. 5:33-37).

When Jesus addressed the subject of swearing, He was addressing a very ancient and abused practice.

The Custom of Swearing

The first Biblical reference to the practice of swearing seems to be:

Genesis 14:22-23 ²²Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, . . . ²³that I will not take any thing that is thine."

1. Lifting the hand signified that one was appealing to the God of heaven as his witness. Thus, to "lift the hand" meant to swear (cf. Deut. 32:40). The custom of placing a hand on the Bible arose to indicate an appeal to the God of the Bible and that the Bible penalty for perjury found was accepted as punishment for violation of the oath.
2. Sometimes an oath was ratified by dividing a victim and either passing between the pieces, or distributing them (Gen. 15:10, 17; Jud. 19:29). This symbolized the seriousness of the occasion and the punishment that would befall the perjurer.
3. Sometimes seven animals were sacrificed (symbolic of a sevenfold punishment that would befall the perjurer). The Hebrew verb "to swear" literally means "to seven oneself" (cf. Gen. 21:28-31).
4. Sometimes the hand was placed under the thigh (Gen. 24:2-3). Scholars are divided over the significance of this act.
 - a. Some say this is a reference to the mark of circumcision (Adam Clarke).

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- b. Some think that because the thigh is the largest muscle of the body, placing the hand under the thigh signified that all one's strength would be used in fulfilling the oath.

Text (1)

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths (Mt. 5:33).

forswear (epiorkeo)—"to swear falsely, break an oath, commit perjury."

(This is the only place in New Testament this word occurs, but a noun cognate (epiorkos) is found in 1 Timothy 1:10 and means, "a false swearer, a perjurer"—Thayer)

Although Jesus is not quoting verbatim from Old Testament Scriptures, He is presenting a summary of what Moses' Law taught.

Leviticus 19:12 "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord."

To fully appreciate what Jesus teaches we must first become familiar with what the Old Testament taught about swearing.

Definitions

An entire chapter (Num. 30) is devoted to the subject of vowing, swearing and oaths.

Numbers 30:2 "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."

Four important words are found in this verse: one "vows a vow," but "swears an oath."

1. **Swear**—"to make a solemn declaration or promise . . . to assert under oath . . . to affirm earnestly and with great conviction" (**American Heritage**).
2. **Oath**—"a formal promise to fulfill a pledge, often calling upon God as witness" (ibid.).

An oath invokes God's vengeance upon a person if what he says is false.

The three steps of affirming truth among the Hebrews is seen in the case of Peter's denial of Jesus (Mt. 26).

1st—Peter simply affirmed that he did not know Jesus (v. 70).

2nd—He denied with an oath that he did not know Jesus (v. 72).

3rd—He began to curse and to swear (v. 74).

When Peter “curled” he was progressing to the third stage of affirming his word. He put himself under a curse if what he spoke was untrue. Peter was following a perfectly legitimate procedure, but unfortunately everything he swore to was false.

3. Yow—(verb): “to promise or pledge solemnly” (ibid.)

4. Yow—(noun): “an earnest promise or pledge that binds one to a specified act or mode of behavior” (ibid.).

Vows and Oaths

The verbs “swear” and “vow” with their corresponding nouns tend to be synonymous. In function they are all basically equivalent, but there are technical differences:

1. One vows to God, but swears to men.
2. A vow is voluntary (Eccl. 5:4-5) whereas an oath is obligatory.
3. A vow is private: between a man and God. But an oath is public and the state has an interest in the affair.
4. A vow is positive: one is invoking a blessing upon himself from God if he performs a certain action. An oath is negative: one is invoking a curse to befall him if he does not perform a certain action.
5. The vow is promissory: that is, a man promises to perform a certain action. The oath is affirmatory: that is, it is used to affirm truth rather than to guarantee action.
6. Vows look toward the future, whereas oaths look toward the past (verifying a past event).

Genesis 28:20-21 ²⁰“Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me . . . ²¹then shall the Lord be my God.”

Although these “rules” may not always prove true, they seem to be the “rule of thumb.”

Summary

For all practical purposes swearing and vowing are equivalent.

Swearing

(1) They are coupled together in Numbers 30. (2) The same rules govern both. (3) The same blessings are rewarded if the oath, or vow is kept. (4) The same penalties apply if the oath or vow is violated.

For all practical purposes there is no difference between swearing and vowing—they stand or fall together. If one is wrong, both are wrong.

In fact, the **Universal Jewish Encyclopedia** could not define a vow without using the word oath to do it: "an obligation which one voluntarily assumes by means of an oath and which concerns the person of the one taking it (vol. 10, p. 434)." These points will be important a little later in our study.

The Various Formulas

When an oath was taken it was to be in God's name and none other.

Deuteronomy 6:13 "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name."

Common formulas included:

- "As the Lord liveth" (Jgs. 8:19)
- "The Lord watch between me and thee" (Gen. 31:50)
- "The Lord do so to me" (1 Sam. 3:17)
- "Let the Lord even require it" (1 Sam. 20:16)
- "God is my witness" (Rom. 1:9)

Note: All of these formulas appeal to God.

Implications of Swearing

By swearing in God's name the worshiper implied several things:

1. God's existence was acknowledged.
2. God's attributes were acknowledged: His omnipresence, omniscience, justice and power.
3. God's moral government over the world was acknowledged.
4. Man's accountability to God as Judge was acknowledged.

Because of these implications, to swear by the name of God was an acknowledgment of Him as the only true and living God. In essence, it was an act of worship.

In contrast, to swear by a false god implied that the idol:

- actually existed
- was omnipresent, omniscient and powerful
- was the moral governor of the world
- was the supreme judge of men.

Thus, to swear by a false god is idolatry. The Scriptures warn against this practice repeatedly (Jer. 5:7).

The Old Testament Required Swearing

Not only did the Old Testament allow one to swear and take vows, it actually required it in three different situations:

1. The Exculpatory Oath—an oath to clear oneself from guilt when no witnesses are available. This was used to prove:
 - a man had not stolen his neighbor's property (Ex. 22:11)
 - no citizen of a city was guilty of shedding innocent blood (Deut. 21)
 - a woman had not violated her marriage vows (Num. 5).

If the defendant took the oath, the suit was decided in his favor. If he refused to take the oath, it was an admission of guilt and he was automatically branded with the crime (cf. Eccl. 9:2, "He that feareth an oath").

If a perjurer of the exculpatory oath desired to clear himself of his perjury he had to follow the prescription of Leviticus 6:1-7.

2. The Adjudation—this was an adjudation (or summons) to appear and give testimony or information. The summons was announced to the entire community: "If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible" (Lev. 5:1, NIV).

This is apparently why Achan's entire family was destroyed (Josh. 7). Apparently the camp was placed under the adjudation to testify and Achan's family withheld information.

If someone withheld information and later repented, he had to follow the prescription of Leviticus 5:5-13.

3. The Voluntary Oath—although the taking of this oath was voluntary, once it was made it was obligatory (Lev. 5:4). One was required to keep his rash oath even if it resulted in his harm (Ps. 15:4).

²Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou

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upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. ³For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words. ⁴When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. ⁵Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay (Eccl. 5:2-5; cf. Lev. 5:5-13 for atonement procedures).

Penalty For Perjury

The penalties for perjury were very serious:

Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The meaning of this passage is uncertain. It means either: "Thou shalt not utter the name of God in an irreverent way," or "Thou shalt not utter the name of God to a lie." Either way the name of God is used in vain.

No specific punishment is given for one who swore falsely in God's name. There seems to be one of three punishments that befell a perjurer:

First: If under the adjuration one was found to be a false witness, he suffered the same penalty being sought against his victim (Deut. 19:18-21).

Second: Vengeance was often rendered by the providential hand of God:

1. When Saul violated the oath to the Gibeonites a famine was sent upon the land (2 Sam. 21).
2. When Hiel defied Joshua's adjuration to not rebuild Jericho, his two sons suffered a "mysterious" death (1 Kgs. 16).

Third: A case might be made that violating an oath was desecrating/blaspheming God's name and should result in death if the offender is discovered:

Leviticus 24:16 "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him."

When Jonathan violated Saul's adjuration it is clear that a death penalty was expected (1 Sam. 14:43-45).

Illegal Oaths

In contrast to breaking a bona fide oath, men were required to violate illegal oaths.

¹⁰Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: ¹¹But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. ¹²And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother (Mk. 7:10-12).

"Corban" (in this passage) was a vow/oath in which one vowed his property to the temple in order avoid supporting his aging parents. Jesus implies that such an oath is illegal and one must support his parents in spite of such an oath. The sin is not in violating the oath, but in making such an illegal oath to begin with.

Illegal oaths and vows were uttered by:

King Herod—swore to give whatever Herodias' daughter asked (Mt. 15:9).
The 40 men—bound themselves under an oath to kill Paul (Acts 23).

Such oaths are illegal from start to finish. Men only compounded their sin by fulfilling such oaths.

Summary

To summarize, the people of the Old Testament were told to make few vows, and they were commanded to keep the vows and oaths they did make. Serious punishment was promised to those who violated the vow, or oath they had made. These teachings are what Jesus referred to in Matthew 5:33.

Text (2)

But I say unto you, Swear not at all (Mt. 5:34).

To begin our study of this verse we notice this critical point: some people swore, even in the New Testament, with God's approval, even though Jesus said, "Swear not at all."

New Testament Examples

1. Jesus answered a question under oath.

Matthew 26:63-64 "⁶³But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. ⁶⁴Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said."

adjure (exorkidzo)—"to charge someone under oath" (Rienecker).

Swearing

Jesus did not denounce the high priest and say, "You shouldn't talk like that." He did not condemn him for using God's name in that manner, but seemed to regard it as perfectly legitimate. Then, and only then, did Jesus answer the question. To refuse this oath would have been looked upon as an admission that Jesus was not God's Son.

It seems rather strange that Jesus would answer under oath when He instructed His disciples to "swear not at all." Jesus usually practiced what He preached to others.

2. Paul swore in God's name.

Romans 1:9 "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

2 Corinthians 1:18, 23 "¹⁸As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay . . . ²³Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth."

If we used these same words in a court of law today, every civil authority present would accept it. They would agree we were taking an oath and swearing to the truth.

Galatians 1:20 "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not."

Philippians 1:8 "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10 "⁵For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness . . . ¹⁰Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves."

3. Paul applies an Old Testament passage on swearing to Christians.

Isaiah 45:23 "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."

The historical setting seems to be that someday even Gentiles would swear allegiance to God; they would take a loyalty oath. This passage is quoted in the Roman epistle:

Romans 14:11 "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

To confess to God is to "swear" to God according to Isaiah. Apparently, then, when one obeys the gospel he is in effect taking a vow/oath to be loyal to God. That is why falling away makes one worse off than before conversion (cf. 2 Pet. 2:20-21 with Eccl. 5:1-5). A man has lied to God when he quits! He has committed perjury!

4. Paul puts some Christians under oath.

1 Thessalonians 5:27 "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."

charge (*horkidzo*)—"to put to an oath" (Greenfield).

5. Paul and others made vows

Acts 18:18 "And Paul . . . having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow."

Remember, a vow is equivalent to an oath, and Paul vowed to things.

6. An angel from God swore.

Revelation 10:5-6 "⁵And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, ⁶And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever."

7. God Himself swore.

Hebrews 6:13 "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself."

This passage does not have the negative tone toward swearing that would be expected if all swearing of all kinds were forbidden.

A Limited Command

Note: The fact that God, Jesus, an angel and Paul all took oaths, swore and made vows shows that the prohibition on swearing in Matthew 5:34 is limited! Jesus was not forbidding all oaths and all swearing and all vows in all places for all time! He was only forbidding a certain kind of swearing—a certain kind of oath.

Ill: "Don't drink and drive." Does this mean no drinking of any kind, or no drinking of a certain kind? It means no drinking of alcoholic beverages while driving.

When Jesus said, "Swear not at all," He went on to specify exactly what He meant. He was saying, "Swear not at all:

Swearing

- by heaven
- by earth
- by Jerusalem
- by your head

No where does the NT forbid swearing, or taking oaths in God's name!

J. W. McGarvey said, "The universal prohibition, 'Swear not at all,' is distributed by the specification of these four forms of oaths and therefore most strictly included only such oaths."

Why This Prohibition?

Why did Jesus give this new prohibition on swearing? Because men were not only lying, but they were swearing to lies! Lying had become a plague among these Jews. They had developed a system of swearing. The more valuable the object by which they swear, the more binding the oath became.

Illustration: If one swears by the earth, that oath is not as binding as if he swore by heaven.

Only when they swore in God's name did they feel DUTY BOUND to tell the truth.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? (Mt. 23:16-19).

Their reasoning was this:

- If a man offers the temple in pledge for something, the creditor cannot seize the temple in compensation, but he can seize the gold that the worshiper placed into the temple treasury.
- If a man offers the altar in pledge the creditor cannot seize the altar, but he can seize the gift which the worshiper offers upon the altar.

This reasoning lead to the following conclusions:

1. Only the oath offered upon the gold of the temple was binding.
2. Only the oath offered upon the gift of the altar was binding.

To swear simply upon the temple, or the altar was not binding and one did not have to keep his oath/vow. They did not believe they were obligated to tell the truth except under oath, and then it had to be a special kind of oath—an oath in God's name!

Jesus condemns their entire system. Their oaths were defeating the very thing for which the oath was designed to serve: truth!

Text (3)

³⁴But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: ³⁵Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black (Mt. 5:34-36).

Apparently as time progressed, the Jews became more and more reluctant to speak the name of God. To avoid pronouncing His name when swearing they began to swear by objects that had some relation to God.

1. "by heaven"—seems to indicate, "May a divine disaster befall me if I break this oath."
2. "by earth"—"May an earthly disaster befall me."
3. "by Jerusalem"—"May the civil authorities strike me." (Jerusalem being the capital city and symbolic of civil authorities.)
4. "by my head"—"May I lose my head/life."

Jesus is saying you cannot get around God. If you swear by:

heaven—it is just as binding as if you had sworn by God, because it is His throne (Isa. 66:1; Mt. 23:22). "You're not going to get by with anything when you swear like this."

earth—it is just as binding as if you had sworn by God, because it is His footstool (Isa. 66:1).

Jerusalem—it is just as binding as using God's name, because it is the city of the great King (Ps. 87:3).

your head—it is just as binding as using God's name, because He is controlling even the color of your hair!

Swearing by all these inanimate objects is improper.

1. They cannot verify if you are telling the truth.

Swearing

2. They cannot exercise vengeance if you lie!

But, if I swear by God, He knows if I am telling the truth and He can exercise vengeance if I do not.

What James Taught

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation (Jas. 5:12).

any other oath—The Greek language has two words that are translated into the English as “other”:

1. **allos**—“other (usually another of the same kind)” (Summers).
2. **heteros**—“other (usually another of a different kind)” (ibid.).

James used the word which means “another of the same kind” (**allos**). Had he wanted to forbid all oaths of all kinds he would have used the word which means “another of a different kind” (**heteros**).

Text (4)

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil (Mt. 5:37).

Note: The oaths which Jesus condemned in the previous verses, were not judicial oaths. No court among the Jews required men to swear by their own heads. The oaths He is condemning have three qualities:

1. They are made in daily conversation
2. They are pronounced over trivial matters
3. They are made with the intent of circumventing the force of a solemn oath. In other words, you want to add force to what you are saying, but you do not want the penalty that accompanies a solemn oath.

What are some examples of these types of oaths and curses? Gosh, golly, gee, heck, darn, etc. The list could go on, but you are aware of what I mean. These are “curse words” and “swear words” in the purest sense. They are designed to:

- add force to what we say
- call down curses upon our heads if we lie
- BUT, they are designed to prevent saying the actual name of God!

- they are an attempt to circumvent the force of a solemn oath
- they are used in daily conversation, not in courts of law
- they are pronounced over the most trivial and mundane matters
- they desecrate God's holy name because of their frequent, casual use.

Argument: "But I didn't mean anything by this word. Besides, I didn't actually use the name of God."

Reply: That's exactly what the Jews were saying when they swore by heaven, by earth, toward Jerusalem and by their heads!

The exact wording does not matter. James said not to swear by any other oath of the same kind!

Daily Speech

communication (logos)—the context seems to indicate our daily conversation, our routine speech.

Jesus is forbidding habitual swearing to everything in our daily conversation. We may not use these "swear words" in our daily speech to emphasize the truth of our statements!

McGarvey states, "Instead of an oath for confirmation on ordinary occasions, Jesus enjoins a simple affirmation or denial—'Yea, yea; Nay, nay'"

Question: Why can we not swear and take oaths to everything we say?

Reply: "Whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Notice, the swearing that Jesus condemns comes from the Evil One. This cannot possibly refer to a serious, reverent, judicial oath uttered in the name of God. The solemn judicial oath originated with God, not the Evil One!

Question: Would God have sworn with an oath if judicial swearing originated with the Evil One? Would Jesus? An angel? Paul?

But swearing to everything in daily conversation does originate with the Evil One. (1) It desensitizes men to the solemn name of God. They become careless and use His name for the most trivial purposes. (2) It tends to make men feel that they are not obligated to tell the truth unless under oath, and then it must be a certain kind of oath.

Have you ever see a man who swears to everything?

- "I swear I get up at 3 AM every day!"
- "I swear I ate 10 eggs for breakfast!"
- "I swear I drove 100 MPH to get to work!"

Swearing

When we hear a man who swears to everything it is pretty good evidence that he is not telling the truth in anything and we should be on our guard because he is getting ready to tell us a whopper! He knows his reputation is not good and his simple affirmation is worthless. So he must add some weight to what he says.

We must develop a reputation of being truthful people. When we say, "Yes" in our daily conversation, we mean it just as much as if we were in a courtroom taking an oath!

Evasive Speech

As we look back at the text we will see that Jesus is not only forbidding the use of oaths in daily conversation, but He is also condemning evasive speech: "let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay"

James words this a little differently: "Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay" (Jas. 5:12).

In other words, when we say "yes" we do not have a hidden meaning. "Yes" has but one meaning. It does not carry some "mental reservation."

Illustration: My Mom would always ask before taking me to town, "Did you wash face, brush teeth and put on plenty of deodorant?" I would answer, "Yes mam!" Then under my breath I would mutter (so she could not hear), "Last week."

(Strictly speaking I said nothing false, but there was a hidden point I held back. It left a false impression.)

Catholics

This is what the Catholic church calls "mental reservation." The New Catholic Encyclopedia reads,

If for example, a wife, who has been unfaithful but after her lapse has received the Sacrament of Penance, is asked by her husband if she has committed adultery, she could truthfully reply: "I am free from sin." In any of these cases the speaker does not question the hearer's right to know a truth. He presents the truth as discoverable but not disclosed. He has made no false statement, but has allowed an admissible ambiguity, foreseeing a possible, or probable, deception (vol. 9, p. 663).

(They can call it the truth it they want to, but when you draw that bottom line, it's a lie!—GB)

Because deception of one's neighbor is an evil, one needs a just and proportionately grave cause to have recourse to evasive speech or writing. Simplicity in speech is to be regarded as obligatory under ordinary circumstances (ibid.)

(If we all thought long enough we would come up with a "just reason" to use evasive speech and deceive people!—GB)

"Jehovah's Witnesses"

The Catholics are not the only ones who teach their members may lie! The "Jehovah's Witnesses" do the same!

In **Aid to Bible Understanding**, it says: "Lying generally involves saying something false to a person who is entitled to know the truth. While malicious lying is definitely condemned in the Bible, this does not mean that a person is under obligation to divulge truthful information to people who are not entitled to it" (1971, pp. 1060-1061).

(We could all figure out some reason why someone is not entitled to truth could we not?—GB)

Jesus forbids this very reasoning when He says, "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay."

All Oaths Forbidden?

Are all oaths forbidden today? Is it wrong to take a judicial oath in a courtroom, or before a notary public?

Answer: NO!

On solemn occasions, before magistrates, even Jesus answered under oath (Mt. 26:63-64).

Hebrews 6:16 "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

An oath puts a serious matter to rest. Paul does not say it is wrong to swear; he accepts it as legitimate and right.

It makes some cringe to think of taking an oath in court, but no one thinks anything of a couple taking "wedding vows," and we have already shown that vowing and swearing are equivalent.

The swearing Jesus and James condemned was: (1) by heaven, (2) by earth, (3) by Jerusalem, (4) by your head, (5) or any oath of a similar nature.

Swearing

The object of Jesus' legislation was to stop this indiscriminate, glib oath-taking, and to show that to take an oath is a very solemn matter—something that must be reserved only for those occasions that are solemn and vital.

The Contrast

What then, is the contrast between the Old Testament teaching on oaths and Jesus' teaching? This:

Old Testament—guarded the sacredness of truth **in** court

New Testament—guards the sacredness of truth **out** of court.

The truths Jesus taught here were not addressed in the Old Testament Scriptures. He taught:

1. Extra-judicial oaths are unnecessary. There is no need to swear when a simple affirmation is sufficient.
2. Extra-judicial swearing comes from the Evil One:
 - it profanes God's name
 - it desensitizes man's conscience.
3. Any evasive speech with the intent to deceive is wrong.

In essence, Jesus taught that a simple "yes," or "no" in our daily conversation is as serious and as binding as a judicial oath uttered in the name of God! The Old Testament never taught that!

Conclusion

Our world is starving for men of integrity and who are trustworthy. What we need worse than anything else is a restoration of old-time, down-right honesty!

Nothing is hurting the influence of the church more than the absence of truthfulness and honesty.

Psalms 24:3-4 "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

Psalms 15:1-4 "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? . . . He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."

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Ephesians 4:7-16

by Terry Baze

The passage before us is one of great interest. It contains a number of problems which commentators have had no little difficulty in solving, therefore giving rise to several interpretations. Perhaps the two most common explanations of the passage are as follows:

1. These verses are a parallel to 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. The gifts spoken of are spiritual gifts which will cease when that which is perfect comes (complete revelation). The gifts of verses 7-11 remain until verse 13, which is simply an explanation of the time when the revelation would be completed. This allusion to a full-grown man versus the childhood state of verse 14 agrees with Paul's illustration in 1 Corinthians 13.
2. The passage is extremely valuable and practical for the church of today and future generations. This text gives a detailed prescription of how the church is to grow to maturity in Christ that is viable and yet challenging. These verses do not teach the same truths found in 1 Corinthians 13, but rather deal with the maturity of the body as each individual grows to perfection in Christ.

The book of Ephesians was written by Paul while imprisoned at Rome sometime around 60-62 A.D. The letter was probably circulated among all the churches in Asia. This, unlike many of Paul's letters, contains no personal greetings, no particular rebuke, and addresses no specific problem. The letter reads much like a sermon and expresses deep insight into spiritual matters concerning the Lord's church. It presents an exalted view of the Christian being "in Christ" and a member of the glorious church.

The first three chapters focus on some of the major doctrines of Christianity. Within these verses, Paul begins with an enumeration of the blessings we have in Christ and prays for us to be aware of these blessings. The last half of the letter is composed of various duties and responsibilities. The first sixteen verses of chapter four tell us to keep the unity of the Spirit. Paul then says we are to "walk as becometh saints" and then instructs us to be subject to one another in our relationships. He concludes by teaching us to arm ourselves with the whole armor of God.

Outline of Chapter 4:1-16

- I. Keep the unity of the Spirit (4:1-16)

Ephesians 4:7-16

- A. Walk worthy of your calling (vv. 1-3)
- B. Unity of the Spirit described (vv. 4-6)
- C. Unity is served by a diversity of gifts (vv. 7- 16)
 - 1. Christ has given gifts to the church (vv. 7- 11)
 - 2. Purposes of the gifts (v. 12)
 - 3. Objectives to be reached by the gifts (vv. 13-16)

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (v. 7).

Grace is given to every Christian. This term (*charis*) is used twelve times by the apostle in this epistle (1:2, 6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7, 29; 6:24). It refers to God's unmerited favor and is used to describe any and every spiritual blessing that God confers upon His children. In 2:8, grace is the gift of God. In this text, it refers to salvation, not to spiritual gifts as some contend. The context must determine the meaning.

This verse states that grace is the thing given, and it is given to all God's children. Thayer states that "grace" here is the capacity and ability that God graciously gives His children. This word does not mean miraculous spiritual gifts. There are times in the New Testament where such gifts are given and it is always by God's grace. However, the gift here is grace, not spiritual gifts. This verse is like 1:3, where all spiritual blessings are said to be in Christ. By God's grace, His children are given salvation, promises, blessings, spiritual gifts, ministries, opportunities, sufficiency and ability to do the work He calls them to do.

"According to the measure." This grace is given to all according to the measure of the gift of Christ. "Measure" means the "determined extent, portion, or amount."

Consider the word "gift." This grace is given according to the measure, or portion, of the gift of Christ. The gifts of God are many and varied. The exact nature of any gift is determined from context. There are three words in the Greek language that are translated "gift" that are relevant to our study.

1. *dorea*—This is used here in Ephesians 4:7. This word refers to the gratuitous nature of the gift and not the character of the gift itself. The word is also found in John 4:10; Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Romans 5:15, 17; 2 Corinthians 9:15; and Hebrews 6:4.

2. *dōma*—This word is found in verse eight. It means any gift or present. The character of the gift itself is involved with this term. It is not concerned

with the gratuitous nature of the gift, as is *dorea*. It is used in Luke 11:13 and Phil. 4:17.

3. **charisma**—This word is found in many places in the New Testament. Paul uses it primarily in reference to miraculous spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4). This word is not used in Ephesians 4:7-16.

The phrase "gift of Christ" does not refer to Christ as being the gift, but "grace" is the gift and Paul's use of "*dorea*" emphasizes that.

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men (v. 8).

Paul gives an example to prove what he has stated in verse seven. He cites a text from Psalm 68:18, which he seems to quote rather loosely. The passage most likely was composed on the occasion of removing the ark of the covenant from Kirjath-jearim to Mount Zion, in 2 Samuel 6:1ff. It is a song of triumph celebrating the victory of Jehovah.

"Led captivity captive"—When Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9; 2:30-34), He did so victorious over death, hell and the grave. He had overcome temptation, sin, death, demons, Satan and all that opposed Him in His mission. He was exalted and glorified, crowned as King of kings and Lord of lords. All such are the captives He led in His train. Colossians 2:15, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

He then "gave gifts to men." The allusion is to a conquering King, who having received the spoils of victory, graciously gives the spoils to whom he wills. Psalm 68:18 reads, he "received" gifts from men. Why the discrepancy? The Hebrew term means to take or receive. It is used on occasion, however, to mean to take in order to give (Gen. 38:6). A similar use would be Acts 2:33, "having received of the Father . . . he hath shed forth this."

The word for "gifts" in this text is "*dōma*." It means a present or gift. To my knowledge the word is not used in reference to the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts in the New Testament. The gifts are not specified until verse eleven. Verses nine and ten are parenthetical, so we could read from verse eight right into verse eleven and realize that some of the gifts are men or offices (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers).

To summarize thus far, as Christ determines, He graciously gives grace to all members of the church. An example of such, is the fact that He gave the church the gifts of verse eleven. The gifts specified are men, or offices.

Ephesians 4:7-16

Even though some or all of these might have possessed and exercised miraculous spiritual gifts, the focus here, is on the men, or offices themselves, not whatever spiritual gifts they may or may not have had. To interpret these gifts here as being miraculous spiritual gifts (*charisma*), would mean that all of the gifts of verse eleven ceased when God's revelation was completed, and the fact is, they did not.

Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things (vv. 9-10).

"Ascended . . . descended." The meaning of verse eight is discussed in these verses. Since Psalm 68:18, which Paul quoted, mentioned His ascension, the implication is that He must have first descended to the earth. This was done so that His presence and influence would fill the whole universe.

"Lower parts of the earth." There is disagreement among translators as to the textual meaning of *katotera mera tas gas*, the lower parts of the earth (KJV). Many agree with this rendering and therefore consider Acts 2:27, 31; Romans 10:7 and 1 Peter 3:19 as corresponding passages, each referring to Christ's descent into Hades between His death and resurrection.

On the other hand, some translations (NIV, NEB, Phillips and Twentieth Century) give a reading that the lower regions are the lower regions of the universe, being the earth itself, not Hades. The term *katoteros* is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. In John 8:23, the world and the term "beneath" are contrasted with "from above." In Acts 2:19, "heaven above" and "earth beneath" are set against each other. Thayer defines "*katoteros*" as inferior, the lower parts of the universe, the earth. In Ephesians, Paul combines the terms "heaven" and "earth" in 1:10 and 3:15. Ephesians 1:10 especially agrees with the latter part of 4:10. Perhaps, therefore, this is reason to assume the contrast is simply between heaven and earth. The hadesic realm may not even be implied.

There are a number of possibilities:

1. The womb—Psalm 139:13, 15.
2. The earth itself.
3. Hades—Isaiah 14:9; Ezekiel 26:20; Psalm 63:9; Acts 2:27.
4. The tomb—Matthew 12:40.

Any of the above might be the correct interpretation. The gist of Paul's argument is simply that Christ's descension to earth and ascension back to heaven, with the work He accomplished, provided His presence in both the upper and lower parts of the universe.

And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers (v. 11).

These are the gifts mentioned in verse eight, that Christ gave to the church. Obviously, these gifts are not miraculous gifts, rather, gifts of offices, or responsibilities within the church.

"Pastors and teachers." Some commentators note that the Greek article *tous de* (some) is found before each gift, except for teachers. Because of this, they feel that "some pastors and teachers" refer to the same office (teaching pastors, or pastors that teach).

Even if this is true, there is still no support here for the modern denominational concept of a pastor. The evidence against such an interpretation is:

1. No reputable translation renders it as "teaching pastors."
2. Both terms are nouns in the text.
3. Both terms are plural.
4. A conjunction separates the two words.
5. Both offices are spoken of elsewhere as being separate.
6. A. T. Robertson says it does not matter if the article is there.

When the church's foundation was finished, the function of apostles and prophets became obsolete. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20). The church's foundation does not need to be built again; therefore there is no need for apostles and prophets today. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid" (1 Cor. 3:1). The Scriptures make no provision for a line of continuous apostleship. The work and nature of apostles and prophets demand that the offices were temporary.

Someone might wonder why all of these offices would not be done away? We continue to build the superstructure of the church today, and therefore, the other offices are still needed for the instructing and training of the saints. The gospel still needs preaching. The churches still need shepherding. The saints still need to be taught, edified and trained to do God's work. The scriptures provide for offices to carry out these ministries and the principles found here are just as true today as then.

Ephesians 4:7-16

*For the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the body of Christ (v. 12).*

The reason these gifts of verse 11 were provided, is found here. It is that the church would be instructed and trained for the work of serving. If the church is equipped and ministering in the work God has given her to do, the result is that she will be built up and grow to maturity in Christ.

"Perfecting." This is the only place this word (*katartismos*) is found in the New Testament. It means "to equip, arrange, prepare, train, instruct, or completely furnish." The RSV captures the true essence of the meaning: "To equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ." The purpose of the gifts Christ gave becomes evident. He gave these offices in order for them to train the saints to do the work. Those that remain should still carry on this work.

"Ministry." From *diakonia*, "service, ministering." The word is used in many ways in the New Testament. The context determines the use of the term. In this text, it clearly refers to the service, or work that every Christian is to perform. This agrees with the teaching of Peter in 1 Peter 2:5 and 9, that instructs us that every member is a priest in God's kingdom.

Spiritual gifts were not given to train the members to perform his or her Christian duty in the church. The gifts of verse eleven were given to train the saints to do the work. The immaturity of the universal church in its development without complete revelation is not the subject of discussion here. This is simply a reference to saints being trained to work for the building up of the body of Christ, the church.

"Edifying." The Greek word is *oikodome*, from *oikos*, which means "a house, or building." Thus, it refers to the construction of an edifice, or the building itself. The word is found three other places in Ephesians, and also in other New Testament passages:

1. 2:21—refers to the church as a building, fitly framed together
2. 4:16—the church edifies itself as each part works together
3. 4:29—good language is to be used which will build up one another
4. Matthew 24:1—the buildings of the temple
5. 1 Corinthians 3:9—ye are God's building
6. 1 Corinthians 14:3, 12, 26—the edifying of the church
7. 2 Corinthians 10:8—the building up of the church.

This last usage agrees with our text in verse twelve. God gives offices (gifts) for building up the church. "Rooted and built up in him, and

established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2:7). He also provided the church with other gifts (spiritual gifts, ministries, opportunities) to build up the church. Some were to cease (1 Cor. 13:8-10) at a certain time, others continue till today.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (v. 13).

The purpose of the gifts equipping the saints to build up the body, is so that the body will reach maturity, that its members will mature as is Christ. He is the example and model, which stature, Christians should seek to attain.

"Till." This word means "until, or as far as." There appears to be a time element involved here, but *mechri* is not used as a preposition of time here, as in most places, but as a subordinate conjunction that ties together a subordinate clause with a primary clause. The actual time element is indefinite and of no significance. The word is used the same way in Galatians 4:19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." The goal is in mind, not the time element. The maturity of the Galatians was the goal, and Paul would work to that end so long as they needed maturing. He would labor accordingly whether or not the complete revelation was given. The maturity will take place as the gifts (v. 11) equip the saints to do the work (v. 12) and the saints do the work. The body will then be built up so that it grows and matures in Christ.

"Come." From *katantao*, meaning "to arrive at, attain to." A study of the work of evangelists, elders and teachers clearly reveals that there is a constant need of edifying, overseeing, governing, instructing and developing within the church. To make this passage purely dispensational and the gifts of verse eleven totally obsolete at the completion of revelation, does away with the valuable ministries of those whom God has placed in the church for her spiritual welfare. This passage is not dealing with the completed revelation given to the universal church, but to the maturing of individuals and congregations within the church universal.

"Perfect." From *teleios*, meaning "full grown, mature, complete." The opposite of children in verse fourteen. How complete, full-grown, mature, or perfect? As much as Christ is. Some say this cannot happen until after Christ comes again, yet, it is God's will that the church grow to maturity on earth. The Colossian letter is like a sister to the Ephesian letter. Paul deals with much of the same information and there are many parallel pas-

Ephesians 4:7-16

sages. In Colossians 1:28, Paul says, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ." This is the exact same goal Paul has for the Ephesians in this text. Complete revelation is not his subject matter here. "And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10). Neither of these statements is dependent upon the time when the revelation became completed.

"Stature." From **helikos**—"as tall as, as big as, etc." Whatever Christ is, that is how mature we should be. Herein lies the beauty of the passage. God provides gifts to the church whereby the members can grow into the personality of Christ. To put on Christ, or be conformed to His image is the whole purpose of the Christian's life, and that is precisely the reason the gifts of verse eleven were given.

"Fulness." From **plaroma**—"that which has been filled, completion." To be filled is to be overcome, overwhelmed, immersed with the presence, power, blessings and influence of Christ. The church is the fulness of Christ. The maturity spoken of here, is that which was attained by growing to the maturity that Christ has. Christian maturity is exemplified in us by "unity of the faith" and "knowledge of the Son of God."

"Full knowledge." From **epignosis**—"precise and correct knowledge" (cf. Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9-10; 2:2-3; 3:10; 2 Peter 1:8; 2:20). None of these verses refer to the complete revelation of God's will. In Ephesians 1:16-18; 3:14-19; and Colossians 1:9-10, Paul prays that they will have this full knowledge. He is not praying that they will have the completed revelation.

"Unity." From **henotata**—"unity, oneness." The only other place this word is found is in 4:3, "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The verses under consideration (7-16) are but a prescription of how the unity of the Spirit can be achieved and maintained. Verse sixteen discusses the whole body working together—that is unity. Colossians 2:2-5 is teaching the same thing as verses 13-16, and no reference whatever is made to the completed revelation.

That we henceforeth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (v. 14).

Verse fourteen is the contrast to verse thirteen, which was Paul's desire for the Ephesians. "Be no more" indicates that this was their condition. Paul

wanted them to grow up in Christ, so they would stop listening to false teachers and quit being deceived and led away from the truth. He likens the false teachers to gamblers who cheat, and men who deliberately trick them in order to deceive or mislead them. Colossians 2:4, 8 teach the same thing, and again complete revelation is not the topic.

"Tossed to and fro." The word here is *kludonizomai*—from *kludon*—"to be tossed by the waves. A surge of the sea" (also found in Jas. 1:6). By their adherence to the false teachers, Paul likened them to a vessel that would be tossed about on a raging sea. They were no doubt fickle and easy prey for false doctrine. This proved their immaturity in Christ. Steadfastness for the truth is a sign of spiritual maturity.

"Sleight." *kubela*—"gambling, dice playing, fraud, cheating."

"Cunning craftiness." *panourgia*—"adroitness, trickery" (Lk. 20:23; 1 Cor 3:19; 2 Cor. 11:3).

*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him all things,
which is the head, even Christ (v. 15).*

A contrast once again is made to verse fourteen. Instead of being immature and carried about like a ship on a raging sea, as they accepted false doctrine, they should speak the truth in love. By doing so, they could grow up in Christ. History bears out the fact that the church did not cease to be led away by false doctrine when the revelation was completed. This admonition is given to the saints, as in 5:6, and was not dependent upon complete revelation.

"Grow." *auxamo*—"to grow, augment, enlarge." The word is used both in Ephesians 2:21 and 4:16 (also 1 Pet. 2:2, 2 Pet. 3:18).

"In all things." *panta*—"in all respects, in every way." We are to grow and mature in order that we can be like Jesus in all respects.

*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted
by the which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual
working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the
body unto the edifying of itself in love (v. 16).*

If we grow and mature into the fulness of Christ in our lives, we will not be like spiritual infants. Instead of being deceived by false teaching, we will speak the truth in love and grow up into Christ, who is the head of the

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body, the church. Having done so, the whole body will be joined together by all its parts and ligaments, with the strength and power of Christ, and will work with every part supplying and functioning properly, so that the body will build itself up.

"Fifty joined together." *sunarmologoumenon*—"to join closely together, to frame together, to render close jointed."

1. Ephesians 2:21—all the building fifty framed together.
2. Colossians 2:2—being knit together in love.
3. Colossians 2:19—And not holding the Head, from which all the body joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together increaseth with the increase of God.

"Compacted." *sumbibazo*—"unite, join together" (Col. 2:19)

"Supplie." *epichoregia*—"contribution, fully supply" (Phil. 1:19).

"Effectual working." *energeia*—"efficiency, working, activity, operative" (Eph. 1:19; 3:7; Col. 1:29; 2:12). The effectual working simply refers to each part supplying. Each part functioning, or working properly, and doing its part. Colossians 2:19 is a parallel passage to this one: "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

"Edifying." The word is the same as in verse twelve. The result there, the building up of the body of Christ, is the same here. These cannot be the same according to the view that makes this parallel with 1 Corinthians 13.

"Maketh increase." The word is the same as in Colossians 2:19 and also "groweth" in Ephesians 2:21.

Christ's gifts to the church train and equip her to do the work of the ministry. When this happens, the church attains to unity and knowledge in Christ, thus growing up into Him. As mature Christians, who are like Christ and who receive His help, all the parts working together, united and properly functioning, will cause the body to grow. Every part must supply in order for the body to grow to its full potential.

Conclusion

I respect those who see in this passage a parallel to 1 Corinthians 13, and recognize their right to such an interpretation. I do not believe that they are teaching anything that is false, only that their teaching of the concepts

in 1 Corinthians 13 are not substantiated in Ephesians 4. I believe such interpretation is erroneous for several reasons:

1. It ignores the context of the epistle itself.
2. It ignores the immediate context of the passage.
3. The subject matter of 1 Corinthians 13 is the complete revelation, while that in Ephesians 4 is the spiritual maturity of Christians.

This beautiful passage reveals God's master plan for the church to grow. The reason that the church fails to grow in many places, is simply that Christians have ignored the plan. Christ provided the church with many gifts whereby every Christian has the potential to develop and grow to maturity in Christ. God expects all His children to grow up in Christ. We are to be like Him.

Sometimes those men who God gives to train the saints to do the work, do not fulfill their obligation. When elders, evangelists and teachers are weak and fail to carry out their God-given mission to serve the body by training the members, the church will not grow. Too little attention has been given to the proper function of leaders in the church. Too many congregations have no scriptural elders. There are too few evangelists preaching the Word. There are too many teachers who simply do not edify the body. There are very few congregations where the leaders are actively involved in training the members to do the work. Often, the leaders are not doing the work themselves and are incapable of training the body. The church is only as strong as her leaders. When elders, evangelists and teachers do not function properly, the church suffers mightily. Let us give full attention to the divine plan for church growth and stop making feeble excuses as to why the church is not growing. 16852 Timberidge, Tyler, TX 75703

The Usages of the Word "Evil" in Scripture

by Melvin Blalock

Evil and its consequences are very familiar to all of us. We have seen its consequences in our present world and we have read often of the tragedy of evil as recorded in the sacred text. In this study we will be dealing with it primarily from the basis of Scripture. We cannot hope to deal with every Scripture where the word is found, but we will endeavor to deal with many of those that are germane to our study. In the first part of the study we will view the word in the Old Testament setting. It will be our purpose to define the word and classify it in its various uses. We will study verses dealing with moral evil and natural evil. This will necessarily lead to the discussion of punishment evil which is an important part of this study.

The definition of the word "evil" as it is used in the Old Testament is important to consider. Lawrence O. Richards in his *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, page 251, offers the following definitions and observations.

A single family of Hebrew words focuses the Old Testament concept of evil. **Ra'a'** is the verb, which means "to do evil, or bad," or more often, "to act wickedly, to do harm." The masculine noun **ra'** means "evil or bad." The feminine noun **ra'ah** means "evil, misery, or distress" and includes every kind of calamity and wickedness. Other words in the family are **roa**, "badness, evil;" **resa**, "wickedness, evil;" and **rasa**, "wicked, criminal."

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance provides an interesting definition of the verb form of this word. Quoting from *Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, page 110, (7489) we find the following: "**Ra'a** (raw-ah), a prim. root; prop. to spoil (lit. by breaking to pieces)." It is easy for us to relate to this definition for we know that evil is a destructive force in our world.

In explaining the **Ra** word group Lawrence O. Richards writes,

These words are used throughout the Old Testament. They focus on two aspects of evil. Morally, they identify actions that violate God's intentions for human beings. The words are also used to describe the consequences of doing evil; the tragedy, distress, and physical and emotional harm that come as a result of wrong moral choices are, like the choices themselves, labeled evil.

Usage of the Word "Evil"

Moral Evil

When we speak of moral choices, it brings to our attention one class of evil that we are to deal with. Moral evil is ever present with humanity. Moral evil is defined by Edward P. Meyers in his book, **The Problem of Evil and Suffering**, (p. 15), "Moral evil includes all those frustrations of human values which are perpetrated. not by natural elements of the universe, but by the free agency of man himself." Mr. Meyers is telling us that because of our free moral agency we have the possibility of being morally evil or morally good. It is within our will to choose good or evil.

When we think of the word "evil," it is probably moral evil that first comes to our minds. We usually equate evil with sin. Mr. Richards writes,

In the Old Testament, there is no hint of the modern notion that good and evil are simply matters of personal preference; that is, that something can be good for me but evil for you. Instead of relativism, the Old Testament observes that "there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Pr. 14:12). Only God is capable of making truly moral judgments. Thus the Old Testament defines wrong actions as that which is evil "in the eyes of the Lord." It is God's evaluation of good and evil that the Old Testament calls you and me to deal with.

Let us observe some Scriptures where the word "evil" is used. The Hebrew word for evil in these verses is *ra* meaning "bad or evil." Observe the following Scriptures: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5); "And God saw that the wickedness [*ra*'] of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5); "And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed" (Num. 32:13); "When thou shalt beget children, and children's children and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger" (Deut. 4:25).

Because God is the moral measure of all things an objective revelation of morality is essential. Thus Moses completes his review of the Old Testament law with these words: "See I have set before you today life and prosperity (*tob*, "good"), death,

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and destruction (Deut. 30:15), (*ra'*—"destruction") God's Word communicates all we need in order to develop a moral sensitivity enabling us to know what is good and evil (Richards).

It is evident from these Scriptures as well as a host of others that moral evil is the result of our free moral agency. Man has been granted the privilege of choosing good or evil. Some have questioned why God created us with the ability to do evil. God did not create a robot or machine when he created man, but He created an intelligent being with the ability to make choices. God would not be glorified by man if man did not possess the will to serve Him or not serve Him. The choice to do evil or not do evil lies with us. Deuteronomy 30:19 says "I call heaven and earth to record against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

In reference to moral evil Richards writes, "What is moral evil? Moral evil is that which God regards as wrong. God, the Creator and Judge, has the right and obligation to make this determination. We creatures have the obligation to understand His standards—and choose them."

The Consequences of Evil

In thinking of the different ways that the word "evil" is used, we need to consider the tragic consequences of evil. Evil things often happen to men because of evil decisions. All of the bad in this world is either directly or indirectly related to evil in some way. The innocent are often affected by the evil of others. We continue to suffer the effect of Adam and Eve's sin even today. In Genesis 3:16-19, 24 we read,

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy and sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And to Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return . . . So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

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Romans 6:12 reads "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." While it can be emphatically stated that we do not inherit original sin, we surely did inherit the evil consequences of Adam's sin.

Natural Evil In the Old Testament

As we discuss the consequences of evil, our attention is focused upon natural evil and punishment evil. All the bad things in this world are related in some way to evil. We should not conclude that every bad thing that happens to us is the result of some evil that we have committed. We continue to reap the consequences of Adam's sin. The sins of others adversely affect us. We live in a world where we are socially connected with one another. Innocent people are often victims of crime perpetrated by the evil doer.

Natural evil may be defined as follows:

Natural evil includes all the frustrations of human values which are perpetrated, not by the free agency of man, but by natural elements in the universe. These would include such things as hurricanes, tornadoes, wind storms, hail storms, disease, and birth defects. Any event that happens within nature itself and causes destruction on man is referred to as a natural evil (Edward P. Meyers).

Punishment Evil In the Old Testament

In the Old Testament not only do we see natural evil come upon man, but we see many examples of punishment evil as well. This brings us to the second major meaning of "evil" as it is recorded in the Old Testament.

Mr. Richards writes, "This second major meaning of *ra'*, "evil," in the Old Testament is expressed in the NIV and NASB. In such words as "harm," "distress," "disaster," "troubles," and a number of similar terms."

Perhaps a few examples are in order to show how this word is used. We will read the following Scriptures from the NIV: "But Lot said to them, 'No my Lords, please! Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster [*ra'*] will overtake me, and I'll die. . ." (Gen. 19:18-19); "When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles [*ra'* "evil"] that had had come upon him they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him" (Job 2:11);

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"Therefore the curse and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster [ra']" (Dan. 9:11-12).

The list of Scripture references where *ra'* means harm, distress, disaster, and troubles is almost endless in the Old Testament. However we particularly want to notice some examples of "punishment evil." The following Scriptures are examples of "punishment evil."

Deuteronomy 7:15 "And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee."

Deuteronomy 31:29 "For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands."

Joshua 23:15-16 "Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, Which he commanded you, and have gone and served other Gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you."

Deuteronomy 32:23-24 "I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust."

Judges 2:14-15 "And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed."

In light of the above Scriptures it is evident that God brought evil upon man in the form of punishment. Lawrence O. Richards states,

Although the Old Testament does not explore theoretical questions, it does make clear statements about God's involvement with evil . . . In regard to choices that are morally evil, the Old Testament agrees with Elihu's evaluation: "Far be it from God to do evil" (Job. 34:10). Habakkuk goes so far as to say, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil" (Hab. 1:13). God does

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not condone or participate in evil and certainly is "not a God who takes pleasure in evil" (Ps. 5:4). Instead, the Old Testament reports God's commitment: "I will punish the world for its evil" (Isa. 13:11) . . . While the Old Testament rejects the notion that God is responsible for moral evil, it strongly affirms that the Lord is involved in supervising the consequences that result after evil is chosen. A number of passages indicate that God will accept responsibility for many consequent evils that trouble us. For example, "I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster [evil]; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). Again, "I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you" (Jer. 18:11). "When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" (Amos 3:6).

John Haley in his book, *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* on page 77, offers this observation: "When Pompeii is buried by the volcano, Jerusalem destroyed by war, London depopulated by the plague, Lisbon overthrown by an earthquake, Chicago devastated by fire; it is God who sends these evils or calamities."

Regarding Isaiah 45:7, Jeremiah 18:11, and Amos 3:6; Richards observes,

Such statements reveal a basic aspect of the Old Testament concept of God. God is the measure of what is morally right, and He is responsible for the consequences of doing evil.

The divine responsibility for consequences may be direct, as when God intervened in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. But normally God's responsibility is indirect, worked out through natural consequences. In our morally ordered universe there are moral laws, even as there are natural laws. Any violation of the moral laws as well as of the natural laws brings inevitable consequences.

But whether consequences that come from doing evil are direct or indirect, the Old Testament is confident that God, who defines the good and the evil, acts righteously. He is right to bring on us those evils that come as a result of our violation of His moral order.

Evil and the Providence of God

Another aspect of evil should be mentioned in connection with its use in the Old Testament. Through God's overruling providence man may be re-

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quired to suffer evil in order to accomplish God's purpose. Joseph is a good example. Notice Genesis 45:5-8 and Genesis 50:20:

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing or harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all Egypt . . . But as for you, ye thought evil against me; But God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

God in his providence has at times used evil individuals or kingdoms to punish with evil. Observe the Scripture in Isaiah 10:5-7:

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

Now that we have given a good deal of attention to the subject of "evil" in the Old Testament, let us observe "evil" as it is revealed in the New Testament. We will define the term; give the categories of evil and again consider the subject of punishment. Richards states:

Two word groups are used in the New Testament to express the idea of evil. Although the two (*kakos* and *poneros*, with their derivatives) are synonyms, they have different shades of meaning. *Kakos* represents evil in a negative way. It is a lack of those qualities that make a person or thing what it should be. Thus *kakos* looks at evil from the perspective of the nature of a thing. *Poneros* is a stronger concept. It represents evil as an active force. *Poneros* takes pleasure in injuring others and is both dangerous and destructive. This word looks at evil from the perspective of its effects (p. 253).

Each of these Greek words is used with equal frequency to render the Old Testament *ra'* in the Septuagint.

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The Use of "kakos" In the New Testament

The first group of words that we will deal with is *kakos*. Richards writes,

The words in this group are variously translated to represent the full range of biblical concepts associated with evil. However, one passage in Romans is theologically definitive in explaining the *kakos* done by human beings who know what is good and who want to do it.

Romans 7:7-25 contains Paul's report of his personal struggle with sin. In this passage he links the law of God, expressed in commandments, with 'another law [principle] at work in the members of . . . [his] body' (v. 23). Paul sees in Scripture the divine revelation of righteousness and agrees that God's will is both right and beautiful. But when Paul tries to do what this revelation unveils, he discovers that he cannot. "I know that nothing good lives in me that is, in my sinful nature" is the apostle's agonized confession (v. 18). Thus he says, "What I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil [*kakos*] I do not want to do—this I keep on doing . . . When I want to do good, evil [*kakos*] is right there with me" (vv. 19, 21).

This is Paul's explanation of the moral gap that exists between what human beings recognize as good and what they actually do. The problem is that sin has warped human nature: "*kakos* is right there with me." There is a flaw within us that keeps us from being what we should be and what we want to be.

In considering *kakos*, we will look at it as it is employed in the New Testament. *Kakia*, (the noun) is translated "evil, or wickedness" and in the NIV often "malice." It is used eleven times in the New Testament. Some examples are as follow: "Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil (NIV-trouble) thereof" (Mt. 6:34). "Repent therefore of this they wickedness [*kakia*], and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice [*kakia*] be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20). "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice [*kakia*]" (Eph. 4:31).

Kakoo (the verb) means "to do harm or evil" and it is found in such Scriptures as Acts 7:6, "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage,

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and entreat them evil [kakoo] four hundred years." The NIV reads, "mistreated four hundred years." "And about that time Herod, the king stretched forth his hands to vex [kakoo] certain of the church" (Acts 12:1). "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt [kakoo] thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

Kakos, is the adverb form of this word. Quoting W. E. Vine's **Greek Expository Dictionary** the word **kakos**, "May be rendered, badly or evilly." He explains that it is used in the physical sense, to be sick, e.g. Matthew 4:24, 'And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him sick [kakos] people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic and those that had the palsy; and he healed them' . . . In Matthew 21:41 this adverb is used with the adjective, 'He will miserably destroy those miserable men,' more lit., 'He will evilly destroy those men (evil as they are),' with stress on the adjective."

Richards states, "Finally, **kakos** itself is variously translated: 'evil,' 'wicked,' 'crime,' 'bad things,' 'harm,' and 'ill effects.' A key passage is Rom. 13:3-10. Human government has been structured by God to restrain the harm and ill effects that would result were persons free to express the evil that warps human character."

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13:3-4 "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil [kakos]. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil [kakos] be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil [kakos]."

The Use of "poneros" In the New Testament

Words in this group are variously translated: 'evil,' 'bad,' 'wicked,' and 'wickedness.' But this Greek term is stronger and more active than (**kakos**). The difference is illustrated in the fact that **poneros** is chosen to describe the character of Satan . . . **poneros** portrays active rebellion against God . . . The rebelliousness of (**poneros**) calls the natural man to turn against God and against good. But the beauty of God's own goodness is still glimpsed in his fallen creations . . . The two primary words used in this family are **poneria** translated 'evil' and 'wickedness,' and **poneros**. **Poneria** appears only seven times in the New Testament (Richards).

Usage of the Word "Evil"

The word *poneria* is translated "evil," "wicked," or "iniquity." "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" (Mt. 22:18). "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26). "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers." (Rom. 1:29). This is three of the seven times this word is used in the New Testament. We can see that it is stronger than *kakos*. "**Kakos** stands for whatever is evil in character, base, in distinction (Wherever the distinction is observable) from *poneros* . . . akin to *ponos*, labour, toil, denotes evil that cause labor, pain, sorrow, malignant evil" (W. E. Vine).

One should remember that the word *poneros* is an active force and rebellious, which leads the natural man to turn against God. This word is used frequently in the New Testament. The following Scriptures are examples: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:39). "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness!" (Mt. 6:33). "But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd [*poneros*] fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason and sought to bring him out to the people" (Acts. 17:5).

Richards notes: "The New Testament always uses *poneros* to represent the active malevolence of Satan's personality. As a leader of the 'spiritual forces of evil' that are ranged against God and His saints (Eph. 6:12), Satan is the chief 'evil spirit.'"

Natural Evil In the New Testament

Thus far we have been discussing moral evil as it is dealt with in the New Testament. Now let us focus on the subject of natural evil. There will always be natural evil in the experience of man while on the earth. There are noteworthy examples of natural evil in the New Testament. The Greek word *kakos* is sometimes used in the physical sense to denote sickness and disease. We readily understand these to be natural evils. W. E. Vine points to these examples: (Mt. 6:24) "And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick [*kakos*] people that were taken with divers diseases and torments." (Mk. 1:32) "And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, [*kakos*] and them that were possessed with devils."

Usage of the Word "Evil"

There are other references to natural evil in the New Testament. Jesus said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil [trouble] thereof" (Mt. 6:34). Jesus warned of impending woes in Matthew 24:7, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

Punishment Evil In the New Testament

We have observed in the Old Testament that God at times used natural evil to punish the evil doer. Does God punish in this manner during the New Testament dispensation? There is no doubt that these evils are present with us because sin is in the world, but does He punish in this fashion today? Sometimes a person will ask, "Am I suffering this illness because of some sin in my life?" We may indeed suffer a physical affliction because of some abuse of our bodies such as smoking or the consumption of alcohol, but it does not follow that every disease is a direct punishment for sin. Jesus dispelled that idea with His disciples long ago as is recorded in John 9:1-3. "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God should be manifest in him."

We should be hard pressed to prove that a disease or a natural disaster was visited upon an individual or a group because of some personal sin, but we are sure that men suffer certain penalties as a result of their rejection of God. Man is said to be given over to a reprobate mind as a consequence of his sin in Romans 1:28. He suffers the hardness of heart due to unbelief (Heb. 3:13). He is blinded spiritually (Jn. 12:40) and he is sent strong delusion that he may believe a lie if he does not have a love for the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12). These are the natural outgrowth of sinful and rebellious hearts, but divine retribution for evil is reserved for the day of judgment.

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Usage of the Word "Evil"

It is apparent that evil does come upon Christians as a trial of their faith and as a source of chastisement to refine them. (Heb. 12:5) "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

While we are called upon to suffer natural evil in this life and experience the trying of our faith it should be remembered that God never tempts us to commit moral evil. James made that clear in James 1:13-14, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil [kakos], neither tempteth he any man."

Conclusion

In this study we have defined the word "evil" and observed the various usages of the word in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. We have shown that evil belongs in two primary classifications, moral and natural. We have discussed punishment evil and God's providence. From the Scriptures it is evident that God is not responsible for moral evil, but that He is involved with the consequences of evil. We have observed that natural evil is in the world because of moral evil and that all men suffer natural evil. 214 Pearl St., Cleburne, TX 76031

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The Last Day (John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48)

by Alan Bonifay

New Testament Usage

The phrase "the last day" appears in the New Testament only in the Gospel of John where it occurs seven times. Six of the seven have reference to the day of the general resurrection and the judgment of all men. The seventh appearance of this phrase, while not bearing directly upon the subject of our discussion, is nevertheless very significant in establishing the meaning of these words.

In His marvelous sermon on "The Bread of Life" (Jn. 6:28-71), Jesus declares four times that those whom the Father has given Him; those which see Him and believe on Him; those whom the Father has drawn to Him; and those who eat of His flesh and drink of His blood possess everlasting life and "at the last day" He will raise them up (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54).

Just as in John 1:3, in the prologue, the universe is said, in accordance with fundamental Hebrew beliefs, to have been created at a definite time in the past, so here it is regarded as subject to a definite limit in the future.¹

On another occasion as Jesus and His disciples draw nigh to Bethany, where his friend Lazarus has so recently fallen asleep in death, Martha hearing of their arrival comes to meet them. In the ensuing poignant conversation, she replies to Jesus' unequivocal statement that her brother shall rise again. "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (Jn. 11:18-24).

Hendriksen comments,

It must not remain unnoticed that in what she said Martha took for granted, as entirely indisputable, the resurrection on the last day. Personal belief in individual resurrection is expressed in many Old Testament references (Ps. 16:9-11; 17:15; 49:15; 73:24, 26; perhaps also Job 19:25-27). Collective resurrection is implied in Ezekiel 37:1-14; Hosea 6:2; and clearly expressed in Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:1-2. Besides, it must be remembered that Martha was not merely a Jewess; she was a disciple of Jesus. We may assume that she had accepted by faith such teaching as that which we find in John 5:28-29."²

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Finally, in what appears to be a brief summary of his previous public teaching, John records these words of Jesus:

He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak (Jn. 12:44-49).

All six of these references allude to the general resurrection of all men and the day of judgment. However, it is in John's seventh usage of this phrase that we begin to clearly perceive the meaning of these words.

In John 7:37 the record says: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." While there is considerable controversy over whether "the last day" of the feast was the seventh day or the eighth day, the point pertinent to our investigation is that "the last day" was a specific literal day and that both the word "last" and "day" are used in their normal way.

Defining the word for "last," the **Analytical Greek Lexicon** says, "farthest; last, latest, lowest, in the lowest plight." W. E. Vine gives: "last, utmost, extreme." E. W. Bullinger: "the last, the extreme, the most remote; with reference to time that which concludes anything." The word is used fifty-four times in the New Testament. It is translated "last" forty-eight times, "uttermost" twice, "ends" once, "lowest" twice, and "latter" once.

Defining the word for day, the **Analytical Greek Lexicon** gives, "day, the interval from sunrise to sunset; or the interval of twenty-four hours, comprehending day and night." Bullinger, Vine and others give essentially the same definitions. Of the some 388 times the word is used in the New Testament, about ninety-five percent of the time it is translated "day" or "days." The other renderings like "daily," "age," "years," "daytime," "time," "be," and "judgment" are all contextually clear.

Obviously, then, from the usage of this term in the New Testament we learn that "the last day" is a specific literal day (i.e., twenty-four hour

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period) on which the resurrection of all men and their subsequent eternal judgment occurs.

Corroborating the expectation presented in John's gospel of a specific future day of judgment are statements in at least sixteen other New Testament books:

Mt. 10:14-15 (Mk. 6:11; Lk. 10:11, 12); Mt. 11: 20-24; Mt. 12:36; Mt. 24:36, 50 (Mk. 13:32; Lk. 17:30, 31); Acts 17:30-31; 1 Cor. 1:7-8; 5:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 9-11; 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:2-4; 2 Thess. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:6-8; Heb. 4:8-9; 1 Pet. 2:11-12; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7-13; 1 Jn. 4:17; Jude 6.

Taken together these passages establish with abundant force the truth that at some future time there will be a day of judgment for all men.

The Nature of the Day

The Scriptures teach that the last day will be a perfectly normal day like all of those which have gone before: different only in that it will be the last day ever to be ruled by the concept of time (cf. Mt. 24:36-41; Lk. 17:24-36).

Also in each of the three parables in Matthew 25, life is portrayed as proceeding under normal influences when the Lord returns to reckon with his servants (cf. Mt. 25:6-13, 19, 31).

Throughout the New Testament the Lord's return is presented as sudden, unexpected, and without warning. In Matthew 24, Jesus gives numerous and precise indications as to when Jerusalem will be destroyed, but in sharp contrast to that, there will be no warnings preceding His second coming (cf. Mt. 24:36-51; 1 Thess. 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 3:9, 10).

The time of Jesus' coming is totally unknown. The fact is, the New Testament does not teach Jesus is coming soon, and neither does it teach His coming is yet in the distant future. It teaches over and over again that Christians are to be ready, waiting, eagerly desiring, and looking for His return. When Jesus does come (and He will) it will be on a day like any other. It will be suddenly, unexpectedly and without warning. One day "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" and time shall be no more (1 Thess. 4:16).

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The Consequences of the Last Day

When He comes the universe will pass away. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them . . . And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Rev. 20:11; 21:1). Quoting Psalm 102:25-27, the Hebrew writer wrote, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed" (Heb. 1:10-12). On that great and final day the Hadean world will cease (Rev. 20:13, 14).

Further, as is implicitly taught in this passage, the general bodily resurrection of all men—the righteous and the wicked—shall occur. Paul writes concerning the resurrection: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 14:23). Two points are worthy of consideration here. First, the offering of the firstfruits was a guarantee that the remainder of the harvest that belonged to the Lord would be subsequently forthcoming. In like manner, the Lord's resurrection is an earnest or guarantee of our future resurrection. Second, the firstfruits were always of the same nature as that of the subsequent harvest-offering. Thus, we can deduce that our resurrection will be of the same nature as our Lord's. According to Luke 24:3, His was a bodily resurrection. The record says, "And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." The simultaneous bodily resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked is most clearly established in John 5:28-29.

Finally, the last day will be the "day of judgment" (Rev. 20:11-15). The New Testament is abundantly clear that the great judgment is universal, consisting of "all men everywhere" (Acts 17:30, 31); "all nations" (Mt. 25:31-33); "the living and the dead" (2 Tim. 4:1; Acts 10:12; Rom. 14:9; 1 Peter 4:5); "all" (Jude 14-15); and "the dead small and great" (Rev. 20:12-15). "The angels that sinned" (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) will be judged, also. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10; see also Mt. 16:27; Rom. 14:11, 12; 2:6). For those who are "weighed in the balance and found wanting" an eternity in a Devil's hell will ensue. For those washed in the blood of the Lamb and found faithful, an eternity of wonder, glory and bliss will begin as they are ushered into heaven itself (Mt. 25:46).

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2 Peter 3:7-13

For the remainder of our lesson we shall consider 2 Peter 3:7-13, with particular emphasis upon four questions:

1. Is this passage a reference to the second coming of Christ, or does it refer, instead to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70?
2. What does this passage teach concerning the destruction of this earth and its renovation?
3. What is the meaning of the phrase "new heavens and a new earth?"
4. What are the implications of the last day as thus presented for the dispensationalist premillennial view?

Second Coming of Christ, or the Destruction of Jerusalem?

The basis for the notion that 2 Peter 3 is in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem is predicated upon several very tenuous arguments. The first is that 2 Peter dates from the mid 60s (65 or 66 A.D.). The second is that in verse three, Peter states that scoffers shall come in "the last days" denying the Lord's coming. The advocates of this view understand "the last days" as an exclusive reference to the final days of the Mosaic age. However, we believe that there are references using this term which apply to the Christian age. For instance:

1 Timothy 4:1 "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;" (The development of Catholicism and various cultic religions is in view).

Hebrews 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (cf. 2:3, 4; the authority of Christ is in view).

2 Timothy 3:1ff "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

The third argument which purportedly establishes this view is that language like that in verses 7-13 is often used by the Old Testament prophets to represent the revolutions in the political state of empires or nations. For example, Isaiah 34:4, where the destruction of Idumea is foretold under the figures of "dissolving the host of heaven" and "of the falling down of all their hosts as the leaf falleth off from the vine;" or Ezekiel 32:7, where the destruction of Egypt is described by the figures of "covering the heaven and making the stars thereof dark" and "of covering the sun with a cloud"

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and "of hindering the moon from giving her light." In Joel 2:10, the invasion of Judea by a foreign power is thus foretold: "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." In Joel 2:30, 31, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans is thus predicted: "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." Other examples are found in Amos 8:9, Haggai 2:6 and Matthew 24:9.

In answer to this it is noteworthy that none of these prophets have spoken as Peter has done of the entire destruction of the earth. They speak only of "the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll;" the obscuring of the light of the sun and the moon; "the shaking of the heavens and the earth" and "the falling down of the stars;" whereas Peter speaks of the utter destruction of the parts of the earth and its atmosphere by fire. This affords us reason for believing that the events foretold by the prophets are different in their nature than those foretold by the apostle; and that they are to be figuratively understood, but he is to be understood literally. Even the phraseology of the prophets compared with that of Peter supports our view. The prophets predict events which exhibit impossibilities if interpreted literally, such as "the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll" or "the turning of the moon to blood." Note, "its passing away with a great noise" and the "burning of the earth and the works thereon" together with "burning" and "melting" of the "elements" or the planet earth, are all things possible and therefore may be literally understood.

Note also these arguments in answer to the view that Peter speaks of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70:

1. 2 Peter 3:6-7—The destruction of the world in Noah's day was universal, and in like manner the destruction of the earth when the Lord comes again will also be universal. Note carefully that Peter states that in Noah's day "the world" perished, but at the second coming of Christ it will be "the earth" that will be destroyed. Further if the "water" of verse six is literal, so must be the "fire" of verse seven.

2. 2 Peter 3:8—This seems to me a totally inappropriate figure under which to represent God's faithfulness to His promise despite the passing of time if the destruction of Jerusalem is in view.

3. 2 Peter 3:9-11—Presumably in consonant with the destruction of Jerusalem view, the counsel to repent would be in order for them then as

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Christians to be able to read Matthew 24, and thus escape the city. But, what difference would holiness and godliness effect? Holiness and godliness would have no bearing on their escape from Jerusalem and Matthew 24:3-35 was given in order for the Christians to be able to escape the city. But if "the last day," the day of judgment, is in view, and verse seven says it is, then obviously the importance of Christians being found in holiness and righteousness is evident.

4. 2 Peter 3:7, 10—This "day" is to be one of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Matthew 13:49-50, and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 teach that this will occur at the end of the world. In verse ten Peter used the same sudden unexpected arrival of the thief in the night to represent the Lord's coming that Jesus used in Matthew 24:42-43. The passage in Matthew 24 is clearly in reference to "the last day," the day of judgment.

5. 2 Peter 3:12—Why would Jewish Christians look forward to and urge on the coming destruction of their city, friends, and acquaintances if it was to be succeeded by no greater blessing than life after A.D. 70? But Christians awaiting a final abode in heaven could certainly look forward to the Lord coming to rescue them and take them home.

6. 2 Peter 3:13—If this is all about A.D. 70, then pray tell what was the new heaven and the new earth they were looking for? What was the "promise" the new heaven and new earth fulfilled? There were no changes dramatic enough after Jerusalem's destruction to warrant such a figure.

7. 2 Peter 3:13—Furthermore things were no more righteous on earth in A.D. 75 than they were in 69. No condition prevailed after Jerusalem's destruction warranting the appellation "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The church still was suffering a bitter persecution by the Romans and continued to do so for nearly two-and-a-half centuries.

8. 2 Peter 3:14—As we pointed out in verse eleven, if this is about Jerusalem's destruction, which the Christians escaped, what difference does being "without spot and blameless" make? But if this is the second coming it is of critical importance.

9. 2 Peter 3:17—The warning against being away in error is far more appropriate if it is the second coming under consideration.

10. 2 Peter 3:4, 9, 13—Notice "the Promise of his coming": "the promise" about which God is not slack in fulfilling; and "the promise" which prompts Christians to look for "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." This promise is found in John 14:3: "And if I go and prepare

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a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Matthew 16:27 styles it: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Will The Earth Be Renovated?

It is sufficient to note that the new heavens and new earth will follow the total destruction of this earth in blazing fire. This being the clear import of Peter's language in verses 7, 10, 12, the earth that will then be is not this one. It is this earth which embodies the hopes and expectations of future kingdom advocates. The notion that this earth will be renovated is totally inconsistent with Peter's teaching.

What Are The New Heavens and New Earth?

Isaiah first uses this phrase in 65:17 and in 66:22. Edward Young says the word "create"

points to the production of something fundamentally new. What is to be announced is so revolutionary that it is the result of God's creative activity. That almighty power which was displayed at the original creation is again to be displayed in a new work of creation [the church—AWB]. With the advent of the Messiah the blessing to be revealed will in every sense be so great it can be described only as a creation of a new heaven and a new earth. The reference, however, is not to be restricted to the first advent but includes the entire reign of Christ, including the second advent and the eternal state. Christ renews the world, and Hebrews speaks of it as the world to come (2:5). In passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15, Paul shows how the new creation applies to believers; and Peter sets forth the hope of believers to receive this new heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3:13). In the concept of the prophet, time and eternity; the age of the New Testament and the eternal home are not sharply distinguished; and believers are already in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3).³

In the New Testament there are two words translated "new." One is prospective and indicates that which is young as opposed to old; the other is retrospective and points to that which is fresh in contrast to that which is worn out. It is the second of these which is used here. The heavens and the earth which the apostle describes in this passage will be new and fresh

and not old and worn, as are the heavens and the earth which now exist. Guy N. Woods suggests these points:

1. The present heavens and earth serve as a figure of the heavens and earth to follow.
2. The words "heavens and earth" are not intended to embrace all of God's material universe, but only that portion where His people dwell.
3. In the antetype, this limitation must be understood, and the words "new heaven and earth" must then be regarded as a designation of where His people dwell, and not a detailed description of the future abode.
4. Heaven is the final abode of the people of God.
5. Therefore, the phrase "new heaven and new earth" must be understood as a designation for the Christian's eternal home—Heaven.⁴

Implications For the Dispensationalist Premillennial Theory

We have already established that the last day is a literal day—the day of judgment for all men. Both the righteous and the wicked will be resurrected from the dead and judged according to their works on the same literal day—the last one (Jn. 5:28-29, et. al.). In 2 Peter 3, the day of judgment is one of perdition for the ungodly, but for the righteous it is the long sought day ushering in the believer's "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is also the literal day on which the earth will be burned up.

Contrary to all of this, and for that matter, all of God's Word, is the dispensationalist's view of the last day as enduring for at least 1007 years. He pictures the first part of the second coming as the resurrection of the righteous and their rapture for seven years, during which time the great tribulation will occur on earth. After which the second part of the second coming will begin when Jesus comes to earth to reign one thousand years on David's throne in Jerusalem. Then comes the little season when Satan is loosed. And finally, the third part of the second coming when the wicked will be resurrected and judged. All of this makes a mockery of Hebrews 9:28, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The whole system of dispensationalist premillennialism is in blatant opposition to God's Word and especially is this so in eschatological considerations.

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Conclusion

When the Apostle John speaks of "the last day" in his narrative of the life of Christ he means the final day of time. That day will begin like any other, but ere it ends it will witness the coming of the Lord Jesus. His arrival will be sudden and unexpected. On that day the dead will be raised. All men and angels will be judged according to their deeds. The righteous will be taken home to heaven and the wicked will be banished to Gehenna. Time will be no more. The watchword for the people of God is: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 24:44). 709 Potomac Ave., Fairmont, WV 26554

End Notes

- ¹ R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, p. 168
- ² William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of John*; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., Vol. 2, p. 154
- ³ Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. III; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1979, p. 154.
- ⁴ Guy N. Woods, *Peter, John, Jude*; Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville, Tenn., 1962, pp. 188-189

Survey of Apologetics

Survey of Apologetics

by John M. Criswell

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Dedication:

*To Mom and Dad, the first apologists that ever influenced me.
And my wife and constant companion: Beth*

Because of the gravity of such a topic it should be noted at the outset that any material covered in this short paper is merely introductory in nature and in no way attempts to discover the underpinnings of the field itself. The sole purpose of this writing is to project simply onto the readers mind an image of various terms, movements, and individuals associated with this field. From the outset it should be noted that an exhaustive study of the subject at hand would be impossible in this setting. With this realization the writer makes no attempt to discuss any point relating to apologetics except as it deals with Christianity in its inception and maturation process. Christian Apologetics is rich with tradition and tributary movements. Only major streams of thought will be navigated.

Christian Apologetics

From the very dawn of creation the human creature has felt the need to justify itself and its actions. Most actions, good or bad, especially if anticipating rejection, bring about an immediate defense from the doer. With few exceptions this rule is constant. Mankind is drawn toward a higher, at times seemingly unreachable code of ethics. A way of living that is unquestionably supreme, just, and equitable to his fellow man. Whether one attributes such a force to the "Laws of Human Nature,"¹ which all appeal to and expect others to have knowledge of, or whether attributed directly to God, Himself, it matters not. The truth remains the same. Mankind has an indelible sense of moral obligation and moves in the direction of defending his deeds; right or wrong.

One of the classic accounts of such an attempt at justification is found in the first book of the Bible. In Genesis the epoch unfolds as man is created

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in a state of perfection. God, in seeing the sinless state of his creation, pronounces that, "... it was very good" (Gen 1:31). As if then to give man free choice God entrusts him the care of the beautiful garden with simple yet specific instructions. Obedience to these instructions held a blessing while refusal surely doomed man with a curse. With due time, in keeping with his rebellious spirit, man decided to disregard God's command. The fruit was eaten and nakedness was realized. As Genesis records the account one is led to understand that Adam and Eve were ashamed of their blatant transgression and thus hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. Adam's reply to God in Chapter 3:10-12 becomes the first recorded apologetic statement in defense of the sinfulness of the human race. In this classic passage Adam excuses himself by offering the plea of fear and the technique of blame. Eve was indicted.

Although from the Old Testament, this account gives us a basic insight into the definition and application of apologetics. Apologetics simply put means a "speech in defense."² Distinction needs to be made between the English word "Apologize" and the field of "Apologetics." While both terms are similar they stand apart in connotation. If one considers the word "Apologize" immediately there is brought to mind an attitude of meekness or remorse. One could imagine that "to apologize" means making retribution for wrongs done. This is the common usage in 20th century English. In the field of "apologetics", however, the term takes on a much more positive connotation. To make an apology does not necessarily mean that one is sorry for his beliefs or actions. It rather means that one is defending his case. Remorse may or may not be relevant. Strictly speaking, one must realize that apologetics merely means "defense of oneself."

"The Greek word *apologia*, meaning "speech in defense," refers to an oral and literary genre known throughout the ancient Mediterranean world."³ The concept is as old as time itself but the early Greeks exercised their skill in the field with unequalled expertise. J. B. Tyson states:

The literary form of apology had a time-honored history, dating back to the *Apology* of Socrates by Plato. The customary approach was to take the charges, explore their meaning, and demonstrate their erroneous nature. Their style was characterized by clarity of exposition and interesting detail. Many were replete with quotations from poets and philosophers. They generally concentrated on one major point and gave slight attention to one or two minor matters. A concluding appeal summed up the argument. It takes a learned person to be an

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apologist. The writer must write in a clear, forceful, and appealing style and must be familiar with a wide range of literary allusions. He must be aware of the basic ideas and motivating forces of his opponents and must know what in his defendant will appeal to them.⁴

The *Encyclopedia of Religion* states:

When Socrates was accused of demonstrating impiety toward the ancestral gods of his state and of corrupting the morals of Athenian youth through adherence to unusual beliefs, he argued his case against ignorance and unenlightened authority by means of REASON. Although he failed to convince a majority of jurors that his pursuit of wisdom, which had made him a critic of prevailing religious belief, was based in truth, his effort became a model for future apologists.⁵

It was in such a vein that Christian apologetics had their roots. Christians, facing a Greco-Roman culture buttressed by polytheistic beliefs and practices, where monotheism was judged to be both blasphemous and incredible, found Reason to be their only defense. Beginning in the second century CE, Christians also exercised a strenuous apologetic effort to explain the foundations of their emerging beliefs and to defend themselves against oppression and popular slander. As the pagans discovered Christians would not serve the gods legitimated by Roman authority, they were held to be atheistic and seditious elements of the population. In addition, the lifestyle that the Christians lived and the way they worshiped fostered accusations of cannibalism and incest from the pagans.⁶

Religious apologetics can then be defined usefully in modern terms as the laying out of the fundamentals of religious belief.⁷ It becomes a systematic way to prove to others the claims of the Christian faith. It is a theoretical discipline seeking a rational justification for the truth it claims.⁸ Apologetics is that which directs itself toward others to persuade them by the exchange of ideas and logic. The *Encyclopedia of Religion* sums it up in this manner:

Apologetics is other-directed communication of religious belief that makes assertions about knowing and serving God. It represents the content of a particular faith in an essentially intellectualist fashion and, like a national boundary, acts as a membrane for the exchange of ideas. The content of apologetics is based in the revelation of God. But its format

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is based in culture. Apologetics often is other-directed in so far as it presupposes, at least apparently, an audience external to the faith it represents.⁹

As we shall see, however, apologetics by a particular group rarely is taken seriously by those outside that group. Apologetics, if looked at in a realistic manner, tends to be self-stimulating literature. W. Walker in his book, *History of the Christian Church*, says that there is no evidence that apologists influenced heathen opinion or that their appeal was seriously considered by rulers toward whom it was aimed. Their work was most valuable in Christian circles.¹⁰ However disappointing this may seem, it is not without merit. Apologetics help promote the clarification of ideas within the group and forges a strategy of orthodoxy toward non-believers.

In a nutshell apologetics may be summed up as a single statement, "What rational defense can be given for the Christian faith."¹¹

Why Study Apologetics?

To the historian and theologian the preceding material may be of interest from the perspective of theoretical and antiquarian information. Certainly theology often enshrines itself within its own Ivory Towers and the branches of higher learning are filled with "Academia Nuts." But of what use is the field of apologetics to the average Christian? Is there reason to be aware of or to study such a subject?

As has been noted in the preceding definition, apologetics is a theoretical discipline. It is not a study that addresses the specifics of direct confrontation. William Craig in his book, *Apologetics: An Introduction*, says, "This means that a course in apologetics is not for the purpose of teaching you 'If he says so-and-so, then you say such-and-such.'"¹² Again, understand that apologetics tries to answer the question, "What rational defense can be given for the Christian faith." It works best in a theoretical context.

Although this is the case, apologetics has many practical advantages. Even for the armchair student of Christianity it should hold some interest. As one considers the Christian faith and the attacks it has suffered in times past, the importance of Christian apologetics should become vividly clear. From its very inception Christianity has been under fire. Ridiculous as it may seem that a system which teaches good will and supreme love to ones fellow man could be persecuted, the truth remains that such is the case. Perhaps the assertion of anti-Christian writer Celcus in 178 CE will help sum up many a non-Christian's sentiment. Avrey Dulles summarizes Celcus,

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The Christians demand a faith not based on examination, and this can only be an irrational commitment. Further, they shun open debate with the learned. They operate as a secret society and, despising wisdom, seduce the ignorant and credulous. The Bible is full of childish legends and falls far below the finest achievements of classical history. It falsely teaches that God changes His mind, that He chooses favorites among the human race, and that He manages the whole of creation for the benefit of man alone.¹³

Though written in the 2nd century, much of this same logic is alive today. No longer can the serious Christian expect to pass off with a light brush the philosophical arguments of Atheists, Agnostics, and Diests alike. The Christian may feel that he is grounded in his faith and that it is not necessary to refute the idea that the Gospel is foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18). This, however, can no longer be an excuse for apathy and lethargy. Hans Kung says, "Atheism today demands an account of our belief in God as it never did in the past."¹⁴ Francis Schaeffer states, "... we are living in a post-Christian era when the thought forms of society are fundamentally anti-Christian."¹⁵ Today as never before the Christian is surrounded with doubt and disbelief. While living in a "Christian Nation", so called, it is apparent that the thought of man's imagination is on evil continually. However alarming this may be, America is not alone. Europe has been swept with anti-Christian propaganda. W. L. Craig attests:

Atheism and Agnosticism are widespread in Europe and have become influential in the United States as well, particularly in the universities . . . Humanism has become remarkably aggressive in the United States with an almost evangelical fervor. Not only "Low Brow" atheists like Madeleine Murray O'Hare, but sophisticated and intelligent humanists who are opposing theism and Christianity with rational arguments.¹⁶

He also points out that most philosophers adhere to one of these world views. This is especially true of Universities and higher learning. For Christians it must become the task to familiarize themselves with the arguments. "As Christians we simply cannot afford to stand by, exhorting people to believe in God, without dealing with the problem on the rational level."¹⁷

In understanding the problem let it be noted that logic may not always convince people but it is a starting point in our sophisticated society. It may not save people but it can provide an environment conducive to the gospel being heard and not dismissed as a logical absurdity.¹⁸

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From the above comments it might seem as if the writer has fallen into a paradoxical spiral. If education is filled with Atheism and Agnosticism how can one hope to use education to defend that which education as a whole rejects? Clarity must be made. The problem that the 20th century Christian finds himself up against is not education in general. Rather it is quite the opposite. Education, one could rightfully assert, brings one closer to theology. The difficulty arises when education purports various theories and philosophies that have no coherency with scientific truth. The Christian need not fear scientific fact for in no wise does it detriment Christ's philosophy. Perhaps the downfall of Christianity is not the system but its adherents failure to face issues and legitimate objections that have in the past been raised. W. L. Craig sums it up well in quoting the European philosopher Wolfhart Pannenberg:

For much too long a time faith has been misunderstood to be subjectivities fortress into which Christianity could retreat from the attacks of scientific knowledge. Such a retreat into pious subjectivity can only lead to destroying any consciousness of the truth of the Christian faith.¹⁹

The advice of the Apostle Peter serves the Christian as well today as it did 19 centuries ago. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

The true Christian of the 20th century has the tremendous obligation of defending his beliefs by the philosophical means available. One cannot hope to convince others of Christ if they do not begin at the hearer's level. One with faith will have little success in speaking of faith to those that have none. A common sub-strata must be found. If the Christian is to approach his philosophical system from any perspective other than "blind faith", education will be the vehicle by which he achieves his goal. Pannenberg again says that if Christianity is to make any meaningful claim to truth, it must submit to the same procedures of testing and verification as are employed in the secular sciences.²⁰ For too long believers have brushed aside the legitimacy of the skeptics argument that Christians heads are buried in the sand. While some accusations are totally unfounded and while the darts of derision have sometimes been hurled unjustly, perhaps some blame lies at the Christians own door. In fear of the philosophical jungle where the serpent still tempts man with forbidden "apples," in our own rebellion we have not tasted of the fruit of the garden at all. There is much in the "Educational Garden" that is good for food.

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To do a justified job in apologetics will require much work. A working knowledge of Biblical Scholarship, Biblical Criticisms,²¹ and perhaps at least a taste of Hebrew and Greek will be needed.²² The serious apologist will find it necessary to employ all of these tools to defend his positions. In addition, seeing that apologetics are bound up within the existing culture, a knowledge of current trends and movements of the day will become vital.

A word at this point regarding the tools that are available and Biblical Scholarship. Today, as noted above, anti-Christian claims have become extremely sophisticated. Often the very tools of Christian and Biblical Scholarship have been turned against the very faith it critiques. Agnostics and critics have wielded them well. With such a realization many have condemned the process of scholarship altogether. Many are appalled at the very notion that the Bible could be critiqued by mere man. How can man subject the word of God to the same procedures of testing and verification as the secular sciences? While this may seem to be anti-Biblical let it be noted that Biblical scholarship holds an important role. While being non-religious and in some respects stemming from the 19th century era of skepticism, it is still valid. It serves many useful purposes. Only in approaching it without fear and with an open mind can one hope to gain from its well-spring. Biblical scholarship, while being viewed as the enemy of the Christian faith, and in some cases justifiably so, is an important friend in gaining a deeper understanding of God's book. If it is believed that the Bible is God's word and that it is divine, then one need not fear any man-made tests it is subjected to. If it is not of man but of God then man's ability to critique the Bible should show that it is a book that not only equals man's writings but excels them. Scholarship should be approached cautiously but without fear.

One might ask what scholarship of this nature has to do with apologetics. The answer is simple. Scholarship is the touchstone of verifying many biblical claims. Indeed, the field of history to which most scholars and preachers appeal is bound up in this tradition. As in any area of study, however, one should keep an open mind and differentiate between the ridiculous and sensible. And while it may seem to be a paradox that the field which is so useful in apologetics can be the same field that Agnostics use, it should not alarm us. Every field, including science and religion, has the ability to give impetus to heresy. This is not a fault with the field but rather human nature.²³

New Testament Apologetics

Now that "Apologetics" has been defined and its importance understood, it becomes the next logical step of understanding its use in the Christian

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Era. What proofs, logic, and reason are used by New Testament writers and those who immediately followed? To begin such a study one must go to the text and discover the situation of the first century writers.

To a causal reader of the New Testament it might not seem as if apologetics played a leading role in its development. New Testament books, on the surface, usually do not reveal such a genre. Upon closer observation, however, it becomes clear that much of the text is apologetical. Avrey Dulles, noted scholar in the field of apologetics, and author of the classic work, *History of Apologetics*, states:

While none of the New Testament writings is directly and professedly apologetical, nearly all of them contain reflections of the Church's efforts to exhibit the credibility of its message and to answer the obvious objections that would have arisen in the minds of adversaries, prospective converts, and candid believers.²⁴

Consider the implications of the first century CE. While Christ had, indeed, promised his kingdom and had established such according to Acts 2, there would still be doubts and derision arise. Christ, a Jew by nationality, would be forced upon by his fellow countrymen to verify his claims as the Son of God. Later his disciples would be asked to do the same. And though Jesus' fellow countrymen failed on the whole to accept his claim, the miracles and prophecy he cited had divine impact upon his disciples in the first and following centuries. Again the truth is borne out that apologetics generally has its most profound effect on those who believe already.

Within this initial thrust of Christianity came the technique of proving Christ by the fulfillment of the Old Law. This became the primary essence of the New Testament's apologetical statement. It might be noted that before being an apologetic, Christianity was a message of Jesus as Messiah and Lord. As this message was proclaimed, however, it naturally gave rise to questions. How could such a one of lowly birth and upbringing be the promised Messiah?²⁵ "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him." (Mt. 13:55-57).

Such a question about the birth and lineage was answered by Paul in appealing to Old Testament Scripture (cf. Rom. 1:3; Acts 13:17-23).

Questions were also raised as to how Jesus could have suffered such cruelty and could have been betrayed by one of his own. The prospective

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Jewish believer demanded an answer. Such being true, Jesus and his followers looked to the Old Testament prophets to prove their claims. This became the pattern for the entire New Testament period. Avrey Dulles says:

The widespread failure of the Jews to recognize Jesus as Messiah presumably constituted a major obstacle to the evangelization of Israel. In answer to this difficulty, a number of Old Testament quotations would seem to have been adduced. In addition to the Fourth Servant Song . . . the Christians appealed frequently to Isaiah 6:9-10, which describes God's binding of those who were to hear the preaching of Isaiah. The text, cited in all four Gospels and in Acts 28:26-27, was doubtless one of the pillars of the primitive apologetic.²⁶

In the earliest Kerygmatic²⁷ proclamation the disciples of the church pointed to the old law and prophecy as proof of their claim. It is important to remember that in this initial setting Christianity was still viewed by many as a deviant form of Judaism. Therefore situation demanded that the proofs called upon fit within the cultural and social framework of the day. At this early point most Christians were Jews. The Gospel had not yet been preached to all nations (Mk. 16:15). Even while Christianity spread it was initially taken, even by Paul the great "Pagan Evangelizer," to the Jews. Much of the New Testament calls on the Jewish readers knowledge of the Old Testament Scripture to understand its illusions. Hebrews, which has been called by Alexander B. Bruce the 'First Christian Apology',²⁸ and 1 Corinthians are excellent examples of such writings. To the early church the Old Testament scriptures were vital to their understanding of Jesus as both Son of God and Messiah. Verses like Acts 17:11 are illuminated when such a context is kept in mind. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Jewish Christians turned time and again to the tradition in which they were raised to meet arguments about the superiority of Christ, his sonship, and his resurrection. The writers of the text felt the critical need to give the world their apology. "Parts of the New Testament such as the major Pauline letters, Hebrews, the four Gospels, and Acts—Reveal an apologetical preoccupation in the minds of the authors themselves."²⁹ Perhaps this could best be summed up by John's statement, "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (Jn. 20:31).

Although Jews were the primary target of New Testament theology and apology, it is quite clear that the Greek Gentile world would also be en-

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countered. This is especially significant following the Jewish rejection of this new off-shoot of its National religion. Paul's statement in Acts 13:46 is an apt expression of the sentiment of the apostle. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

With this decision the waves of apologetical tide flow out in the direction of the Greek world and toward the succeeding centuries. From this point Christian apologetics would never be the same.

Without the decision to expand the gospel and kerygma to the Gentile world one's study of the entire field of apologetics might be rather brief. It was in this fertile soil of Greek learning that apologetics germinated. The culture of this new environment gave synthesis to the Light of the gospel. This Light synthesis (photosynthesis) would have its roots in the apostle Paul and would bloom for the next several centuries.

In a close study of the Acts of the Apostles it becomes clear that Paul was an expert in Jewish as well as Greek logic. His encounters with the Greek and Roman world point out time and time again the apostle's ability in assessing human nature and human endeavors of learning. It has been said that Paul in Acts represents the ideal Pharisee AND philosopher of the Greek world.³⁰

Paul is one,

Who finds in Christianity the proper fulfillment of all that was good in his ancestral tradition and can therefore appeal confidently to the Jewish scriptures to vindicate his belief, and also as the exponent of a philosophical monotheism who can appeal for confirmation of his preaching to the utterances of the Greek poets. This double claim, that Christianity is the truth to which both the scriptures and the insights of the philosophers directly lead, is a starting-point for the arguments of the Apologists, but they develop its implications and they provide it with a theological rationale.³¹

Paul uses all of his techniques to bring the gospel to all the world. Acts is replete with examples of apostolic apologetic statements. Some good indications of the apologetic elements are found in not only Paul's words but also in Stephen's defense (Acts 7), Peter's apology to Cornelius (Acts 10), and perhaps the most famous is Paul's address to the cultured Greeks of Athens (Acts 17).³² Paul's areopagite address resounds with techniques later

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to be used by great apologists. F. F. Bruce says, "In several respects Paul's *Areopagitica* anticipates the Christian apologies of the 2nd Century."³³

A final note before entering the "unholy ground" of the Patristic Era is that the first century was a difficult time in the spread of the message of Jesus Christ. This time period was filled with persecution, hardship and poverty. Paul, himself, lists his perils for Christ (2 Cor 11). It was also a time when Christianity met its opponents head-on. Both Judaism and Paganism were fiercely battled. Yet in the face of tremendous difficulty the new sect grew at a phenomenal rate. This growth of the early church was directly attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit and a personal conviction by individual Christians to teach the gospel to the entire world even as they were scattered. It was also from this humble apostolic kerygmatic beginning that some of the greatest logic of all time would arise.

The Patristic Era and Beyond

As we have seen, apologetics for the Christian faith had their roots in the Hebrew scriptures. Jesus and the early apostles referenced them time and again to prove that the new era they were ushering in was not a mere division off the old but a New Age altogether. The Christian Age had been advented. We have also seen that as the kerygma of Jesus was taught it gradually came in contact with the "Civilized Greek World." With this turn of events came a whole new apologetical discourse. Apologetics would become something far different than they had ever been before. No longer would Christianity appeal only to Jewish tradition and law to prove Christ's claim. Classical Greek logic would be employed. This was a first for no such thorough attempt to analyze and interpret the significance of the Christian faith had hither to been made.³⁴ A bright theological sunrise could be seen peeping over the cultural horizon. The air of learning, however, though brisk with excitement, was not without storm clouds. While the succeeding generations would produce some of the most skilled minds in defending the truth it would also at the exact same time produce some of the most divisive action against the Church of the first century. With a complexity of logic came a complexity of theology. The end result would be a new form of Christianity far different than that taught by Christ or his initial followers. Division in spite of the great minds of the day would be inevitable.

With this as the backdrop we now turn to the Patristic era. As time and space would not allow for a comprehensive study only major events and individuals will be discussed.

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It is very important to note that Apologists of the post-Apostolic era did not arrive at their thoughts with radical change. It was a slow process. Metamorphosis of the field itself underwent a fermentation period. "The main lines of their defense of Christianity and their commendation of it to the world of their time . . . had already been adumbrated, more especially in the New Testament books themselves."³⁵

As theologians and apologists came and went each built upon the foundation of preceding generations. G. P. Fisher says that systematic Christian theology basically begins with the work of Greek Apologists of the second century.³⁶ They, indeed, had an important role in its development. Much of modern interpretation of scripture and systematic theology had its inception in this era. By the end of the second Century the new faith was on the way to becoming the most forceful and compelling movement within the Empire. Many of the keenest minds of the day were becoming followers of the "The Way."³⁷ From this humble 2nd century beginning would come the theology that would shake opponents for generations to come.

As should be clear, Apologists of the early part of the second century followed their forerunners. Logic to prove the scriptures was deduced from the Old Testament and prophecy. Non-Testimonial apologetics would come later. Dulles says:

Like the New Testament writings, most of the noncanonical Christian literature until about A. D. 125 was concerned with establishing the faith and discipline of the Christian community rather than with attempting to demonstrate the credibility of the Christian faith. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, and others, while affording valuable materials that could be exploited by apologetics of later centuries, did not themselves engage in what one should call apologetics."³⁸

The methods of 20th century apologetics would gradually arise, however, from this substrata. After 125 A.D. emphasis would turn away from the scriptures to cultural logic. This would be an attempt to show from cultural and philosophical problems that Christianity was the only alternative.³⁹

Apologists of the second century wrote for specific causes. Certain trends and groups would dictate their message and emphasis. Dulles again sheds light on this issue in the following quote.

After the 1st quarter of the 2nd century, however, apologetics became the most characteristic form of Christian writing. This

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shift from a purely intra-Church literature to documents addressed to the outside world can be attributed for the most part to four groups.⁴⁰

He goes on to identify the four groups: Converts who wanted to justify the radical change of life from paganism; Philosophers whose attacks on Christianity were becoming sophisticated causing Christians to feel the need to give a more reasoned response; Emperors who were the addressee of many apologists; Jews that were trying to slander Christians.⁴¹ Most, if not all of the Apologetic works, fall into one of these categories.

Putting the apologetic works aside, the Apologists can, themselves, be put in one of two categories. The categories being Political Apologists and Religious Apologists. While a few of the apologies fall clearly into one or another of these categories, many cut across all such schematic divisions.⁴²

Political Apologists

Political Apologists strove to address the issues of Christianity and the State. Henry C. Sheldon says:

In conducting their defense, the Christian apologists vindicated the attitude of the Christians toward the State, showed up the weak points of heathenism, and brought forward the positive evidences for the truth and divinity of their own system.⁴³

They tried to evoke a conducive attitude from the Emperors and rulers in which Christianity could grow unharmed. This task was monumental. Many hardships were faced. Sheldon again says:

According to a wide-spread calumny of the times, the Christians were guilty of criminal practices, shameless violations of the common laws of civilization. But in the eyes of the more intelligent, their great offense was that of being un-Roman.⁴⁴

Many of the Christian's practices and lack thereof drew negative response. Christian's failure to sacrifice to the gods drew them up on charges of being enemies of the state.⁴⁵ Also their secrecy and worship of an unknown Deity was looked on a mischief. Despite these charges Christian apologists sought to vindicate themselves of the negative attitudes of intelligent Greco-Roman thinkers.⁴⁶ In fact most of the writings of this era were dedicated directly to the Emperors. In reality, however, the apologists were seeking a wider audience. They sought the educated public.⁴⁷ The Christians would not call

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the Emperor Lord in the heathenistic since they but were ready to acknowledge him as their earthly lord and pray for his prosperity. Tertullian writes:

Without ceasing, for all our Emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the Empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies; a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest,—whatever, as man or Caesar, an emperor would wish. We cannot but look up to him as called by our Lord to his office; so that on valid grounds I might say Caesar is more ours than yours, for our God has appointed him.⁴⁸

Thus is the approach of many of the early apologists. In addressing the Emperor so delicately they hoped they could win national favor.

Religious Apologists

The religious apologists, like the political, faced their own opponents. They strove to thwart paganism. Sheldon says: "The representatives of the new religion did not allow a single accusation, a single objection to fall to the ground: they overcame pagan philosophy with its own weapons."⁴⁹

This group of thinkers tried to show strong arguments for conversion from paganism. They sought to show its weaknesses and expose its immoralities. They showed that the elevated concept of God in the bible inspired charity and courage. It was their sole aim to prove the superiority of the Christian way of thinking.

Before noticing particular apologists a few words should be said about this early stage in the field of apologetics. First, theology owes much to these individuals. Their dedication and theology has inspired us 20 centuries later. Without this initial step the world of apologetics would be much smaller. Their small steps were, indeed, giant leaps for mankind. This period of development, however, was not without problems.

Avrey Dulles says that the work of the 2nd century apologists reflect the vigor and inconsistencies of youth. The writers, he explains, are never fully masters of their subject and are at times defensive and aggressive toward their opponents.⁵⁰ They are not careful, it would seem, in manifesting a positive attitude in their battle. They ridicule their opponents and approach the subjects as debaters instead of philosophers.⁵¹ Finally, the early apologists, however zealous they may have been, were often uncautious and quoted sources that were not to their best interest.⁵² At times their arguments hinged on translations such as the Septuagint (LXX) which may not have

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been totally accurate. In general the early apologists accomplished their purpose but lacked the finesse and grace of later theologians. A lot of questions are left unanswered in their defenses.

Having this background it becomes useful to notice a few of the most important apologists that have influenced our modern understanding.

Aristides

Aristides, the Athenian philosopher who wrote his brief *Apology* addressed to the Emperor Hadrian about 125 CE, was the most important apologist prior to Justin.⁵³ He strives to delve into comparative religion and in the process divides mankind into five categories: barbarians, Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, and Christians.⁵⁴ He exposes the barbarians error because they adore innate objects and elements. He concludes that the objects of their worship, especially nature, are moved by a higher force and therefore cannot be divine. He continues his attack on the Greeks by saying that they worship fictitious gods and that they prove their own gods false by their immoral lifestyle. The Egyptians, he asserts, being more stupid than other men adore plants, herbs, reptiles and quadrupeds. They seem to be in his eyes without excuse. The Jews are more profound. They demonstrate superiority because they recognize one God. They practice acts of mercy but these acts are belied by their superstitious observances. They seem to assume that God stands in need of gifts and sacrifices. The Christians, on the other hand, surpass all others because they worship the true God and live in purity and modesty.

As one might quickly see, Aristides is defensive and at times offending in his approach. His *Apology* is brief but by placing emphasis on the moral and pure lives of the Christians he lays the groundwork for the most successful Apologists of the next few centuries.⁵⁵ Aristides when called upon to sum up the Christian belief states:

As for the Christian, they trace their origins to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is confessed to be the Son of the most high God, who came down from heaven by the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin and took flesh, and in a daughter of man there lived the Son of God . . . This Jesus . . . was pierced by the Jews, and he died and was buried; and they say that after three days he rose and ascended into heaven . . . They believe God to be the Creator and Maker of all things, in whom are all things and from whom are all things.⁵⁶

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Justin Martyr

Justin, a convert from paganism, became one of the most notable apologists of the 2nd century. Born in Flavia Neapolis in Palestine, his influence would spread to the entire world.⁵⁷ Justin's contribution to apologetics comes in his defense of Christians in their attitude toward the state. His two Apologies composed at Rome in about 150 CE and 155-160 CE, respectfully, are replete with this concern. His first Apology is addressed to Emperors Antoninus Pius and Lucius Commodus and he argues that Christians should not be condemned on the basis of their name alone. He argues that civic authorities should take time to see if the Christian faith was actually destructive of civic loyalty. He states: "We have come, not to flatter you by this writing, nor to please you by our address, but to beg that you pass judgement after an accurate and searching investigation."⁵⁸

His second Apology addresses many of the same themes. He compares the superiority of Christianity to paganism. He believed that Christianity was the oldest, truest and most divine of philosophies.⁵⁹ He asserts in both Apologies that the philosophers, being enlightened by the divine Logos, were in some sense Christians without knowing it.⁶⁰ Justin argues the truth of Christianity from the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy, and briefly explains Christian sacraments and worship.⁶¹

It has been said that for no other reason than the sheer bulk of his achievements, Justin is the most important apologist of the 2nd century.⁶² The longest of his three surviving works is the Dialogue with Trypho.⁶³

Justin's career was cut short by his martyrdom in Rome about AD 165. From this demise his name is taken.

Athenagoras

"It is with relief," says Dulles, "that one turns from these narrow diatribes to the moderate and courteous work of Athenagoras of Athens."⁶⁴ His work has been called, "Unquestionably the most eloquent of the Christian apologists."⁶⁵

Athenagoras' Plea for the Christian, written as a request for civil toleration, was addressed to Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus about 177.⁶⁶ In this discourse he points out the great variety of religious doctrines tolerated within the Empire and appeals to the Emperor's sense of justice. He addresses the charge that Christians were atheists and immoral. Dulles again sums up the issue by saying:

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Athenagoras demonstrates that Christians are not atheists by showing that their idea of God is more exalted and consequently more divine than anything the pagans are able to attain to. Even the polytheists, he adds, are atheists with regard to one another's gods. On philosophical grounds, moreover, it is evident that there cannot be a plurality of gods. As regards the charges of cannibalism and promiscuity that have been malignantly laid at the door of Christians, he replies that Christians are bound by their religion to very strict standards of chastity and to a respect for human life that extends even to unborn infants, thus forbidding abortion. It is quite evident, he concludes, that Christians obey the laws of the Empire and pray for its peace and prosperity.⁶⁷

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria (c150 - c214) who was probably an Athenian by birth was converted to Christianity and travelled to many lands seeking religious teaching. Finally settling in Alexandria, the most important city of Christian theology of the 3rd century, he put himself at the feet of Pantaenus who was a leading philosopher. He was later to succeed Pantaenus.⁶⁸ His principal works comprise the trilogy, the *Protrepticus* (Converter), the *Paedagogus* (Tutor), and the *Stromata* (Miscellanies, or, literally, carpets).⁶⁹ In these and other works he addresses the topic of atheism. He concludes the pagans, not the Christians, were atheists. Clement uses at will analogies and illusions of Greek culture, philosophy, poetry, and music to argue the harmony of the Christian system. "The central principle of Clement's thinking is the doctrine of Creation."⁷⁰ He believed that this was the ground for redemption. He believed that since God had implanted, from the beginning, the good seed of truth in all his rational creatures, there could be things learned from all men. All truth, wherever it may be found, comes from the Creator.⁷¹

Dulles again sums up this great apologist of the third century. He states:

With Clement, Christian apologetics finds the first of its great masters. No longer does one feel obliged to make allowance for the inevitable crudities and blunders of an uncouth childhood. Clement is at home with his materials and by his genius infuses fresh life into the dry bones of arguments already trite. His work is well ordered, yet not wooden; he combines variety with symmetry. For the modern taste his work

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may be overloaded with literary allusions and rhetorical conceits, but Clement's discretion and sincerity prevent him from degenerating into aimless artificiality. He is above all a Christian humanist who moves easily amid the arts and letters of classical civilization, combining Christian piety with the highest values of ancient culture.⁷²

Origin

The Alexandrian school of apologetics brought to great heights by Clement was to reach its climax with Origin.⁷³ Born in Alexandria about 184, the loss of his father to martyrdom while still a boy had a far reaching impact. "Origin stands out as a giant among the early Christian thinkers."⁷⁴ He is the greatest scholar and most prolific author of the early church. He was not only a profound thinker but a loyal churchman.⁷⁵

Although Origin never specifically mentions Clement it is clear that he had read him and in many ways continues his work.⁷⁶ Origin was some thirty years younger than Clement.⁷⁷ He equipped himself for his writing by studying under the father of Neoplatonism, Ammonius Saccas. His chief work was study and exposition of Holy Scripture. This would take him deep into textual criticism and exegesis, both literal and spiritual.⁷⁸ He produced the **Hexapla**, the greatest piece of biblical scholarship of the early church.

It put in parallel columns the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, a Greek transliteration, the Greek translations by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, and the Septuagint. Origin made the hexapla the basis for his interpretations of the Old testament.⁷⁹

His sermons and massive work in biblical commentaries illustrates his theory that there are three levels of meaning in any biblical text. The three are; the literal; the moral; the allegorical or spiritual.⁸⁰

Origin's other famous work is a response to the anti-Christian polemic of Celcus (written about 178). In this work entitled *Contra Celsum* he follows Celcus point by point and refutes the charge that the Bible is not historical and that Jesus is not a credible basis for faith. It is an important work but one that has not received much attention.

Clement and Origin mark another turning point in Christian theology. They mark a time of maturity achievement. No longer do they plead for mere toleration but launch a vigorous counter attack on opponents. They show their mastery of the full range of philosophy and letters and speak as authorities in their own right. They feel at home in borrowing arguments

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from Platonic and Stoic philosophers, Jewish controversialists, and earlier Christian apologists. Their most important achievement is not what they say but the process they use.⁸¹

Tertullian

Having seen some of the greats of the Greek world we now turn to Carthage which became the principal theological center for the Latin speaking world. Tertullian was at the forefront of the Latin apologists. B. A. Fuller says:

Tertullian born at Carthage in 160, a fighter in temper and a lawyer by profession, offered to the Christian cause, which he embraced at the age of thirty three, not only all the resources of a fanatical, passionate and uncompromising character, further fortified by an excellent classical education, but the super-abundant zeal and devotion that so often mark the convert of mature years.⁸²

Tertullian had a central aim in writing. "His aim was to show everything in Catholic Christianity was superior to everything in any other religion."⁸³ To this task he brought all the skills of his law background. In addition, he too sought to vindicate Christianity from the attacks of civil negativism. His *Apology* written in 197 is probably the finest of his writings. It is a brilliant application of Roman juridical principles to the defense of Christianity.⁸⁴ In this work he attacks the heretics of his day, shows the absurdities of Christian persecution, explains the Lord's Prayer and the meaning of baptism, and helped develop the orthodox understanding of the trinity. He was the first to use the Latin word "Trinitas."⁸⁵

He addressed the fruitlessness of martyrdom by saying: "We become more numerous every time we are hewn down by you: the blood of Christians is seed."⁸⁶

He also, in keeping with his defense against persecution, showed with wit and sarcasm how absurd it was to accuse Christians of sexual promiscuity and other immoral practices. He used as a major defense the pure life style of the believer that found them even praying for the Emperor. In many ways he followed in the footprints of his predecessors.

Tertullian wrote on a wide variety of subjects including baptism, the soul, the church, and history of philosophy. He is famous for his saying that was made with reference to God's sacrifice of himself on the cross. He writes, "It is believable because it is absurd, it is certain because it is impossible."⁸⁷

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He also, in dealing with his view that the church and classical philosophy had little or no connection, says, "After Jesus Christ we have no need of speculation, after the Gospel no need of research."⁸⁸ He basically disregards any classical methods of philosophy. Unlike Clement and Origin, Justin and others, he has little respect for Socrates, Plato and the great thinkers of history.

Although his sole aim was proving the superiority of the Catholic church, he became disgusted with the growing worldliness and politics within its ranks. In his later years, even against his own previous logic, lapses into Montanism.⁸⁹

Interim Period

After Tertullian there becomes fewer monumental apologists until the time of Augustine. For the serious student, however, this period between the third and sixth centuries is not barren. Apologists such as Arnobius, Lactantius, Ambrose, and Eusebius provide excellent reference. Avrey Dulles concludes the following:

From Tertullian to Augustine the apologists are able to point with pride to the rapid advances of the new faith, the constancy of its martyr, the heroism of its saints. With the conversion of Constantine this pride verges, for a moment, on complacency: it is as though the golden age were at hand. Eusebius, more than any other single thinker, introduced what one may call the apologetic of world history. Under more sobering circumstances Augustine and his disciples carried this apologetic to greater heights.⁹⁰

Two final apologists will briefly be considered. Aurelius Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Though separated by over 900 years and though bridged by the Middle Ages, they both contribute greatly to apologetic theology. Their two approaches are determinative for the Middle Ages.

Aurelius Augustine

Augustine's major contribution in the field of apologetics comes in the area of faith and reason. His views are somewhat hard to interpret as they seemed to shift and change through the years. At times he seems a strict authoritarian viewing the grounds for faith as sheer, unquestionable, divine authority. This authority might be expressed in either Scripture or in the church. Augustine confessed, "I should not believe the gospel except as

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moved by the authority of the Catholic church." He held that the authority of the scriptures were higher than the church because they were inspired of God and were completely error free. They are absolute.⁹¹ His assertion that 'one must believe before one can know' became famous. He is fond of quoting the passage in Isaiah 7:9 in the Septuagint version: "Unless you believe you shall not understand." With such a view it would seem that reason has no role to play in the justification of belief.⁹²

It is clear, however, by certain statements made that he was not an unqualified authoritarian. He held that authority and reason together brought man to belief. Authority demands belief and then in turn prepares man for reason. This in turn leads to understanding and knowledge. Authority, however, was the prerequisite. But at the same time, reason is not entirely absent from authority, for one has to consider whom to believe, and the highest authority belongs to clearly known truth; that is, the truth, when it is clearly known, has the highest claim to authority in that it demands our assent. Augustine thought it was man's duty to consider what men or what books we ought to believe in order to correctly worship God.⁹³

Within this theology Augustine held that scripture, though perfect, did not in itself carry credibility. Men will not automatically accept the scriptures upon hearing them. Thus God has provided the scriptures with certain signs of credibility. On the basis of these signs mankind will believe. The principle signs adduced by Augustine were miracle and prophecy.⁹⁴ It was his belief that though many religious systems boasted of revelation, only Christianity could point to miracle and prophecy. This proved the Scriptures' true authority. The Scriptures were superior to any other writings. It was clear to him that man, in considering what books or men were credible, would believe the Bible to be the greatest because of miracle and prophecy.

Augustine's authoritarianism would appear to be drastically qualified. Clarification needs to be made. In order to understand this inconsistency the definition of "authority" needs to be illuminated. To the Catholic church of this time authority included not only theological truth but also the entire realm of tradition or past knowledge. Knowledge of the past was accepted on the basis of authority. Augustine felt that there could be a distinction between what is believed to be true and what is seen to be true. That which is believed comes by hearing the testimony of others. That which is seen to be true comes from the physical senses or rational demonstration. Thus, with regard to miracle and prophecy, Augustine said the trustworthiness of temporal events either past or future must be Believed, not Known by intelligence. Augustine declared that one must believe in God because it is

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taught in the books of the great writers who lived with the Son of God and witnessed things that could not have happened if there had been no God. He then concludes that one must Believe before he can Know. For Augustine the historical evidence for miracle and prophecy lay in the past and was thus in the realm of authority and not reason.

To the modern mind this logic may seem faulty. What would compel one to believe the testimony of ancient classical writers or writers of scripture? If he was to avoid circular reasoning he could not say that one must accept the authority of evangelists because of the authority of scripture. It was the evangelists testimony that was supposed to give authority to scriptures. In such reasoning Augustine had writers giving authority to scripture and scripture giving authority to the same writers. How could he overcome this circle? He had to come up with some reason to accept the testimony of evangelists and teachers. After frankly admitting that the scriptures belonged to an ancient tradition that anyone may refuse to believe, he turned to the modern day miracle of the church. In this is his most interesting contribution. He saw the very existence of a mighty universal church as proof the scriptures were divine. In addition he appealed to the miracles. Not the miracle of the scriptures and testimony of the past but to the miracle of the church itself as a present day, on going, phenomenon. W. L. Craig sums up the situation well:

In the *City of God* he stated that even if the unbeliever rejects all biblical miracles, we are still left with one stupendous miracle, which is all one needs, namely, the fact of the whole world believing in Christianity without the benefit of miracles.⁹⁵

To put it in his own words, "We are still left with the one stupendous miracle, which is all we need, the miracle of the whole world believing, without benefit of miracles, the miracle of the Resurrection."⁹⁶

In other words, the greatest miracle of the church is that individuals believe in the church without miracles. To put it simply, the greatest miracle is that there are no miracles.

However circular and ridiculous this may appear to the 20th century mind it was typical of the logic used in this era. He continues his reason on miracles by saying that miracles were needed in the early church because the witnesses of the church were few and unlearned. In his day, however, he felt that God provided few miracles to keep man from constantly seeking visible signs.⁹⁷ He recognizes two classes of miracles. Those that are divine

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and those that are demonic. He attributes many of the so called miracles of his day to the latter. He felt that miracles could be distinguished on the basis of their religious effects. Whether it diverted or directed man toward a worshipful attitude to God.

Augustine's major contribution to apologetics can be seen in his theories on faith and reason. His major works include *The City of God* and his *Confessions*.

Thomas Aquinas

Finally in our brief survey of major apologists we come to Thomas Aquinas. He is not in any stretch of the imagination the last of the apologists. Indeed other thinkers such as John Locke and Henry Dodwell could be cited. Aquinas' works and theology, however, seem to be the last of the truly great classics. In modern times theologians such as Karl Barth and Rudolph Bultmann demand attention but with the voluminous material upon which modern scholars have to build and with the ground work already done by preceding theologians, it is difficult for one philosopher to dominate. Perhaps Aquinas marks the end of the "monumental era" of religious history.

Aquinas' work, like Augustine's, finds its foundation in the realm of Faith and Reason. He develops a framework for the relationship between the two by identifying signs of credibility. He makes a distinction between truths about God. On one hand there are the truths of God that completely surpass the human understanding. Of such is the doctrine of the Trinity. These must be taken on Faith. On the other hand there are those truths that can be understood and that are within the grasp of human reason. In his work *Summa Contra Gentiles*, he seeks to prove these truths; such as God's existence and nature, the orders of creation, the nature and end of man, etc.

As Thomas defines his views of faith and reason he makes very clear the distinction. Craig sums up this distinction:

Truths of reason may be seen—that is, either proved with rational certainty or accepted as empirically evident—whereas truths of faith must be believed, since they cannot be proved either rationally or empirically. This does not mean that truths of faith are incomprehensible or above logic.⁹⁸

Thomas goes on to say, however, that God does provide certain signs of miracle and prophecy which act to confirm the truths of faith.⁹⁹ He holds

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that because of these signs man can see the truths of faith. He calls these signs "Confirmations."¹⁰⁰ Craig sums up the idea:

Thomas's procedure, then, may be summarized in three steps:

- (1) Fulfilled prophecies and miracles make credible that the Scriptures taken together as a whole are a revelation from God.
- (2) As a revelation from God, Scripture is absolutely authoritative.
- (3) Therefore, those doctrines taught by Scripture that are neither demonstratively provable nor empirically evident may be accepted by faith on the authority of Scripture. Thus, Aquinas can say that an opponent may be convinced of the truths of faith on the basis of the authority of Scripture as confirmed by God with miracles.¹⁰¹

It is very interesting to notice that Aquinas, like Augustine, appeals to the miracle of the Church as proof of Scripture.

In conclusion it should be noted that Aquinas believed that something could not be known and believed at the same time. To know something (by reason), he asserted, ruled out the ability to believe it (by faith). Perhaps one might be reminded of the definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (KJV).

Practical Apologetics

The question might well be asked in reading the above discourse on the history of apologetics as to how one uses the field to advance their own faith. With the practical side in mind we now turn to two basic assertions of the Christian faith. Upon these two beliefs hinge the Christian system. We approach the very heart of Christianity when we seek to prove the existence of God and the truth of Christ's resurrection. One must understand that many facets of the Christian's faith could be subjected to proof tests. One could address the issue of miracles, historical accuracy of the bible, and the consistency of Christian doctrine. For such this writer recommends W. L. Craig's book, *Apologetics: An Introduction*. Much of the material thus far has been taken directly from this classic work. It is an excellent, understandable text for the Christian not inclined toward scholarly diatribe.

For this brief survey only the proof of God and the Resurrection will be addressed. The issue of God's existence will be addressed because such is the basis for all monotheistic thinking. The issue of the Resurrection will be addressed because such is the basis for all of Christianity's claims.

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Without some understanding of these two facts, Christianity is paralyzed. It might be argued that faith alone is enough. Perhaps at one time this sufficed but in our twentieth century sophisticated society it is doubtful that the believer will be able to convert the educated unbeliever to their faith with such unilateral means. One can no longer be satisfied to prove the Bible by the Bible in every instance. The non-believer will immediately dismiss such as invalid circular logic.

Does God Exist?

At the very essence of belief in any monotheistic system lies the question, "Does God really exist?" Without such an answer progression into deeper theology is fruitless and, yes, without doubt foolish. How, in Christianity, for instance, could one hope to approach the doctrine of the Trinity or Christ's resurrection if God does not exist? This is, indeed, the springboard for all further study and belief. The Christian system falls lame if a belief in God cannot be justified.

In this section an attempt will be made to show the logic behind the belief in God. An appeal will be made to various apologists, some of which are afore mentioned, and to human reasoning in general. It is hoped that such a section will better equip the Christian to approach the non-believer with some sense of assurance and courage. At the outset I must admit that much of the following material is not original. It is a compilation of many sources. Special recognition, however, must again go to W. L. Craig.

Some have approached the issue of God and stated that it is impossible to prove His existence. Believing that the concept of God by very definition is infinite, they assert that man, being finite, cannot possibly approach even a simple understanding of such a being. God is in the realm of theory and therefore cannot be proven by empirical evidence. Since there is no proof—one must rely on blind faith.

But is there no compelling evidence that a Supreme Being exists? What made the biblical writers such as the Psalmist say, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (Ps 19:1). And the apostle Paul declared, "Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

Can we know God exists? Is God real? Is He personal? Can the mortal reflect and approach the immortal? Is He, as many scholars have said, a

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projection of man (Feuerbach), opium of the people (Marx), resentment of those who have fallen short (Nietzsche), illusion of those who have remained infantile (Freud)? Is there any ground for certainty?¹⁰² Perhaps in some since these questions hold validity. For the serious believer there must be a realization of counter-arguments and philosophies.

At the outset of an investigation about God it should be noted that the finite cannot totally understand the infinite. In this respect scoffers perhaps boarder on truth. The question before the monotheist, however, is not whether man, with a human infinitesimal mind can totally comprehend the supreme and infinite being of God. Such, by very definition, is impossible. The real question before the believer and unbeliever alike is whether or not God in some fashion manifests Himself? Is it possible to rationally believe in God? Are there, inherent within man and nature, characteristics that point to something higher? I hold the answer to be affirmative. While it is not the intent to delve deeply into scientific theory to prove the existence of God, although I believe such does prove His existence, we shall boarder on the philosophical and scientific realm in seeking understanding. Only the more simple arguments will be considered.

The Absurdity of Life Without God

Although the apologetic for Christianity based on the human predicament is relatively new it holds some very valid and interesting viewpoints. Often called "cultural apologetics", it does not attempt to show in any positive sense that Christianity is true; it simply explores the disastrous consequences for human existence, society, and culture if Christianity should be false. In its approach it is somewhat akin to existentialism. Scholars that have appealed to such logic have included Blaise Pascal, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Soren Kierkegaard, and Francis Schaeffer.

In considering the human predicament one should be compelled to search for a higher more lofty way of life. A brief look around one's environment will readily manifest that man is without hope by himself. In considering the pain and suffering humankind inflicts upon one another it should make any rational creature awake from their slumber of Godless passivism. But though the evidence strongly shows no hope without a higher cause, men still preoccupy their time and thoughts with trivialities and distractions, so as to avoid the despair, anxiety, and boredom that would be encountered if those distractions were to be removed.¹⁰³

But how does the human predicament relate to God. The answer is clear. Once mankind has denied the existence of God then human life becomes

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worthless. If God is non-existent then there remains no need for morals, rules, for kindness to ones fellow man. If there is no Supreme Good then good can not exist. And if good does not exist then there is no definition of evil and any act that one does may not be classified as right or wrong. If God does not exist then man is truly the Cosmic Orphan. Without justification. Without purpose.

Craig points out that since the Enlightenment, when man threw off the shackles of religion, man has tried to answer the questions of, "Who am I?," "Why am I here?," "Where am I going?," without reference to God. The answers, however that come back is that we are the accidental by product of nature, a result of chance, there is no value in ones existence.¹⁰⁴ "Modern man thought that when he had got rid of God, he had freed himself from all that repressed and stifled him. Instead, he discovered that in killing God, he had also killed himself."¹⁰⁵

If God does not exist then life becomes absurd. We are inevitably doomed to die forever. We are but a spark in the blackness of the expanse of the Universe. We are a spark that appears, flickers, and then dies forever without purpose. Paul Tillich says that man must face "the threat of non-being." I know that I am alive today therefore I must ask about tomorrow. Will there be a day when I no longer exist? Life without God demands a dooming "Yes." If God does not exist then we are faced with the reality that eternal death is inevitable. Our lives, regardless of how long, then become valueless. As the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre observed, several hours or several years make no difference once you have lost eternity. Life without God requires that we face the fact that any effort to prolong life becomes useless. Modern medical techniques, personal health improvement, saving lives, improving society are but the Universe Court Jester's joke if God does not exist. Why prolong that which has no purpose to begin with?

If there is no God then mankind and the Universe are doomed. Like prisoners we are innocent victims of chance condemned to execution. There is no hope of pardon. If there is no God there is no justice, no morality. If God does not exist then it matters not whether we have ever existed or not. Our death is of no consequence. Neither is our life. We are no better than a swarm of gnats that plague the barnyard of life. We are belched up from the blackness of the stomach of the Universe onto the face of the earth to be again swallowed back into utter darkness.

All of mans dealings become useless if there is no God. There remains no need for good, for religion, no need for peace between nations, no use

for education and learning. Without a Higher Good these pursuits become laughable.

But the situation without a Supreme Being becomes even more bleak. If life has no ultimate meaning then morality has none. If morality has no meaning then it matters not how one has lived his life. To have lived as Hitler is as acceptable as to have lived as a saint. The concept of morality loses all meaning in a universe without God. One cannot criticize evil if there nothing to compare it against. One cannot know the meaning of a crooked line if there is no straight.¹⁰⁶

Without God mankind is doomed to a future of oblivion. H. G. Wells foresaw such a prospect in his novel **The Time Machine**. A time when the earth is dead and the only sound is silence. The rush of the wind and the gentle ripple of the sea are the only movement and beyond that nothingness. "Without God all is worthless. " Man is a lump of slime that evolved rationally . . . if God does not exist then you are just a miscarriage of nature, thrust into a purposeless universe to live a purposeless life.¹⁰⁷

The Atheist, however content he may seem, is fooling himself. About the only solution he can offer is that we face the absurdity of life and live bravely.¹⁰⁸ Without God any system of arbitrary justice or happiness the Atheist creates is merely a concoction of his imagination and has no ultimate basis. No ultimate good. If God does not exist then values are nothing more than social conventions.

Ontological Argument

Having considered the uselessness of a life without God we now turn to more positive arguments in His favor.

The Ontological argument attempts to prove from the very concept of God that God exists. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) was the proponent of this argument. W. L. Craig explains:

God is the greatest conceivable being. This is true by definition, for if we could conceive of something greater than God, then THAT would be God. So nothing greater than God can be conceived. It is greater to exist in reality than merely in the mind . . . if God existed only in the mind, then something greater than Him could be conceived, namely, His existence not only in the mind, but in reality as well. But God is the greatest conceivable being. Hence, He must not exist merely in the mind, but in reality as well. Therefore God exists.¹⁰⁹

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Anselm uses the analogy of a painting. A painting is greater if it exists in reality instead of just in the mind. If a painting merely existed in the mind it would not physically exist. But when the artist paints that work, while still existing in the mind, it also exists in reality. Since God, therefore is the greatest entity, He, of necessity, must exist in reality. For if He existed only in the mind then he would not be the greatest entity.

Perhaps the following breakdown will explain more clearly.

1. GOD is the greatest conceivable thing.
2. Existence in reality is greater than existence only in thought.
3. Therefore GOD exists in reality.

Cosmological Argument

The cosmological argument assumes that something does exist and argues from the existence of that thing to the existence of a First Cause. This argument originated in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle and has been advanced by Anselm, Descartes, Aquinas, and others.

Basically the argument summed up states that everything that exists must have had a cause. Nothing happens without some reason or something putting it into motion. Everything that exists began to exist at a specific moment and was put in motion by a specific power. Thomas Aquinas writes in *The Summa Theologica*:

The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is moved is moved by another, for nothing can be moved except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is moved, whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality. Therefore whatever is moved must be moved by another . . . therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, moved by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.¹¹⁰

The following syllogism may help in understanding Aquinas' argument.

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the Universe has a Cause.

Some have argued that just because the Universe exists that this does not necessarily demand a beginning. In other words, infinity flows out endlessly from this point in time in both future and past directions. Notice the absurdity of such an argument. If the universe did not begin to exist a finite time ago, then the present moment would never arrive. But obviously it has arrived. Therefore, we know that the universe is finite in the past and began to exist. One cannot form an infinite collection (ex. days) by successive addition. Therefore to arrive at the present, which is obviously the end point of a successive collection from the past, one must deduce that there at some point in time had to be a beginning. The universe, therefore, had a beginning. And since the universe had a beginning then there had to be a cause that began that beginning. A First Cause—God.

Teleological Argument

The Teleological argument reasons from design. It infers an intelligent designer just as we infer an intelligent designer of any product that has purpose.

This again has its roots in Plato and Aristotle. Seeing the order of the cosmos, the Greeks were tremendously impressed. To Plato one of the strongest arguments for supreme powers was the argument from the order of the motion of the stars. Indeed, anyone who has considered the stars might be struck with the same awe that the ancients were struck with.

William Paley who undoubtedly brought to a high point this argument uses the comparison of the watch and its works. The analogy has become famous in illustrating the Teleological argument. Just as a watch has intricate moving parts and works in precision, so does the universe. And just as we find it preposterous to assume that the watch just came to be, so we find it equally absurd that the universe came out of nothing.

At this point the more serious student in the field of apologetics may find it useful to delve into the scientific theories and models and their critique to better understand the truth of God. Such models would include The Big Bang model, the Steady State model and the Oscillating model. W.L. Craig presents these and others and points out their inherent weaknesses. In the end the conclusion is that they all point to the fact that there must have been a Creator. We hold that Creator to be God. Not a cold entity but a living, forceful, personal God.

Before progressing on into other matters it must be understood that the arguments presented in no wise demonstrate all the proof available for the

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existence of God. In the same manner, the arguments, themselves, are covered very briefly. For the causal apologist, however, these should give some understanding to the complex theories that one encounters in refuting Atheism.

It might also be noted at this point that many scientists are professed Atheists. It is my belief, from a non-scientific perspective, that Atheists while professing a disbelief in God have substituted various scientific theories in place of God. In other words, their theories have become God. As might be anticipated, any theory be it religious or so called scientific, must trace its assertions back to an original and first cause. In the end the Atheist, while poking fun and ridiculing the believer of God is really ridiculing himself. As he derides Faith he is actually deriding himself and his own faith in so called scientific theory. From a perspective of social goodness and human development Christianity far outweighs Atheism. This is not to mention actual scientific proof of God.

The assertion by some that they do not believe because they are scientists is addressed by Kung in his comprehensive book, *Does God Exist?* He says his writing is "sustained by the hope that a new age is dawning when the very opposite answer will be given: "Of Course (I believe). I am a scientist."¹¹¹

Just now scientists are beginning to discover what the Bible has stated for thousands of years. There must have been a beginning. The universe began to exist. It had a beginning and First Cause. This is proved by both scientific theory and theology. Perhaps the truth of the matter is that man for so many centuries, while considering himself enlightened, tried to push God out of the picture. His supposed enlightenment, however, in the end could not illuminate his works of darkness. The following quote provides a delightful summation.

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.¹¹²

The Resurrection Factor

If man is to have a meaningful existence then two factors must be involved: God and immortality. In the preceding sections of this survey we

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have addressed the existence of God. We now turn to man's immortality. If this is indeed necessary for a meaningful existence then one must consider Christianity's proclamation of the resurrection. If Christ was raised from the dead then there dawns within us a new light of hope that our lives can find such an end. If Christ arose then Christianity is proved to be valid and the only meaningful system of belief. If, on the other hand, Christ did not rise from the dead then Christianity crumbles. And great is its fall. It becomes the most widely perpetuated hoax of all time. In this final section we wish to discover the credibility of the New Testament witness to the resurrection of Jesus.

For the 20th century critic looking at Christ's claims and teachings it is naive and outdated to simply trot out the trilemma "Liar, Lunatic, or Lord" and adduce several proof texts where Jesus claims to be the Son of God, the Messiah, and so forth.¹¹³ In our modern and sophisticated world logic must again be employed. Perhaps at times it will be necessary to reach outside the Biblical text for proof. To attempt to prove the text by the text, as noted earlier in this paper, becomes circular logic.

W. L. Craig says:

The case for the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus seems to me to rest on the evidence for three great, independently established facts: the empty tomb, the resurrection appearances, and the origin of the Christian faith. If these three facts can be established and no plausible natural explanation can account for them, then one is justified in inferring Jesus' resurrection as the most plausible explanation of the data.¹¹⁴

For the purpose of this study attention will be given to the Empty tomb and the Resurrection Appearances.

The Empty Tomb

Important to be noted is that if the burial story is true, it supports the assertion of the empty tomb. This is the first key element in proving the resurrection. If Christ had never been put in the tomb then no resurrection could have occurred. The burial supports the fact that the grave was later found empty.

The Tomb and Common Knowledge

If Jesus was actually buried then people of the first century would have known where the tomb was. This much seems evident. Therefore, when the

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disciples began to preach the resurrection of Christ, had the tomb not been empty, confusion would have arisen. The apostle's testimony would have been contested and hearers could have pointed to the tomb to produce Jesus' corpse or remains. It would have been utter foolishness to assert that Jesus arose from the dead if His body was exhumable. Had prospective converts in Jerusalem known that the body was still entombed, the apostles would have had little success in convincing them of His resurrection. The initial success of Christianity and the apostles in Jerusalem, however, proves that there was no body to be found. Considering the hostility of the non believing Jews, had they been able to produce such a body it is certain that they would have exposed the whole affair as a fraud. It then remains that if the story of Jesus' burial is true, than the story of the empty tomb must be true as well. Most scholars agree that the burial of Jesus is one of the most well documented and established facts of Christianity. Even doubters concur.

Joseph of Arimathea

But let us notice a few points. First, Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea. According to the gospels, Joseph laid Jesus' body in his own new tomb (Mt. 27:60). He is described as a rich man, an honorable counselor (Mk. 15:43), and scholars agree that he was a member of the Sanhedrin—the Jewish Supreme Court. This court was made up of seventy men who were prominent leaders of Judaism. It seems highly unlikely that the Christian tradition would have fabricated such a story. Members of the Sanhedrin were too well known to have allowed any fictitious person to be placed on their list or any falsehood spread about them.

Paul

Second, the apostle Paul provides testimony sufficing as early evidence of the burial of Jesus. He says in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also, received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Women

If we accept the statement of the burial then we are conclusively lead to the empty tomb. According to the Gospels Mary and other women discovered the empty tomb. W. L. Craig asserts that in Jewish times the testimony of women was regarded with diminished value. He concludes that

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had the story of the resurrection been a hoax women would not have been detailed in the story. For New Testament writers to perpetuate a "Myth" men would have been portrayed as the first witnesses of the resurrection to make the story seem plausible. The very fact that women testify of the empty tomb makes it more believable.¹¹⁵

Preaching

The next consideration is that the disciples could not have preached the resurrection in Jerusalem had the tomb not been empty. We have already considered the possibility of the Jews producing a corpse. Such would have been the easiest way of silencing the disciples for ever. Had the body of Jesus been in the tomb proof could have been easily attained.

Jewish Propaganda

Also, the earliest Jewish propaganda against the resurrection presupposes the empty tomb. Matthew 28:11-15 says:

While they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.

Even the Jews, in trying to discredit the apostles, did not deny the empty tomb. No attempt is made to discredit the burial. They instead propagandize the missing body.

Considering these facts it is difficult to deny that the tomb was empty. How then do non-believers account for the facts? Two theories have risen and fallen through the centuries of Christianity.

The Conspiracy Theory

The Conspiracy Theory, initiated in first century Jerusalem, has been one of the most widely purported arguments in attacking Christianity. Its claims found harbor in not only the first century Jews but were revived again in the Diebst claims of the eighteenth century. Today, however, modern scholar-

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ship has abandoned such an attack. First, it is not morally possible that the disciples were frauds or charlatans. There is too much evidence that they were simple, devout men pursuing righteousness. I am reminded of the events that occurred after Jesus was buried. Thomas, the follower of Christ, would not believe that Jesus had risen until there was proof. Thomas believed that Jesus was dead. Had the resurrection story been a fraud, it would have initially been a fraud against some of the original twelve. The disciples would have first had to have tricked Thomas. In reading John's account of the final days of Christ before the resurrection it seems clear that the disciples were bewildered as to the next events in their lives. So much so that Peter went back to his boat. There may be some disagreement as to whether Peter was doing this to pass time or whether he actually determined to return to the sea as a fisherman. In either case, the truth remains that the disciples were lost without their leader. It is unlikely that such a group would have been in an emotional state to fabricate such a story so near the events themselves. Second, the Jewish story does not account for the disciples' sincerity. So convinced were the disciples that Jesus had risen they were willing to undergo subsequent suffering for their belief.

Apparent Death Theory

Another theory that has plagued Christianity is the Apparent Death Theory. This theory purports that Jesus only appeared to die. That he was not completely dead when entombed. That once in the grave he revived and escaped to convince his disciples that he had risen from the dead. This theory has also been abandoned by modern scholarship. Inherent within this theory are several problems. First, it is physically impossible. Considering modern medical evidence's facts regarding "Crucifixion" and the extent of Jesus' wounds and torture it becomes apparent that it would be impossible for a human being to survive such crucifixion and entombment. Second, even if Jesus had appeared to his disciples in a half dead condition it is unlikely that it would have evoked worship of him as Lord. What had he proved? Early scriptures paint the picture of a glorious resurrection. Nothing less would have been expected. Finally, such a theory makes Jesus a charlatan and blatant liar. From all we know historically, Jesus was a mild and understanding teacher.

Eyewitness Accounts

Finally in ascertaining the truth of the resurrection we turn to eyewitness accounts. The main proof text is found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

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For I delivered to you as of first importance, what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then all the apostles; and last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

In this explanation to the Corinthians he calls on six classes of individuals to testify as proof of Jesus' resurrection. Although this passage is easily overlooked, it becomes vital in understanding the truth of the resurrection. In closely observing the groups mentioned it will be noticed that all play a role in building a *prima facie* case. Paul's claim is remarkable, for here we have the testimony of a man that was personally acquainted with the first disciples. These disciples, he says, were eyewitnesses of the risen Christ.

Cephas

First, Paul says that Jesus appeared to Peter (Cephas, Jn. 1:36). This is interesting in that there is apparently no account in the gospels of what exactly happened during this incident (cf. Lk. 24:34). Yet Paul vouches for this sighting. From Galatians 1:18 we know that Paul spent about two weeks with Peter in Jerusalem three years after his Damascus road conversion. Paul could have heard the details from Peter during this time. Most scholars agree that Peter did see something for his life is portrayed as an ardent follower of Jesus Christ even to his martyrdom.

The Twelve

Next Paul appeals to the appearance of Jesus to the twelve. In one of the appearance accounts Jesus demonstrated his physical reality by eating before the disciples (ex. Lk. 24:32). This is significant to show that this was the same Jesus that had been their leader previous. This was not an apparition. Food was actually consumed. Jesus was in recognizable physical form.

Five Hundred Brethren

Paul also recounts the appearance to the 500 brethren. This account is remarkable in that if Christ had not been raised from the dead why would have Paul asserted so openly that so many were witnesses. It would have been utter folly for Paul to assert such if not true. Perhaps the most inter-

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esting part of this account is the phrase, "most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep." In this phrase it seems that Paul is laying it all on the table. He seems to be inviting the Corinthians to check up on the data. What other reason is valid for him mentioning the fact that they were still alive. Paul, it appears, knew some of the 500 personally for he personally knows of some of their deaths. It is highly doubtful that Paul would have offered such verifiable proof if not true. The time element was so near the actual death of Christ that witnesses could still be located.

James

The next appearance that Paul mentions is that of the Lord to James. This was Jesus' younger brother. What makes this account so amazing is that from all indication Jesus' brethren did not believe in him during his personal ministry. (see Jn. 7:5) James was not one of the twelve apostles (Mt. 10:2-4).¹¹⁶ But all of a sudden after the resurrection they pop up in New Testament text. They are mentioned as being in the upper room in Acts 1:14 and mentioned in Acts 12:17. Acts 12:17 accounts Peter's prison release and first words to the church. His words were, "Report these things to James." Paul in Galatians 1:19 implies that James was being recognized with the apostles. In Galatians Paul mentions three pillars of the church at Jerusalem; Peter, James and John. It might be noted at this point for the sake of the reader that the James mentioned in these passages was the brother of Jesus. James the Apostle, in contrast, was martyred by Herod Agrippa I (c. A.D. 44, Acts 2:12). Finally from Acts 21:18 it can be seen that James was perhaps the central figure in the Church at Jerusalem.

Not only did James and Jesus' brothers become believers, they became some of the most influential leaders in the early church. To what do we attribute this? There seems to be only one answer. They saw the risen Lord. What other fact could account for their leadership in a cause that they had once denied. What else justifies their willingness to die for Christ?

The Apostles

Paul next mentions the appearance to all of the apostles. The believability of this account is again manifested by the knowledge Paul had of the early followers of Christ both personally and second hand.

Paul

Finally, Paul asserts that Jesus had risen from the dead because he appeared to him, as one untimely born. This turn of events in Paul's life is

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one of the most touching and inspirational. The event completely changed his life. Paul, before his Damascus road conversion, had been a rabbi, a Pharisee, a respected Jewish leader, and a persecutor of Christians. Suddenly he gave it all up and became the most instrumental preacher of Jesus to the Gentile world. He abandoned his respected position, his comfort in Jewish tradition, to join the outcasted group called Christians. He entered a life of poverty, hardship and death for this new found sect. In II Corinthians 11 Paul relates his trials. To what can we attribute such a change? The risen Lord (1 Cor 9:1).

From all of these accounts there can be no doubt that the text is true and that Jesus rose from the dead. Paul is too sure of his facts and is too open to validation if he is purporting a myth. No individual, and especially not Paul, who was one of the greatest Jewish scholars of his day, would produce such an account had it not been true. Such would have been far too risky.

In conclusion to the above evidences of the empty tomb it is clear that the resurrection took place. One could scarcely doubt the facts. In addition, the resurrection could not have been a myth or fable for the time period between the event and the gospel writings is too short for such to develop. Especially within the same geographic location as where the events took place. All Jerusalem knew of the events of the crucifixion and burial (Lk. 24:18). The facts were too easily verified. "For these things were not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). Therefore the only believable and logical explanation that remains for the empty tomb and sightings is the Resurrection.

The Ultimate Apologetic

In concluding this brief survey of the History of Christian Apologetics there is one final comment that must be made. The fact remains, after all the historical evidence is in, that all the learning and scholarship is of little value in proving the Christian system if one key element is missing. That element is the Christian's Life. This is the ultimate apologetic. The average Christian might not be concerned with most of the facets of apologetics and scholarship but one cannot escape the obligation every follower of Christ has to tell others of The Way. In the final analysis, the loudest voice in defense of the truth is one's life. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, That ye love one another; as I have love you, that ye also love one another. By THIS shall all men know that ye are my disciples" (Jn. 13:34). Jesus also said that the world would believe in him if we bear much fruit (Jn. 15:8). The final responsibility lies on the shoulders of the Christian. Although scholars and apologetists through the centuries have made a con-

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centrated effort to establish a basis for belief, all lies in rubble if individual believers do not take a stand and live for their Master.

While study in the arts and letters are important there is a task for the apologist that is far more important. Saving the sinner. We must never focus our attention on the arguments to the exclusion of the sinner. Apologetics must not distract from its primary aim of communicating the gospel. To most of the people we come in contact with in our every day lives there is no need for systematic apologetics. The need is in showing God's love to the world. It is a great responsibility the 20th century Christian has. There will be times, however, that the effective soul winner will need not only a knowledge of the Bible but also a knowledge of apologetics as well. It should become the aim of every member of Christ's body to "Know our subject profoundly and share it simply."¹⁷

The ultimate apologetic is your life. The greatest success will not be in Proving Christianity to be true but in Showing it to be true.

Conclusion

In this paper only a brief survey of this great field has been made. It is the sincere prayer of this writer that each Christian will take his responsibility seriously and always be ready to give an answer of the hope that is within them with meekness and fear. May God bless us in this effort. 71 Penstock Ln., Lake Katrine, NY 12449

Endnotes

- ¹ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Westwood, New Jersey: Barbour and Company, 1952), p. 3. In this work Lewis explains that there is a higher law that all human appeal to. This is used in working out personal disputes even in every day life. All mankind understands a since of right and wrong.
- ² *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. I AARO-AUST, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan & Free Press, 1987), p. 349.
- ³ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. I AARO-AUST, p. 349.
- ⁴ Joseph B. Tyson, *The New Testament and Early Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), p. 402.
- ⁵ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. I AARO-AUST, p. 349.
- ⁶ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. I AARO-AUST, p. 350. There seems to have been some confusion within the first century by pagans as to

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what the Christians were actually doing in the Lord's Supper. Some scholars have stated that pagans accused Christians of cannibalism because of their eating of Jesus' body in the secret feast. As the Christians were a private sect during the first years for fear of persecution, there were many rumors that were started. One could suppose that the charges of incest leveled against the believer came from the terminology Christians called themselves: Brothers and Sisters.

- ⁷ **The Encyclopedia of Religion**, Vol. I AARO-AUST, p. 352.
- ⁸ William Lane Craig, **Apologetics: An Introduction** (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), p. xi.
- ⁹ **The Encyclopedia of Religion**, Vol. I AARO-AUST, p. 349.
- ¹⁰ Williston Walker, **A History of the Christian Church** (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 50.
- ¹¹ Craig, p. xi.
- ¹² Craig, p. xi.
- ¹³ Avrey Dulles, **A History of Apologetics** (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1971), p. 35.
- ¹⁴ Hans Kung, **Does God Exist?**, trans. Edward Quinn, (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. xxii.
- ¹⁵ Kung, p. xxi.
- ¹⁶ Craig, p. 58.
- ¹⁷ Craig, p. 58.
- ¹⁸ Craig, p. 58.
- ¹⁹ Craig, p. 15.
- ²⁰ Craig, p. 15.
- ²¹ There are several criticisms that should be noted that are used in biblical scholarship. They include: Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism, Literary Criticism, Rhetorical Criticism, Source Criticism. All of these taken together provide a very useful supply of tools.
- ²² It seems that for a time the church of Christ had lost its Campbellian tradition of study of the mother tongues of the Bible. It appears that some initial interest is being sparked again in such areas. Preachers and teachers as well as members of the Church of Christ need to be open minded toward scholarship and study. For too long its members have been viewed as closed minded and anti-scholar.
- ²³ When this writer decided to explore a degree on the University level in Biblical scholarship several negative remarks were made. Although these

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remarks were well intended they lacked a true understanding of the secular field of religion. Inherent within the field are problems it is true. However, many gems were unearthed. While encouraging individuals to take information in this field, as in many others, on a cautious basis, I highly recommend that any one desiring to understand the Bible and its history take University courses.

²⁴ Dulles, p. 19.

²⁵ Dulles, p. 1.

²⁶ Dulles, p. 5.

²⁷ Kerygmatic means the proclamation of Jesus as Lord. This is a term referring to the earliest Christian message.

²⁸ Dulles, p. 10.

²⁹ Dulles, p. 19.

³⁰ G.P. Fisher, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Hurbert Cunliffe-Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p.30.

³¹ Fisher, p. 30.

³² Dulles, p. 10.

³³ F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1972), p. 313.

³⁴ Fisher, p. 30.

³⁵ Fisher, p. 30.

³⁶ Fisher, p. 30.

³⁷ *Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity*, ed. Tim Dowley (New York: Guideposts, 1977), p. 75.

³⁸ Dulles, p. 22.

³⁹ *Library of Christian Classics, Early Christian Fathers*, Vol. 1, ed. Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 17.

⁴⁰ Dulles, p. 22.

⁴¹ Dulles, p. 22.

⁴² Dulles, p. 22.

⁴³ Henry C. Sheldon, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1 (Peabody, Mass., Hendrickson Publishers: 1895), p. 179.

⁴⁴ Sheldon, p. 179.

⁴⁵ Sheldon, p. 180.

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- ⁴⁶ Fisher, p. 30.
- ⁴⁷ Eerdmans, p. 75.
- ⁴⁸ Sheldon, p. 183.
- ⁴⁹ Sheldon, p. 175.
- ⁵⁰ Dulles, p. 29.
- ⁵¹ Far too often it seems that teachers of the Bible approach non-believers in the same way. There seems to be a debater's attitude in many proclaimers of Christianity. Perhaps a more logical and Christian way would be to approach individuals in nonaggressive means.
- ⁵² Sheldon, p. 178.
- ⁵³ Dulles, p. 25.
- ⁵⁴ Dulles, p. 25.
- ⁵⁵ Dulles, p. 25.
- ⁵⁶ Eerdmans, p. 113.
- ⁵⁷ Eerdmans, p. 109.
- ⁵⁸ Sheldon, p. 180.
- ⁵⁹ Walker, p. 51.
- ⁶⁰ Dulles, p. 26.
- ⁶¹ Walker, p. 51.
- ⁶² Dulles, 26.
- ⁶³ Eerdmans, p. 108.
- ⁶⁴ Dulles, p. 27.
- ⁶⁵ Dulles, p. 27.
- ⁶⁶ Henry Chadwick, **The Early Church** (New York: Dorset Press, 1967), p. 79.
- ⁶⁷ Dulles, p. 28.
- ⁶⁸ Dulles, p. 32.
- ⁶⁹ Dulles, p. 32.
- ⁷⁰ Chadwick, p. 97.
- ⁷¹ Chadwick, p. 97.
- ⁷² Dulles, pp. 33-34.
- ⁷³ Dulles, p. 34.

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- ⁷⁴ Chadwick, p. 100.
- ⁷⁵ Eerdmans, p. 104.
- ⁷⁶ Chadwick, p. 100.
- ⁷⁷ B.A.G. Fuller, **A History of Philosophy** (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1938), P. 333.
- ⁷⁸ Dulles, p. 34.
- ⁷⁹ Eerdmans, p. 104.
- ⁸⁰ Eerdmans, p. 104.
- ⁸¹ Dulles, p. 38.
- ⁸² Fuller, p. 336.
- ⁸³ Fuller, p. 336.
- ⁸⁴ Dulles, p. 40.
- ⁸⁵ Dulles, p. 40.
- ⁸⁶ Dulles, p. 40.
- ⁸⁷ Fuller, p. 336.
- ⁸⁸ Dulles, p. 43.
- ⁸⁹ Fuller, p. 336.
- ⁹⁰ Dulles, p. 71.
- ⁹¹ Craig, p. 5.
- ⁹² Craig, p. 5.
- ⁹³ Craig, p. 6.
- ⁹⁴ Craig, p. 6.
- ⁹⁵ Craig, p. 7.
- ⁹⁶ Dulles, p. 65.
- ⁹⁷ Dulles, p. 65.
- ⁹⁸ Craig, p. 8.
- ⁹⁹ Craig, p. 9.
- ¹⁰⁰ Craig, p. 9.
- ¹⁰¹ Craig, p. 9.
- ¹⁰² Kung, p. xxi
- ¹⁰³ Craig, p. 35.

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- ¹⁰⁴ Craig, p. 39.
¹⁰⁵ Craig, p. 39.
¹⁰⁶ Lewis, p. 33.
¹⁰⁷ Craig, p. 45.
¹⁰⁸ Craig, p. 46.
¹⁰⁹ Craig, p. 62.
¹¹⁰ **The Summa Theologica**, by St. Thomas Aquinas, Ed. Anton C. Pegis (New York: The Modern Library), p.25.
¹¹¹ Kung, p. xxiii.
¹¹² Craig, p. 92.
¹¹³ Craig, p. 166.
¹¹⁴ Craig, p. 185.
¹¹⁵ Craig, p. 190.
¹¹⁶ Merrill F. Unger, **Ungers Bible Dictionary** (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. 553.
¹¹⁷ Craig, p. 95.

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Non-Futuristic Views of the Millennium

by Jim Crouch

The book of Revelation speaks of individuals who will live and reign with Christ for one thousand years (20:4). This statement has given rise to various theories, some of which are quite imaginative. The range of interpretations can be grouped into four major views: historic premillennialism, premillennial dispensationalism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. While these terms are inadequate, and actually represent entire eschatological doctrines, they do serve the purpose of distinguishing the doctrines from one another. In this study, we are concerned with the non-futuristic views of the millennium, viz., postmillennialism and amillennialism.

Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism, when broken down, means "after the 1000 years." This is in contrast with premillennialism, meaning "before the 1000 years." These terms are to be understood in reference to the second coming of Christ. Postmillennialists believe the second coming of Christ will follow the millennium of Revelation 20. A brief synopsis of postmillennial eschatology follows.

1. First, like the premillennialist, the postmillennialist understands the millennium of Revelation 20 to represent an earthly utopia. However, as previously mentioned, he believes that this will occur prior to the second coming of Christ, as opposed to after.
2. He believes that this utopia will come about as a result of the preaching of the gospel, and man's consequent obedience to the same. The gospel will continue to have success throughout the world, until the vast majority of every nation become Christians. This will gradually usher in the millennium. Most acknowledge that this will not merely be the result of human effort, but rather will be the result of divine action. When God is ready to usher in the millennium, Satan will be bound, and the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of men, convicting them of sin, and stimulating them to obey the gospel. Therefore, the only difference between the present age and the Millennial Age is more in quantity of Christians, rather than quality of life. Whereas today, Christianity is the exception in most societies, it will gradually become the accepted rule.

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3. The postmillennialist does not accept the millennium as a literal one thousand year period; it is merely a long period of time, its length determined only by God's Will.
4. At the end of this earthly millennium, Satan will be released for a short time, resulting in a great apostasy. This will be in connection with the coming and revealing of the Anti-christ.
5. The millennial age will conclude with the second coming of Christ. This return will be personal and bodily. This event will be immediately followed by the general resurrection (both just and unjust), and then the final judgment. Based on this judgment, the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished eternally. Some postmillennialists believe the Jewish nation will be converted. This is not to be confused with the premillennial theory that the Jewish state will be reborn and the Jews reinstated as God's chosen people. Rather, it is simply in fulfillment of certain unfulfilled prophecies.

History of Postmillennialism

Postmillennialists generally claim Augustine (354-430) as the father of their millennial doctrine. However, that Augustine adhered to all the postmillennial theories is highly unlikely. For example, though he believed that prophecy dictated the conversion of most of the world before Jesus' return, he believed the millennium stretched from the advent of Christ to His second coming. In fact, so general were his teachings on this subject, Augustine is also given credit for popularizing the doctrine of amillennialism.

From a historical perspective, it is easy to see why Augustine (and others) would expect a conversion of the world. At the time he was living, the Roman Catholic Church had gained tremendous power in the world, and was growing stronger. Seemingly, without any special intervention by God, the world would soon be converted. In this atmosphere, it is understandable that man would tend to misconstrue Bible prophecy to fit historical patterns. In fact, history often influences people's thinking about the Bible, the subject of the millennium not withstanding.

During the Middle Ages is when postmillennial sentiments became the strongest. During the age of Roman Catholic strength, though postmillennialism was growing stronger, premillennialism was the most popular view. With the Middle Ages and Reformation Movement, premillennialism lost most of its popularity, and even became recognized as a heretical doctrine. As a result, many denominations began incorporating postmillennial ideas

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into their church creeds. The Augsburg and Westminster Confessions are basically postmillennial in nature, as are the stated creeds of Lutherans, Presbyterians, and other Reformed groups.

In the past seventy-five years, postmillennialism has suffered a sharp decline in popularity. Again, this has largely been the result of historical changes. During the first one thousand years of the church's history, worldwide conversion seemed possible, and even probable. As a result, the postmillennial expectation of an earthly, Christian utopia seemed feasible. However, in recent centuries, historical trends have tended to be for the worse, rather than the better; the earthly utopia seems to be moving further away rather than closer. As a result, people have tended to re-examine their millennial beliefs, and postmillennial followings have dissipated. Today, there are very few who still hold to the classic tenets of postmillennialism.

The Principle Tenets of Postmillennialism

The Spread of the Gospel. The most distinctive feature of postmillennialism is the idea of the successful and effective preaching of the gospel to the entire world. As a result of Satan being bound and the effectual working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, the gospel will permeate the world, until the whole of it converts to Christianity. This is not to say that there will be no sin in the world, nor that every individual will become a Christian. Rather, it is the belief that the vast majority of the world will be converted; Christianity will become the rule in every society of the earth, rather than the exception; and sin will be reduced to a minimum.

In proof of this doctrine, postmillennialists turn to such Old Testament passages as: Isaiah 45:22-25; Hosea 2:23; Psalms 47; 72; 110. However, none of these passages, taken in their proper context, are in any way conclusive of this point. One of the principle supports of this doctrine is from Matthew 24:14:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come (RSV).

Further proof of this postmillennial doctrine is found in the Great Commission ("disciple all nations"), and other similar statements by Christ in the gospels.

An external evidence that the preaching of the gospel is succeeding, and will ultimately bring about the millennium, is the vast improvement of the world's societies. Not only are individuals being redeemed, but as a result,

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the world is changing, accepting Christian values more and more. While the trend has its ups and downs, the slow, general progress of humanity from the flood until now has been for the better, rather than the worse. Eventually, this process will be completed, and the Millennial Age will gradually be ushered in.

The Nature of the Millennium. Postmillennialists understand the one thousand years of Revelation 20 to be purely symbolic in nature, representing a very long period of indefinite length. In classic postmillennialism, the binding of Satan is what brings about the earthly utopia that they look for, and the reigning of one thousand years occurs during this period. In interpreting Revelation 20 in this manner, the first resurrection and the reigning are figurative; and the second resurrection is interpreted variably as literal or figurative.

In discussing the postmillennialist view of the millennium, we should realize that Revelation 20 is not the basis of this view of the millennium; but rather, other passages of Scripture throughout the Bible suggesting a worldwide preaching of the gospel. In recent years, the tendency has been for postmillennialists to interpret Revelation 20 in the same way as amillennialists, completely divorcing Revelation 20 from the earthly utopia they look for. With this interpretation, they believe that the millennium represents the present gospel age, and that Satan is bound right now. However, before this Millennial Age ends, an earthly utopia will be ushered in as a result of vast numbers of people obeying the gospel. Only after this will Jesus' second coming occur.

Obviously, Revelation 20 is of little consequence to postmillennial eschatology. More than anything else, the millennium will be a long period of time in which Christianity will rule the earth, and Christ will reign over the people. Christ will not reign bodily on the earth, but will reign in the hearts of men, in that the population of the earth will obey His commands.

Evaluation of Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism is very positive in nature. Premillennialists and Amillennialists generally do not look for worldwide conversion, and often look for just the opposite. This tends to affect one's outlook in preaching the gospel. Postmillennialists are generally very active in preaching the gospel to the world, this being one of the natural results of its doctrine. It encourages members to actively reach for opportunities around them.

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However, this is of little consequence if its teachings are not grounded in the Scriptures. Its doctrines are not based on a good exegesis of Bible text. When taken in its proper context, there are very few passages of Scripture which could possibly be construed to point to an earthly utopia as a result of the preaching of the gospel. There are no plain passages of Scripture that teach this idea at all. In addition, postmillennialism tends to ignore other plain Bible teachings concerning the last days.

Revelation 20:1-6 is the only passage of Scripture that actually deals with a millennium, yet postmillennial doctrine is not taught, or even hinted at, in these verses. Where then is the authority for defining the millennium as they do? No doubt, it is in realization of this problem that many postmillennialists are now divorcing their theory of the earthly utopia from Revelation 20, basing their doctrine solely on other passages of Scripture.

Amillennialism

Amillennialism, by definition, means, "opposed to the 1000 years." This term is somewhat misleading, for amillennialists definitely believe in the millennium. Therefore, we must understand the term to be in contrast with premillennial and postmillennial doctrine: amillennialists do not believe there will be a future earthly utopia, neither before nor after the second coming of Christ. Following is brief sketch of amillennial eschatology.

1. The amillennialist believes that we are currently living in the Millennial Age described in Revelation 20. This age began with the first advent of Christ, and it will not end until just prior to Christ's second coming (gospel age). It is not a literal one thousand years in duration, but simply a long period determined by God's will.
2. The second coming of Christ will be immediately followed by the general resurrection of the dead, the judgment and the subsequent reward and punishment of all men in their eternal abodes. There will be no transient period of one thousand years, or any other length of time, dividing any of these events—they will follow one another in rapid sequence.
3. Amillennialists believe that Christ could return at any moment. The pre- and postmillennialists believe that certain world events must take place before Christ can return. Since the amillennialist believes that Christ could return at any time, he generally pays far less attention to prophecies that supposedly deal with the last days or the "signs" preceding the parousia.

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4. In general, amillennialists interpret the Revelation in a more figurative sense than do pre- or postmillennialists. This is also generally true in regard to Old Testament prophecies. The prophecies that pre- and postmillennialists look to as proof of an earthly utopia, the amillennialist generally regards as being fulfilled in the history of the church, or in the "new earth".

Historical Note

Pockets of amillennialism can be traced in the church from the first century forward. Although disputed, some scholars believe that the teachings of Barnabas are a form of amillennial eschatology. Even so, Augustine is generally given credit for developing and propagating amillennial doctrines as we know them today. In fact, amillennial and postmillennial doctrines were probably intertwined until the 19th Century, when postmillennialism evolved into the form we find it today.

With the decline of postmillennial popularity in the 20th Century, large numbers of postmillennialists have changed to accept the amillennial understanding of the millennium. Amillennialism has grown increasingly popular over the last several decades, and this can largely be attributed to the decline of postmillennialism.

The Principle Tenets of Amillennialism

The Two Resurrections of Revelation 20. A significant element of Amillennialism is its treatment of the two resurrections of Revelation 20. "They came to life [first resurrection] and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended [second resurrection]" (v. 4b-5). The classical amillennial interpretation of this verse is that the first resurrection is a figurative resurrection (which occurs at baptism—resurrection of the spirit), and the second resurrection is the bodily resurrection of all men. Some amillennialists of recent years have understood the second resurrection to spiritual as well. While there are many variations of this theory, the result is the same: there will not be two separate resurrections, one of the righteous, one of the unrighteous, with a literal one thousand years separating the two.

The Nature of the Millennium. The amillennialist defines the one thousand years of Revelation 20 figuratively as representing the gospel age. Satan is now bound until the end of the age. The number "1000" is symbolic. It is formed by adding the number seven (a sacred number of perfection) and the number three (a sacred number of completion). The result is the

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number "10" which would then represent "sacred perfection or completion." The number "1000" is merely the number "10" to the third power, stressing the absolute completion of that which is described.

That the amillennialists interpretation of the millennium is correct is dependent entirely upon his method of interpreting the entire book of Revelation being correct. The millennial teaching of Revelation 20 directly follows the second coming of Christ recorded in Chapter 19. This is what leads premillennialists to understand a millennial age to follow the second coming of Christ. To avoid this, amillennialists generally see the book of Revelation as being divided into different sections or divisions (usually seven), with each section covering the same period, or different period of time, viz., from the first advent of Christ until the end of the gospel age. In keeping with this theme, Revelation 20-22 forms the final division. If this interpretation is correct, the events of Revelation 20 do not describe events that follow the second coming of Christ, but rather take a step backwards in history. The figurative number "1000" then extends from this point until the completion of the age, or Christ's second advent.

Evaluation of Amillennialism

In favor of amillennialism, this doctrine recognizes that the book of Revelation utilizes a great deal of symbolism, as do many Old Testament prophecies. The Amillennialist generally does a good job of incorporating this general fact in his interpretation of Scripture. He does more than look at the words and their definitions; he then attempts to harmonize the text with the overall context of the Bible, the book, and the culture of the writer.

The amillennialist view of Revelation 20 does not conflict other Bible teaching. This is important, for we should always allow the plain Bible passages to help interpret the more difficult passages rather than vice-versa. Also, the amillennial understanding of Revelation 20 does not conflict with historical trends. In fact, amillennialism allows for either an improvement or deterioration of conditions, believing that this has no bearing on Bible eschatology.

On the negative side, classic amillennialism is inconsistent in its interpretation of the two resurrections of Revelation 20—one is spiritual, one is physical. The same Greek word is used in both verse 4 and verse 5 ("they lived"—*ezesan*). These words are used "back-to-back" and there is seemingly nothing in the passage dictating that the word should be understood differently in verse 4 than in verse 5. There is no contextual reason to interpret them differently, and probably indicates a poor exegesis to do so.

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Along this same line, the passage says that the martyrs and those who did not worship the beast lived and reigned with Christ during the millennium. Then the passage says that the rest of the dead (everyone else) did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. The purpose of verses 4-6 is to make this contrast between two groups. The contextual implication is that those who participate in the first resurrection do not participate in the second resurrection. Classic amillennialism states that the first resurrection is spiritual (generally referring to baptism) and that the second resurrection is the bodily resurrection of all men. This all being true, those who obey the gospel would not participate in the second resurrection, the bodily resurrection of man (this is reserved for the rest of the dead). The phrase, "but the rest of the dead" contrasts two groups of people—those who participate in the first resurrection, and those who do not.

Another small problem with the Amillennial position that the first resurrection is baptism is the statement in Revelation 20:6, "on such the second death hath no power." The second death is the "lake of fire" (v. 14), or final the punishment. The indication is that those who are baptized cannot be cast into the lake of fire. Those who propagate the impossibility of impostasy sometimes use this interpretation as proof of this fact.

Exegesis of Revelation 20:1-6

Correct interpretation of the book of Revelation as a whole is crucial to a proper interpretation of Revelation 20. The close of Revelation 19 clearly speaks of the second coming of Christ. If Revelation 20 follows Revelation 19 chronologically, then the millennium would come after the parousia. This, of course, is the reasoning that premillennialists use to establish the time of the millennium. That this interpretation is incorrect is evident in light of many other clear passages in the New Testament.

Revelation 20 then does not follow chapter 19 chronologically. Rather, it takes us back in time to the beginning of the gospel age, and it opens the final section of the book of Revelation. Contained in this section is: the binding of Satan (20:1-3); the thousand year reign (20:4-6); the final battle with Satan and his defeat (20:7-10); the final judgment (20:11-13); the final punishment of the wicked (20:14-15); a description of the final reward for the faithful (21:1 - 22:5).

Our passage of interest is easily divided into two main parts: 1) Verses 1-3, which deal with the binding of Satan, and 2) Verses 4-6, which deal with the millennial reign.

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The Binding of Satan

John sees a vision of an angel who unlocks a great pit (abyss). He casts Satan into the pit, and secures him there with a chain and a seal, where he will remain for one thousand years. The objective of the binding is clear: to prevent him from deceiving the nations during the millennium (v. 3).

The number "one thousand" is symbolic. Some explain that it is formed by adding the number 7 (a sacred number of perfection) and the number 3 (a sacred number of completion). The result is the number "10" which would then represent "sacred perfection and completion." The number "1000" is merely the number "10" to the third power, stressing the absolute completion of that which is described. That this reasoning is correct is a matter of dispute. However, the probability that this number is figurative is evident from the very nature of the book, as well as the figurative nature of the immediate passage. Without dispute, the seal, chain and lock are clearly figurative, for these could never literally bind a spirit being such as Satan.

The one thousand years then are not literal, but represent a long period of time to be determined by God's will. As the term "years" denotes a period of time, it is necessary to understand the one thousand years as representative of a long period of time or possibly a complete age. During this period, Satan is bound, unable to deceive the nations. This millennial period extends from the ministry of Jesus until just before the end of time. That Satan was bound while Christ was on the earth is evident from Scripture. Notice the wording and context of Matthew 12:27-29.

And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house (RSV).

The implication of this verse is obvious. Jesus had just cast a demon from a man who was previously blind and dumb before Jesus healed him. Some of the people began thinking that Jesus might be the Messiah, but the Pharisees murmured that He was actually casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul (Satan). Jesus first shows the fallacy of such reasoning by stating that a house divided against itself cannot stand (vv. 25-26). It would be unwise indeed for Satan to cast out his own demons. But next, Jesus explains His power to cast out the demons (v. 29). Jesus is dealing specifically with Satan and Satan's kingdom. Satan represents the strong

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man, and Jesus plainly says that he (Satan) has been bound. The fact that Jesus could cast out demons was evidence of this binding.

Another clear passage to this effect is found in Luke 10:17-18. After the seventy disciples had returned from a preaching tour, they were pleased that they were able to cast out demons in Jesus' name. Concerning this, Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Further, Jesus mentions that, as a result of His crucifixion, Satan would be "cast out" (Jn. 12:31-32). The word used here for "cast out" is the same phrase used in our text where the angel is said to have "cast" Satan into the bottomless pit.

Further, the "reigning on thrones" of Revelation 20:4 is strikingly similar to the promise Jesus made to this apostles in Matthew 19:28. In this passage, the time frame involved is the "period of regeneration," an obvious reference to the gospel age.

These passages make it easy to interpret the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1-3 as an event that took place during the ministry of Christ and that will extend until the end of the age. We should understand that Satan being bound does not mean that he would exert no influence over the world. It simply means that he would be restricted to the point that he could not deceive the nations of the world. This is clearly stated by John. Satan would be unable to have power over (superseding) the power of the gospel. This truth is taught in other New Testament passages, and forms one of the principle themes of the book of Revelation.

It is sensible to think then that the power of the gospel is what has bound Satan, and would therefore be representative of the chain in Revelation 20:1. Note that each of the passages above which indicate that Satan is currently bound involve the establishing of Christ's kingdom and the preaching of the gospel. It is also possible that the preaching of the gospel is what keeps Satan bound during this gospel age.

The Millennial Reign

Classic amillennialism states that these verses deal with two resurrections: the first (v. 4) is spiritual, and is a type of the resurrection that occurs at baptism; the second (v. 5) is literal, and refers to the bodily resurrection of the dead prior to the judgment. I believe only one resurrection is spoken of in these verses, but that it is explained from two different perspectives: one positive, one negative.

One of the keys to understanding this passage is the statement of verse four, "I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony

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to Jesus . . ." Though this word "soul" (*psuchas*) sometimes refers to those who are alive on the earth (1 Pet. 3:20), it is obvious that John here has reference to those who have passed from this earth to the intermediate state (they had been beheaded). There is some question as to whether John sees only one group of people, or two or three separate groups in this intermediate state. It seems likely that John is referencing at least two groups. One was a group of martyrs, and the other was those who had lived faithful Christian lives, having neither received the mark of the beast, nor worshipped him. Christ had promised the church at Laodicea that those who overcame in this life would receive the right to sit on thrones with Him. Revelation 20:4 is a possible fulfillment of this promise. So understood, John sees the souls of all Christians in the intermediate state, some of which had died a martyr's death. The separation of the body and soul at death; the death of the body, and the resuming of the life of the soul in the intermediate state is here called a type of resurrection.

Ezasan means "to live, or come to life." It is from the Greek root, *zao*. This root is only used one other time in reference to souls of the intermediate state (Lk. 20:37-38). It is used in reference to bodily resurrection (Mt. 9:18; Rom. 14:9; 2 Cor. 13:4). It is also used in other ways, such as to refer to the fact that God lives (Rev. 4:9-10; Rev. 7:2) and seeming in reference to spiritual life of believers in Revelation 3:1. The fact that it refers to a type of resurrection in Revelation 20:4-5 is evident from the statement in verse six, "this is the first resurrection."

Admittedly, this poses a bit of a problem with this interpretation of Revelation 20:4—how do souls living in the intermediate state fit the figure of a resurrection (vv. 4, 6)? However, this is not an insurmountable difficulty. John is speaking of individuals that have died physically, and yet he sees them now as living and reigning with Christ. The fact that they had died is obvious; the fact that they were now alive is also obvious. Also, the figure is consistent due to the change in state that takes place. Physical life for these individuals has come to an end, and a new kind of life has begun in the spirit world. Certainly this type of transition is what occurs in a resurrection. It should also be noted that scholars are in dispute concerning the genuineness of this phrase in the text.

These souls "lived and reigned with Christ" for one thousand years. The one thousand years of verses four and five should be understood as being the same period as the one thousand years of verses two and three, viz., the gospel age. The phrase "with Christ" describes both the living and the reigning; they lived with Christ, and they reigned with Christ. Whether this

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living and reigning with Christ is literal or figurative is a matter of some dispute, and could easily be interpreted either way. Possibly Christ has personal contact with the righteous souls of the intermediate state (cf. Phil. 1:23, 2 Cor. 5:8). However, the living with Christ could be a figurative expression of their past lives in contrast to their new state in paradise.

Verse four deals with the righteous dead, and now verse five deals with "the rest of the dead" or the unrighteous dead. The Greek word for "rest" (*loipols*) is properly defined as "the remainder; what is left over." It seems that the purpose of verse five is to contrast two different groups: those of verse four with "the remainder" or everyone not included in verse four. The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were ended. The word "again" is found in the KJV text, but is easily left out, as it is not inherent in the definition of this Greek phrase. It is the same word as used in verse 4, and is there translated, "they lived." This is a proper translation. The phrase could be understood to be in an ingressive aorist tense, in which case "they began to live" or "they lived again" would be the correct reading (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*). However, there is nothing in the word itself that demands this rendering. It is accurately translated by definition, "they lived."

Further, we should understand that the word "until" (*achri*) does not always denote a change that is to take place after a certain point. For example, note the reading of Romans 5:13: "For until (*achri*) the law, sin was in the world." However, we should not understand this passage to mean that sin disappeared after the law was given. Sin was in the world until the law, but sin was also in the world after the law, and is still in the world today (cf. 2 Sam. 6:23). John uses this word in a similar manner in this passage. The phrase "until the thousand years were finished" has the same force as saying, "during the thousand years."

Verse five is actually a parenthetical thought introduced by John, and is so rendered in the NIV and other translations. It is not meant to introduce a completely new thought or teaching. It should be understood in light of what is said in the close of verse four. Therefore, we should not understand the word "live" (*ezesan*) in verse five to be a reference to living in general. By context, it is a special kind of living as defined by verse four. In other words, it is not that the rest of the dead do not live at all; this is not the point of discussion. Rather, the rest of the dead do not live with Christ. What one group does, the other does not do—this should be the limit to the interpretation. One group lives and reigns with Christ; the other group does not live and reign with Christ.

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The natural conclusion then is that the unrighteous dead (in torments) do not live and reign with Christ during the gospel age (literally or figuratively); however, neither will they live and reign with Christ after the millennium. The word "until" does not necessarily suggest that they will live after the one thousand years are over. Understood in this way, John deals with only one resurrection in Revelation 20:1-6. It is a figurative resurrection that only the righteous dead participate in. This perfectly fits the language of verse five, "this is the first resurrection." The fact that there is a first resurrection for the righteous implies that there will be a second resurrection. Though not mentioned here, it is taught in many other passages, and is implied 20:11-12. The second resurrection a literal, bodily resurrection that all men, righteous and unrighteous, and will occur at the end of time.

Verse six is then easily explained. Those who participate in the first resurrection are blessed, as they are comforted in paradise, and the second death (lake of fire, v. 14) cannot harm them. Their faithful life on earth has been completed and their reward has been sealed. On the other hand, the lake of fire will have power over those who do not live and reign with Christ during the gospel age, i.e., over those who have not lived faithful lives. What will happen to these two groups of people after the millennium is described in the following verses of this section of the book.

Conclusion

John gives a brief, broad view of the Christian age, represented here by the term "one thousand years." In verses 1-3, John describes what effect the millennium has on the earth—Satan is unable to overcome the gospel and deceive the nations; in verses 4-6, John describes the effect this same period has on those who have passed this life—the righteous live and reign with Christ, and the unrighteous do not live and reign with Christ.

Therefore, John only deals with one resurrection in these verses, and it is a figurative resurrection which describes the faithful Christians who have passed from this life to a new life in paradise. The righteous participate in this event, but the unrighteous do not. The literal, bodily resurrection of all men is not dealt with in these verses, but is implied in verses 11-13 of this chapter, just prior to the general judgment.

This is one of many amillennial interpretations of Revelation 20:1-6. This is admittedly not the most important passage of the New Testament, and its interpretation is obscured by the figurative language involved. However, in light of the importance premillennialists are placing on this passage, and in light of the popularity of premillennial doctrines today, a good exegesis of

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this passage becomes necessary. Our aim in this article is promote further study of this passage.

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Romans Chapter One

by Greg DeGough

Paul, and the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:1-7)

I. Verse 1

- A. Paul says he is a slave (*doulos*) of Jesus, invited (*kletos*) to the office of an apostle and appointed (*aphoridzo*) to that office by God. Paul knew he had a divine commission (Gal. 1:15, 16; Acts 13:2).
- B. Paul was appointed as an apostle for (*eis*) the gospel of God. That of which the gospel consists will be seen later in the chapter. Paul understood that the end goal of his calling and appointment was the advancement of the gospel.

II. Verse 2

To Paul, the prophets are the agents through (*dia*) which God's previous promise of the good news was made; the Scriptures were the medium. All of the apostles knew that the promise of the gospel is revealed in the Holy Scriptures (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

III. Verses 3-4

The gospel is the good news about God's Son. Paul declares several things about God's Son:

A. He was human.

- 1. Greek—begotten from the seed of David, with respect to the flesh.
- 2. This was important to Paul for at least two reasons:
 - a. because of Jesus' mediatorship (1 Tim. 2:5-6)
 - b. because of the Messiah's descent (Rom. 9:5).

B. He was divine.

- 1. Greek—powerfully declared to be the Son of God, with respect to the spirit of holiness, by a resurrection of the dead.
- 2. *kata pneuma hagiosune*—set here in antithesis to *kata sarka*. Sanday and Headlam—"The *pneuma hagiosunes*, though not the Divine nature, is that in which the Divinity or Divine Personality resided."¹ Proksch—"hagiosune is here identical with deity."²

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3. His divinity was declared (*oridzo*) powerfully (*en dunamei*) by His resurrection from the dead. This declaration was also an appointment of authority (Acts 10:42; 17:31).
4. Thus we can see that Paul is declaring both the human and divine natures of Jesus.
- C. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. "These words gather up the total personality of Jesus, His deity and humanity."³ Here Paul specifically identifies the Son of God to whom he refers. He is the same Jesus, the Christ, to whom the Roman Christians submit as their Lord.

IV. Verse 5

The purpose of Paul's appointment was clear. Paul knew how and why he had been prepared, saved, and appointed as an apostle of Christ.

- A. He was saved through Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection as an example of Christ's patience for all those who would believe (1 Tim. 1:15-17).
- B. He was prepared by the Father for his work (cf. Gal. 1:15-16) appointed by Christ to office (Acts 26:16-17), and enabled by the Spirit of God to preach the message of salvation (2 Cor. 3:4-11; 4:1, 5-7).
- C. His mission? To bring about obedience which springs from faith among all the Gentiles, for the sake of Jesus' name.
 1. To Paul, faith springs from the gospel (Rom. 10:17) and obedience springs from faith. If we want people to obey God, like Paul, we have to preach the gospel.
 2. The call that Paul sent out to all the Gentiles was for Jesus' name sake; so that He might be honored. The apostle's work was done not for selfish ambition but for the glory of Jesus' name.

V. Verse 6

As a result of hearing and obeying the gospel the Romans received a calling. They were called to be slaves of Christ, as was Paul (Rom. 6:22).

Paul's Thankfulness for the Romans and His Desire to Visit Rome (Rom. 1:8-15)

1. Verses 8-13.

In typical style, Paul proceeds with thanksgiving for the Roman recipients of his letter and explanation of his situation with regard to visiting them.

II. Verse 14

The motivation for Paul's desire to visit Rome is not selfish. Paul is not looking for a good excuse to travel and see the world. Remember (v. 5), he preaches the gospel for the sake of the name of Christ.

A. To Paul, preaching the gospel to all men is an obligation. He views himself as a debtor (*ophelletes*) to all men, he owes them the gospel. This obligation is not one which he grudgingly fulfills, but rather one which challenges him to seek a higher reward (1 Cor. 9:16-18).

B. In verse 14 Paul is not categorizing foreigners (non-Greeks) as foolish. He simply emphasizes the universal scope of his mission. He must preach to all men, in all mental conditions and environments.

III. Verse 15

The gospel is good news to Paul, it is propositional and communicable. It can be preached. That which is God's power for the salvation of all those who believe is contained in words; words which can be read, spoken, preached, believed, and obeyed.

The Theme of the Letter to the Romans (Rom. 1:16, 17)

I. The gospel is God's ability to save.

A. The Greek word **dunamis** which is translated "power" in this passage is the word from which our English word "dynamite" is derived. It means: power, might, strength, force, ability, capability (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18, 22-24; Jas. 1:21). This word is also used in many places in the New Testament of miraculous power from God, especially the power which was manifested in the resurrection (Mt. 22:29; 1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 13:4; Eph. 1:18-21; Phil. 3:10).

B. The gospel is meant to bring about (eis) the salvation (*soterian*) of particular men.

1. The salvation of men is realized in their deliverance, or preservation (cf. Luke 1:71 for a connection between this passage and the original meaning of *soterian*). That from which men must be delivered will presently be seen in this and following chapters.

2. The particular men who are thereby delivered are those who believe, and the beauty of God's power for salvation is seen in its universality; it is designed to save every believer (Acts 10:34-35).

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3. However, God's special concern was directed toward the Jews.
 - a. Greek—both to Jew, especially (proton), and to Greek.
 - b. proton—in the first place, above all, especially (cf. 2 Cor. 8:5; 1 Tim. 2:1; 2 Pet. 1:20; 3:3).
 - c. No favoritism is shown, all men get equal opportunity with God (Rom. 2:9f). But the Jews were given first opportunity because of their ancestors and God's promises (Rom. 9:3-5; 11:28-29).

II. Why is the gospel God's power to save all who believe?

- A. Paul is concerned with the question: "How can a man be righteous before God?" in the greater part of the letter to the Romans.
- B. His answer: True righteousness (*dikaïosune*) is revealed (*apokalupto*) to man in the gospel.
 1. Righteousness is revealed in the gospel.
 - a. *apokalupto*—to uncover, disclose, bring to light.
 - b. In the "good news," which is propositional communication from God to men, the way to obtain true righteousness is disclosed.
 2. The righteousness disclosed in the gospel is that after which the blessed hunger and thirst (Mt. 5:6). It is greater than the righteousness of the Pharisees (Mt. 5:20) for it is the Father's righteousness (Mt. 6:33) sought by those who depend on Him for their all.
 3. The righteous revealed in the gospel is uprightness, freedom from wrong; not by man's power, it is uprightness from God (cf. Rom. 3:10; 5:19). It is righteousness which originates with God, not man, "a God-kind of righteousness,"⁵ "the righteousness bestowed by God" (cf. Rom. 10:3).
 4. This righteousness is revealed to us in the gospel because Christ, the subject of the gospel, is our righteousness. We become the righteousness of God by Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- C. This righteousness is only obtained by faith.
 1. Greek—from (*ek*) faith to (*eis*) faith.
 - a. The first prepositional phrase *ek pisteos*, or "from faith" (faith being the source), seems to fit most properly with *dikaïosune theou*, or "a righteousness of God."

- b. The second, **eis pistin**, or "to bring about faith" (faith being the goal), would then follow "is revealed" leaving a passage which reads like this: "For in the gospel a righteousness of God by/from faith is revealed in order to bring about faith."
2. This concept harmonizes very well with the thrust of the letter to the Romans, Paul's other writings, and his quotation from Hab. 2:4 (cf. Gal. 2:15-16; Rom. 3:21-24; 4:3-13; 9:30-32; 10:3, 4, 6, 10; Phil. 3:7-9).

The Gentile's Revolution Against God (Rom. 1:10-32)

I. The inexcusable nature of Paganism (vv. 18-23)

A. The wrath (*orge*) of God is being revealed (*apokalupto*) against men.

1. **orge**—wrath of a settled sort as a result of sin, evil, etc. God's wrath is not an arbitrary, impulsive passion, it is always and only expressed against evil.
2. Notice the parallel between the revelation of God's wrath here in verse 18 and the revelation of the righteousness from God in the gospel spoken of in verse 17. Here Paul begins to show the need for the righteousness revealed in the gospel. The righteousness from God revealed in the gospel can save those who are the objects of His wrath which is being revealed.
3. The statement, "is revealed," is in the present tense indicating that it was continuing to happen as Paul wrote. He is showing us how and why God's wrath is being revealed.

B. Why is God's wrath revealed from heaven against these men?

1. Verse 18b—These men are practicing impiety (*asebeia*) and unrighteousness (*adikia*) and are suppressing (*katecho*) the truth in wickedness. A. T. Robertson offers a very interesting view of this passage:

Truth (*aletheia*, *alethes*, from a privative and *letho* or *lanthano*, to conceal) is out in the open, but wicked men, so to speak, put it in a box and sit on the lid and hold it down in unrighteousness.⁶

2. Verse 19—The truth they are suppressing is what they know to be true about God.

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- a. The known about God⁷ (to *gnoston tou theou*) "is plain (*phaneron*—visible, clear, plainly to be seen, open, plain, evident, known) to them because God has made it plain (from *phaneroo*—to reveal, make known, show) to them."
- b. "God has shown them what can be known about Him."⁸
3. Verse 20—They know this truth from the manifestation God has given them in the things He has made.
 - a. "Ever since (*apo*—since, to denote the point from which something begins) the creation of the world the invisible things of God (to *aorata autou*) have been clearly seen (*katho-rao*—to perceive, notice; to see thoroughly, perceive clearly⁹), being understood (*noou-mena*—present passive participle of *noeo*—of rational reflection of inner contemplation, perceive, apprehend, understand, gain an insight to) from what has been made."
 - b. "His . . . invisible nature is perceived with the mind's eye by the things He has created."¹⁰
 - c. The use of the present participle (*nooumena*) indicates that at the same time men perceive the invisible things of God they also rationally understand them. These things are of such a nature that they cannot be misunderstood but by an act of willful rejection.
 - d. In saying that "the invisible things of God have been clearly seen" Paul rules out the use of the senses in the perception of these things and insists on the use of the mental faculties. God obviously expects men to use their rational faculties, in fact He holds them responsible to do so.
4. What is the truth they know?
 - a. Paul asserts two things are understood from what has been made:
First: God's eternal power (*aidios dunamis*).

Example—The laws of conservation and increasing entropy require an eternal power not bound by the universe as its cause. As time progresses the available power decreases (by the law of increasing entropy) even though the total power in the universe remains constant (by the law of conservation). Therefore the source of the tremendous power manifest throughout the universe must be outside and above the universe. It cannot be temporal power; it must be eternal power.

Second: God's divine nature (*theotes*—divinity, "that which shows God to be God, and gives Him the right to worship"¹¹).

Example—The fact of consciousness and personality in mankind requires a personal, conscious source. The fact of moral sensibility in mankind requires an ethical source. The fact of an ability to will in mankind requires a volitional source. The fact of love in mankind requires a loving source. In short, what makes man, man, cannot be found proceeding from the things that are made. The only realistic and satisfactory answer to these requirements is not created, but divine. God is the eternal, divine, volitional, loving source of mankind.

These two revealed aspects of God's "invisible things" are enough to show man that God exists apart from and outside of created things, and yet man still attempts to lower Him through idolatry (cf. Acts 17:24-31).

- b. Paul is not battling atheism in the first chapter of Romans. He is condemning idolatry. He assumes the Pagans hold a belief in some form of god or gods.

Paul is proclaiming God's "otherness" with regard to His creation. He is declaring that the creation shows God to be "outside," apart from its own sphere.

5. The conclusion is that men are without excuse (*anapologetous*) for their Pagan practices. The evidence which God has left of His Being is clear, perceptible, and universal (Ps. 19:1-4). Those who refuse it have no defense (cf. Jn. 3:19).
6. Verse 21a—Their lack of excuse is based upon their willful rejection of the truth about God.

"Although they knew God (*gnontes ton theon*—2nd aorist participle of *ginosko*), they neither glorified (*edoxasan*—1st aorist active of *doxadzo*—praise, honor, magnify) him as God nor gave thanks to him" (*eucharistesan*—1st aorist active of *eucharisteo*—to give thanks, render or return thanks).

- a. The aorist participle indicates that the knowledge of God in these men precedes their decision not to glorify Him or give Him thanks. These men are not ignorant but are willfully acting upon the knowledge they have.

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- b. Why should they have glorified Him and given thanks (Acts 14:15-17; Mt. 5:45)?

7. Verses 21b-23—The result of willful rejection.

- a. Verse 21b—"but their thinking (*dialogismos*—thought, opinion, reasoning, design) became futile (*emotaiiothesan*—1st aorist passive of *mataloo*—to be given over to worthlessness; think about idle, worthless things; be foolish. cf. Jer. 2:5) and their foolish hearts (*asunetos*—senseless, foolish, implying also a lack of high moral quality) were darkened (*eskotisthe*—1st aorist passive of *skotidzo*—to be darkened)."

In these two passive verbs we see a contrast with the active verbs in the beginning of the verse. Men, having knowledge of God, make willful decisions to ignore him and suffer consequences over which they have no control.

R. C. Sproul—"Their reasoning is futile precisely because it proceeds from a primary premise that is faulty and produces only the final fruit already present in the initial bias . . . The intellectual problem is produced by the moral problem, not the moral problem by an intellectual one."¹²

- b. Verse 22—"Although they claimed (*phaskontes*—present participle of *phasko*—to say, assert, claim) to be wise (*sophoi*), they became fools" (*emoranthesan*—1st aorist passive of *moraino*—to become foolish).

The present participle indicates that at the same time these men were being made fools, they were asserting their wisdom.

- c. Verse 23—"and exchanged (*ellaxan*—1st aorist active of *allaso*—to change, exchange) the glory (*doxan*—glory, majesty, sublimity) of the immortal (*aphthartou*—imperishable, incorruptible) God for images made to look like (*omoiomati eikonos*—*omoloma*—an image, copy. *eikon*—form, appearance. "A likeness which consists in an image or copy"¹³ "The likeness of the form of mortal man"¹⁴) mortal (*phthartou*—perishable, subject to decay or destruction) man and birds and animals and reptiles."

This is still part of the reason men were made fools. Notice again, because of their willful choice, men are made to be fools.

R. C. Sproul—"The foolishness of man is manifested in the exchanging of the glory of God for idols. The word 'exchange' is important to a proper understanding of the text. Many translations often render the verb as "change." But the total context of the passage excludes this rendition as it is too weak and ambiguous. A particular kind of change is in view here; one that involves a mutation . . . a kind of substitution of one thing for another. This substitution involves replacing the genuine with counterfeit."¹⁵

Paul is building on previous arguments. Since the creation shows God is eternal in power and divine, one of the necessary characteristics of God is that He is immortal. If He is not, then how could His power be eternal or His nature be divine?

Paul has shown that God's immortality is clearly seen in His creation. How could the glory of immortality be anything like mortality? And how could men exchange the glory of God, not for something glorious, not even for something mortal, yet alive; but for a mere image of living mortal man or beasts? Yet, this is the paradox of idolatry. This is Paul's line of reasoning in Acts 17:28-29 albeit he uses a different starting point. How can God be like an image of gold, silver or stone made by men if we are His offspring? The folly of idolatry is making God to be something that reason says He cannot possibly be (cf. Isa. 40-44).

Note that polytheism and idolatry are not viewed as a step closer to monotheism from atheism, but rather a step further away from truth. Archaeology and anthropology substantiate this view.

Liberal theology can result in the same kind of ridiculous exchange. R. C. Sproul—"A strange irony attaches itself to much of contemporary theology. The 'hard sayings' of Jesus are removed from the danger zone of encounter, the motifs of transcendence and 'otherness' are rendered safe by demythologizing, and Jesus Himself is reduced to the realm of the 'historically conditioned.' Gollwitzer raises the obvious question, 'Why should anyone attach unconditional importance to that which is conditioned?'¹⁶ That question sounds strangely like the kind of question the prophets of Israel raised to those who fashioned idols out of wood and stone and then proceeded to bow down and worship the work of their own hands. While it is intimidating to bow in awe before the powerful God of the Bible it is utterly pointless to bow politely to false gods of our own making."¹⁷

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II. God's answer to Pagan unbelief (vv. 24-32).

A. Because of their willful rejection God "gave them over."

"gave them over" (*paredoken*—to hand over, turn over, give up). This term is used in vv. 24, 26, and 28. Used many times of turning one over to the custody of the law, placing one in jail, etc. (cf. Acts 7:42; Eph. 4:19).

B. God gave them over to:

1. Verse 24—Sexual impurity.

- a. *wis akatharsian*—immorality, viciousness esp. of sexual sins.
- b. Why? The desires (*epithumiais*—the desires, longings, or cravings) of their hearts were sinful. Their desires were to be free to be immoral. Notice: God gives them over to their own longings.
- c. This is the end result of God's abandonment; the state to which God gives them up.
- d. "for the degrading of their bodies with one another"

The Pagans despised the body, considering it evil, and treated it according to that belief. One of the ways they degraded it was through sexual perversion (cf. Lev. 18).

The Pagans' preoccupation with sex had much to do with their world-view. In that view the world of the gods is continuous with this world. There is no difference in essential being between our world and the gods'. To pagan minds, sex is the great mystery of life. Everything in this world is living because of sex, and the same must be true in the world of the gods. The gods came into being through sex. As a result the gods could be manipulated and life perpetuated by continuous, varied sexual activity.

- e. Christians are taught a new respect for the body and self-control with regard to sexual activity (Rom. 6:12, 13, 19; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 1 Cor. 6:12-20).

2. Verse 26a is a specific explanation of one form of sexual impurity—Shameful lusts (*atimias pathe*); homosexuality.

- a. *atimias*—shameful, disgraceful. *pathe*—passion, esp. of a sexual nature (cf. 1 Thess. 4:5); hence, disgraceful sexual desires.

- b. Why? (1) Verse 25—"They exchanged (*metellaxan*—exchange something for something) the truth of God (that God is eternal and divine) for a lie (in the form of idols), and worshiped (*esebasthesan*—show reverence to) and served (*elatreusan*—serve, . . . only of the carrying out of religious duties, esp. of a cultic nature, by human beings) created things rather than the Creator." (2) "Placed side by side (*para*, the Creator and the creature, *ktisis*) they preferred the creature."¹⁸ (3) Paul leaves no doubt where he stands: the Creator "is forever praised. Amen."
 - c. Verse 26b—"Their women exchanged (same word as v. 25) natural (*phusiken*—nature as the regular natural order) relations (*chresin*—relations, function, esp. of sexual intercourse) for unnatural ones (*para phusin*—against the regular natural order)."
 - d. Verse 27—"In the same way the men also abandoned (*aphentes*—abandon, give up) natural relations (see above) with women and were inflamed (*esekauthesan*—be kindled, be inflamed, with sensual desire) with lust (*orexei*—desire, in its only occurrence . . . it is used in an unfavorable sense) for one another. Men committed (*katergadzomenoi*—achieve, accomplish, commit) indecent acts (*aschemosunen*—shameless deed, shame=private parts, cf. Rev. 16:15; 1 Cor. 12:23) with other men, and received in themselves the due (*edel*—necessary) penalty for their perversion (*planes*—error, delusion, deceit, deception)."
 - e. Paul is clearly speaking about homosexual activity among men and women. Homosexuality is categorically condemned as perversion. We see that the break-down of order in the natural realm is the inevitable result of men exchanging truth for lie in the realm of religion.
 - f. Concerning leaving or exchanging the natural order of sexual relations, John N. Oswalt says, "At once in the first chapter of Genesis, the basic fact of human life is asserted—that we are sexual beings, male and female. Why are we this way? The questions is answered in the next breath—in order to reproduce ourselves. The fundamental purpose of our sexuality, though by no means the only purpose, is reproduction."¹⁹
3. Verse 28—Depraved mind

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- a. Why? (1) "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile (**edokimasan**—1st aorist active indicative of **dokimadzo**—put to the test, examine, here with reference to the result of the examination, accept as proved, approve. Used of testing precious metals and coins.) to retain the knowledge of God (**ton theon echein en eplgnosei**—to fully recognize God)." (2) They tested God and rejected as unworthy the idea of recognizing Him.
- b. "He gave them over to a depraved mind (**adokimos**—not standing the test, unqualified, worthless, base, cf. 1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Cor. 13:5-7) to do what ought to be done: (**me katheknota**—not proper, not fitting)."

A play on words is used. They tested God (**edokimasan**) and rejected the idea of recognizing Him. As a result, He turns them over to thoughts that do not pass the test (**adokimos**).

On the other hand, God's sons with renewed minds gladly accept God's good, pleasing, and perfect will as approved (Rom. 12:2).

- c. What is the result?

They become filled (**perlermenouis**—filled to the brim²⁰) with: (1) every kind of wickedness (**adikia**—unrighteousness, wickedness, injustice); (2) evil (**poneria**—wickedness, baseness, maliciousness, sinfulness; active wickedness²¹); (3) greed (**pleonexia**—greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness, cf. Col. 3:5); (4) depravity (**kakia**—malice, illwill, malignity; desire to injure²²).

They are full of (**mestous**—stuffed²³): (1) envy (**phthanou**—envy, jealousy); (2) murder (**phonou**—murder, killing. Play on words with **phthanou**); (3) strife (**eridos**—strife, discord, contention, quarreling); (4) deceit (**dolou**—deceit, cunning, treachery); (5) malice (**kakoetheias**—malignant subtlety, malicious craftiness²⁴, a tendency to put a bad construction on things²⁵).

They are: (1) gossips (**psithuristas**—whisperer, tale-bearer); (2) slanderers (**katalalous**—speaking evil of others, slanderous); (3) God-haters (**theostugeis**—hating God, possibly godforsaken); (4) Insolent (**hubristas**—a violent, insolent man); (5) arrogant (**huperethanous**—arrogant, haughty, proud); (6) boastful (**aladzonas**—boaster, braggart); (7) they invent ways of doing evil (**epheuretas kakon**—inventors, contrivers of evil); (8) they dis-

obey their parents (*goneusin apeithels*—cf. 2 Tim. 3:2); (9) They are senseless (*asunetous*—senseless, foolish, implying also a lack of high moral quality); (10) faithless (*asunthetous*—faithless, literally covenant-breaking. Notice the play on words with *asunetous*.); (11) heartless (*astorgous*—unloving; without love of kindred,²⁶ cf. 2 Tim. 3:3); (12) ruthless (*aneleemonas*—unmerciful).

d. Are they remorseful?

"Although they know (*epignontes*—know exactly, completely, through and through) God's righteous decree (*dikaionoma*—regulation, requirement, commandment) that those who do (*prassontes*—do, commit) such things deserve (*axioi*—deserving, worthy) death."

Secular lists of vices contain many of the sins listed in vv. 28-31 along with statements of disdain for them. "The Greeks themselves taught a doctrine of retribution for the wicked after death."²⁷

"they not only continue to do (*poioulosin*—present active indicative of *poleo* indicating continued action) these very things but also approve of (*suneudokeo*—agree with, approve of, consent to, sympathize with) those who practice (*prassousin*—see above) them."

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End Notes

¹ Sandy and Headlam, cited by A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1931, Vol. IV, p. 324.

² Otto Proksch, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, tr. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964, Vol. I. p. 115.

³ Robertson, op. cit., p. 324.

⁴ Except where otherwise noted, all definitions of Greek words are taken from: Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.

⁵ Robertson, op. cit., p. 327.

⁶ Ibid., p. 328.

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- ⁷ Ibid., p. 328.
- ⁸ Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, op. cit., p. 852.
- ⁹ J. H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969, p. 314.
- ¹⁰ Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, op. cit., p. 683.
- ¹¹ Hermann Martin Kleinknecht, **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**, ed. Gerhard Kittel, tr. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1964, Vol. III, p. 123.
- ¹² R. C. Sproul, **If There's a God, Why Are There Atheists?**, Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988, p. 65.
- ¹³ Robertson, op. cit., 330.
- ¹⁴ Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, op. cit., p. 222.
- ¹⁵ Sproul, op. cit., p. 67.
- ¹⁶ Helmut Gollwitzer, **The Existence of God as Confessed by Faith**, trans. James W. Leith (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), pp. 89ff.
- ¹⁷ Sproul, op. cit., pp. 77, 78.
- ¹⁸ Robertson, op. cit., p. 331.
- ¹⁹ John N. Oswalt, "The Old Testament and Homosexuality," **What You Should Know About Homosexuality**, ed. Charles W. Keysor, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979, p. 39.
- ²⁰ Robertson, op. cit., p. 332.
- ²¹ Ibid., p. 332.
- ²² Thayer, op. cit., p. 320.
- ²³ Robertson, op. cit., p. 332.
- ²⁴ Thayer, op. cit., p. 320.
- ²⁵ Robertson, op. cit., p. 332.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 333.
- ²⁷ John Murray, "The Epistle to the Romans," **The New International Commentary on the New Testament**, ed. F. F. Bruce, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965, p. 51.

Instrumental Music—Arguments

Recent Arguments On Instrumental Music

by Johnny Elmore

My commission in this study is to address recent arguments being made for instrumental music in the church. As I began to review the debates on instrumental music, the truth of Solomon's statement that "there is no new thing under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9), was brought home to me. There may be some arguments that are new to us, but I have failed to find an argument currently being made that has not been made previously. In our study, I want to review the historic attitude toward instrumental music, the excuses given for its introduction into the church, the history of arguments for instrumental music and then take up the current arguments.

The Historic Attitude

It is a fact beyond cavil that the New Testament is positively silent on any use of instrumental music in the church. It is also a fact that not only did early Christians sing, unaccompanied by instrumental music in worship, but they opposed instrumental music in worship. This can be substantiated by numerous quotations from early church historians. Everett Ferguson quotes several of them in the book, **The Instrumental Music Issue**. Although these are not our authority, it does indicate that if something was present in a New Testament church, there should be some trace of it later in the practice of the church.

Testimony from later times also indicates the historic attitude toward instrumental music. Thomas Aquinas, declared by Pope Leo XIII to be the formulator of the "official Catholic philosophy," said in 1250: "Our church does not use musical instruments as harps, psalteries, in the praise of God, lest she should seem to Judaize" (Quoted in **Firm Foundation**, Vol. 95, No. 21, p. 323). **The Catholic Encyclopedia**, Vol. 10, p. 651, says: "The first Christians were of too spiritual a fibre to substitute lifeless instruments for or to use them to accompany the human voice." **Fessenden's Encyclopedia**, on p. 852, under the article, "Music" said:

Instrumental music is also of very ancient date, its invention being ascribed to Tubal, the sixth descendant from Cain. That instrumental music was not practiced by the primitive Christians, but was an aid to devotion of later times, is evident from church history.

The American Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, p. 688, says:

Instrumental Music—Arguments

Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of western Europe, about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, king of the Franks, in 755.

The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Vol. 2 p. 1702 says:

In the Greek church the organ never came into use. But after the eighth century it became more and more common in the Latin church; not, however, without opposition from the side of the monks.

John Calvin, in his commentary on the 23rd Psalm said:

Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The papists therefore have foolishly borrowed this as well as many other things from the Jews. Men who are fond of outward pomp may delight in that noise but the simplicity which God recommends to us by the apostles is far more pleasing to Him. The voice of man assuredly excels all inanimate instruments of music.

John Wesley, quoted in *Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 686, said: "I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels provided they are neither seen nor heard." Adam Clarke said in the same commentary: "Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor." Charles H. Spurgeon, a great Baptist preacher who preached to 10,000 every Sunday in Metropolitan Tabernacle in London said with reference to 1 Cor. 14:15, "I would just as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery." Alexander Campbell wrote in the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1851, pp. 581-582, "But I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert." Many more could be given.

Excuses For Its Introduction

Historians credit L. L. Pinkerton with being the G. C. Brewer who introduced the first instrument of music into the church of Christ, or as Guy N. Woods puts it: "on whom rests the obloquy of corrupting the worship of God." Pinkerton employed a small melodeon in the church at Midway, Ky in about 1859. His excuse was that the singing had degenerated into

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screeching and bawling that would "scare even the rats from worship." According to Earl West, in *The Search For The Ancient Order*, they first met on Saturday night to practice songs. Later, someone brought in a melodeon to be used in getting the right pitch. West says, "Before long, one of the sisters was accompanying the singing with her playing on the melodeon" (Vol. I, pp. 311, 312). Another excuse, given by Isaac Errett, was that in many non-instrument churches, no more than one in ten took part in the singing. Robert Richardson wrote in the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1870 that he had warned the churches that if they did not do something about their woeful singing that they would one day have to face the question of instrumental music. In the 1870's, a portable organ was in many homes and, according to historians, the young people were clamoring for it in the churches, at least in the Sunday-school. However, Guy N. Woods sees a difference in attitude toward the Scriptures as the main cause of division over instruments of music, Leroy Garrett to the contrary, notwithstanding. Woods says that the difference in attitude was the same as the controversy between Luther and Zwingli. Zwingli thought nothing was allowed unless it was authorized by Scripture; whereas, Luther believed that nothing was wrong unless it was condemned by Scripture. In his book, *Questions and Answers*, p. 195, Woods says that the real reason so many unauthorized things came to be practiced was the same as that given by Henry Ward Beecher, an eminent denominational preacher, who frankly said that he practiced infant baptism for the same reason he used an ox yoke—he had tried them and both worked. I think we should learn from history that if we want to oppose such innovations as instrumental music, then we must do our best to make God's plan work. We should never be satisfied with poor singing and think that just anything will do.

History of Arguments For Instrumental Music

There has been quite an evolution in arguments in defense of instrumental music. As the advocates of instrumental music found that their arguments would not work, different approaches were used, and these were often inconsistent with arguments previously used. This did not seem to deter the advocates of instrumental music. As one argument was seen to be inadequate, another was taken up which was equally inadequate. One of the first arguments seems to have been: "We like it; we want it; and we shall have it." This could hardly pass current with people who had been schooled in the necessity of authority in religion.

Some of the early proponents of instrumental music fell onto the defense of expediency. Isaac Errett came to be the chief advocate of this defense.

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Although he counseled against the use of the instrument, he set forth the view "that the real difference among us is a difference of opinion as to the expediency of instrumental music in public worship, and therefore, it is wrong to make this difference a test of fellowship, on one hand, or an occasion of stumbling on the other." J. B. Briney made essentially the same argument, and both of these men eventually wound up on the side of the organ. Surprisingly enough, Robert Richardson, viewed by many as one of the "big four" of the Restoration Movement, set forth the correct view of expediency when he wrote:

As it regards the use of musical instruments in church worship, the case is wholly different. [He had argued that expediency determines such things as the place, time and posture in prayer.] This [instrumental music] can never be a question of expediency, for the simple reason that there is no law prescribing or authorizing it. If it were anywhere said in the New Testament that Christians should use instruments, then it would become a question of expediency what kind of instruments was to be used, whether an organ or melodeon, the "loud-sounding cymbals," or the "light guitar"; whether it should cost \$50 or \$500 or \$1,000, and what circumstances should regulate the performance.

Thus, Richardson correctly pointed out that nothing is expedient which is not first of all lawful.

One of the oldest debates in my possession on instrumental music is between J. Carroll Stark and Joe S. Warlick. Stark affirmed that "the Word of God authorizes the use of instruments of music for praise in the church of Jesus Christ." Warlick had earlier met Clark Braden on instrumental music, and chided Stark that Braden had affirmed that "the instrument was only an aid, and not any part of the worship, and that those who said it was a part of the worship were fools." Stark spent his time arguing that instrumental music was authorized in the Old Testament, and Warlick beat him to death with infant membership, incense, polygamy, and dancing. Stark argued that singing implied instrumental music, being inherent in the word *psallo*. Warlick called his authorities, Alvin E. Evans and Clinton Lockhart, in question and countered with testimony from Sophocles and Thayer. It is said that Warlick always believed that this discussion in 1903 in Henderson, TN saved West Tennessee.

A second debate which was important was between J. B. Briney and W. W. Otey. This debate, held in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1908 was important

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because both the societies and instrumental music were discussed. Evidently Briney had learned something because he affirmed that the society was authorized in the New Testament Scriptures but he would not affirm that instrumental music was authorized. He denied that instrumental music is opposed to New Testament teaching and sinful. Briney's chief arguments were that there was no law against instrumental music, and that he did not care anything about instrumental music but it was a matter of expediency, and that the use of instruments inhered in the word **psallo**. Although Otey had the handicap of affirming a negative proposition, he acquitted himself quite well, because of Briney's weak defense.

In the 1880's, O. E. Payne, a Christian Church preacher, analyzed the Greek word **psallo**, used in Ephesians 5:19, and for the next fifty years this was probably the most used defense for instrumental music. Payne argued that the word meant "to strike" or "to hit," and implied the use of an instrument. This was printed in a book in 1920 by Payne entitled **Instrumental Music Is Scriptural**. In this book, Payne said "We must unite in agreeing that if we forego musical instruments we cannot conform to the divine injunction to **psallein**" (p. 172). This was a departure from previous arguments on the question since it made instrumental music a command and also included it as an act of worship, whereas before advocates of instruments had only affirmed it permissible and argued that it was an aid. The circulation of this book ultimately resulted in Dr. Ira M. Boswell and N. B. Hardeman debating the issue. The advocates of instrumental music refused to affirm the irresistible conclusion of Payne's book, that is, that instrumental music is commanded in worship. The proposition affirmed and denied was: "Instrumental music in church worship is scriptural." The debate, which Guy N. Woods has called "the greatest debate ever held on the use of instrumental music in worship," was held May 31-June 5 in the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee, with six to seven thousand present at each session. Boswell came, armed with a great array of scholarly evidence, the design of which was to show that the Greek word **psallo** includes the idea of an instrument.

Brother Hardeman traced the etymology of the word **psallo**, showing that it once signified the twanging of a bowstring, then the twitching of a carpenter's line, and later the touching of the strings of an instrument; and finally, in the New Testament, to sing. He conceded that metaphorically, the instrument is in the word. But, he asked, "What is the instrument that accompanies the singing?" He showed that Paul settled the question when he affirmed that we **psallo** with the heart, therefore the heart is the instrument that accompanies the singing. Boswell continued to produce a vast array of

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evidence to prove what no one denied and to disregard Hardeman's only contention—that in the New Testament, Paul declares that the instrument is the heart, thus rendering Boswell's evidence useless. Hardeman introduced Thayer, Bagster and Sophocles to show that *psallo* in the New Testament means simply to sing. He showed that the forty-seven scholars of the King James Version and the one hundred and one scholars of the Revised Version were members of churches which use instrumental music, yet when they relied upon their scholarship, they translated *psallo* "to sing and make melody in our hearts." The Payne book and the Boswell debate showed that there were serious defects in the "*psallo*" argument, but it is still being relied upon by such men as Dwaine Dunning.

Other Arguments

A variety of arguments have been used to attempt defense of instrumental music, including its use in the Old Testament, its use in the Jewish temple, its mention in Psalms, including the contention that Psalms were no part of the law, and mention made of it in the book of Revelation. A thorough refutation of these arguments can be found in Part Two of **Bulwarks of the Faith**, by Foy E. Wallace. Wallace pointed out that none of these arguments furnished what the proponents needed, namely authority for the use of instruments of music in the worship of the New Testament church.

In later years, there were two young preachers, Burton O. Barber and Julian O. Hunt, who engaged in several debates, contending that instrumental music was only an aid. I know of three of these that were published: **The Hunt-Inman Debate**, in 1942; the **Wallace-Barber Debate**, in 1950; and the **Wallace-Hunt Debate** of 1952. Essentially their contention was that every part of the human body is imperfect and is therefore subject to need an aid in order to be presented acceptable unto God, and God will accept these aids and be pleased with them. Ear-phones aid worshipers in the command, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Rev. 2:7); eye-glasses aid worshipers in carrying out the command, "I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read" (1 Thess. 5:27); the radio aids in carrying out the command, "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2); false teeth aid in the command "For as often as ye eat this bread" (1 Cor. 11:26); gloves and tools aid in the command "to work with your hands" (1 Thess. 4:11); crutches and canes aid in carrying out the command, "Go into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in" (Lk. 14:23); therefore, a tuning fork may be used in getting the pitch, and an organ or piano in maintaining the pitch thus aiding in the command, "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19).

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In answering this, it was shown that other senses come into play and since "every part of the human body is imperfect," incense would aid the sense of smell, and a little jelly on unleavened bread would aid the sense of taste! Also, it is usually pointed out that all of the things mentioned, except instrumental music, are subordinate to the command, but when playing on an instrument is introduced, it is a coordinate—a different kind of music! I might mention that G. K. Wallace had a bit of trouble with individual cups in his debates with Hunt and Barber.

Current Arguments For Instruments

In 1985, Don DeWalt, an influential preacher and educator of the Independent Christian Church, dropped what he thought was a bombshell. In a letter to the editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, Guy N. Woods, DeWalt wrote: "There is no command, apostolic example of necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument." The argument seems to be that since there is no authority for singing in corporate worship, there can certainly be no exclusion of instrumental music in corporate worship. Since singing is permitted for Christians, however, he reasons that they may do it in the assembly, but the instrument is also allowed since neither singing nor playing is specifically authorized. Some have thought that this argument unanswerable. Alan Highers has likened this argument to the boyhood argument where one says, "You're a liar," and the other says, "You're another." In other words, "It is true that I am a liar, but so are you." Similarly, this argument says, "It is true that instrumental music is unauthorized, but so is congregational singing." If it were true, it might prove that we should discontinue congregational singing, but it would not prove instrumental music scriptural.

Guy N. Woods replied, initially, "Whatever else may be said about DeWalt's amazing affirmation, in this unprecedented pronouncement, he sweeps forever away every defense every Christian Church preacher has ever attempted, to justify the use of the instrument in congregational worship, on the ground that it is authorized in Ephesians 5:19, by the word *psallo*! Neither here, nor elsewhere in the sacred writings, he avers, is congregational singing commanded; hence, neither here, nor elsewhere in the New Testament is there authority for instrumental accompaniment for such use. Gone, then, according to him, because they never existed, are the grounds on which Briney, Boswell, Payne, Walker, and all other scholars among them, for a hundred years past, sought to show that the Greek word *psallo* signifies the use of a mechanical instrument accompanying singing in congregational worship" (*Gospel Advocate*, May 16, 1985).

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In the June issue of **One Body**, DeWalt takes up the passages used to sustain the cause for congregational singing and mentions them one by one. I will notice the passages, and his reply and then see what response can be made.

1. Acts 16:25. DeWalt says, "Paul and Silas sang a duet; or did they sing individually? No reference here to congregational singing."
2. Romans 15:9. DeWalt says this refers to David, singing in the midst of the Gentiles and confessing the name of God, and adds: "Congregational singing is not in the text."
3. 1 Corinthians 14:15. DeWalt: "Paul here speaks of his own individual singing. There is no reference here to corporate singing."
4. 1 Corinthians 14:26. DeWalt: "The church was to be strengthened by individual expression. The body or church or assembly does not sing but is strengthened by individuals who do."
5. Ephesians 5:19. DeWalt says: "In the context this verse refers to reciprocal singing. No congregational singing is involved. We can indeed 'speak to one another' in congregational singing but this is certainly not a proof text for congregational singing. There is no necessary inference to group singing here!"
6. Colossians 3:16. DeWalt: "The singing here, like the Ephesian reference refers to reciprocal singing. In the context is one of several expression of our personal devotion to our Lord. Nothing is said about congregational singing."
7. James 5:13. DeWalt: "This is a straightforward reference to individual expression."
8. Hebrews 2:12. DeWalt: "This is a prophetic reference to our Lord singing a solo. A congregation is present but it does not sing."
9. Hebrews 13:15. DeWalt: " 'The fruit of lips' could include singing but by whom and where is at best inferred. Such an inference is hardly a proof text for congregational singing."

On Matthew 26:30 (and the parallel passage, Mk. 14:26), DeWalt says: "We could infer or imagine the Christians followed His example—BUT since there is no example of their doing it such an inference would not be a necessary inference. We could just as well imagine they didn't, for some unknown reason."

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In answer to DeWalt's ridiculous contention, Guy N. Woods showed that it was a departure from the great scholars of the Restoration movement, including Alexander and Thomas Campbell, W. K. Pendleton, I. B. Griggs and J. B. Briney. He showed that the early "church fathers," the ecclesiastical historians, and the ancient commentators, as well as writers of this and preceding centuries, bear witness to the fact of congregational singing.

Woods shows, with reference to Colossians 3:16, that the participial terms (teaching and admonishing) done by singing, are coordinate in usage, and reciprocal in significance, that is, they are all performed at the same time. The participles are imperatives, therefore specifically commanded. Since they are reciprocal, in both Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19, as shown by the Greek word *heautou*, more than one must be present! One person cannot carry out either Ephesians 5:19 or Colossians 3:16; if two, then two hundred, and this is corporate or congregational action. Thayer says, of the Greek word *heautou*, "It is used frequently in the plural for the reciprocal pronoun," and renders it to mean "reciprocally, mutually, one another" (p. 163). He also specifically cites Colossians 3:16.

To show the force of the reciprocal pronoun, look at Colossians 3:13, where we are commanded, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." Does this mean we cannot do it at the same time? No, the reciprocal nature of the command demands mutual action. The same is true of Ephesians 4:32 and 1 Thessalonians 5:13. Obviously there must be an interaction. Paul was not commanding the Colossians to forgive themselves.

Besides, we wonder where else we would teach and admonish and speak reciprocally besides in the assembly? Does this mean we have to search out one another and sing a solo to them, and then they sing a solo to us? The very idea is ridiculous.

Do we have an example of corporate or congregational singing in the New Testament? Woods points out Mark 14:26 and Matthew 26:30, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." The apostle Paul gave this event as an example to the Corinthian church to follow in his teaching regarding the communion, (1 Cor. 11:23, 24).

Can we establish authority for singing in the congregation? (1) It is right to offer united praise to God in an assembly of saints (Acts 2:47; 4:23-30). (2) Singing is a form of praise to God (Acts 16:25). (3) Therefore offering united praise to God in song is authorized in the New Testament.

I have not dealt with all the passages of Scripture DeWalt cited but that does not mean that I accept his analysis of them. Heb. 13:15, for example,

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says: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." In this passage, the verb "let us" is said to be in a Greek hortatory subjunctive plural, and that the number of persons involved above the minimum of two cannot be determined. Although the language does not demand that it be done musically, it can be done by singing, because it is to be done with the lips.

I said a few minutes ago that there has been an evolution in arguments in defense of instrumental music. It is striking to note that every new defense made in behalf of instrumental music is a repudiation of all others that have been made. With the abandonment of the old arguments, they thereby concede that they were not any good to begin with. Let me explain. When Barber and Hunt began to argue that instrumental music is merely an aid, they effectively negated all who had previously argued that instrumental music in worship is scriptural. Obviously, an aid is not a part of the worship. When Boswell argued that *psallo* means to sing "with or without" an instrument, he negated what his own scholar, Payne, said when he affirmed that the instrument "unavoidably inheres" in the word *psallo*. When Don DeWalt says that congregational singing itself is unauthorized, then there is no authority for such singing with an instrument. In fact, DeWalt states that the debaters of years gone by assumed that the references to singing were related to congregational expression and he told Guy N. Woods, "They were wrong and so are you." Yet, the greatest debaters among them went to their graves contending that congregational singing accompanied by instruments was authorized.

That brings us to the latest new argument by Given O. Blakely, of the Independent Christian Church, who met Alan E. Highers, of the church of Christ in Neosho, Missouri last April 12-15, 1988. Blakely was endorsed by Don DeWalt, and was supported in the debate by nearly every living debater of the Christian Church, including Julian O. Hunt, Dwaine Dunning, and Don DeWalt and such renegades in the church of Christ as Ervin Waters, Buff Scott, and Olan Hicks. I was able to hear two nights of the debate, and several of our preachers attended.

The first two nights Highers affirmed, "The use of mechanical instruments of music as an element of Christian worship is without scriptural authority and therefore sinful." Blakely denied. The last two nights Blakely affirmed, "The employment of instruments of music in the singing of praise does not transgress the law of God, is harmonious with the faith of Christ and is inoffensive to God; hence, it is scriptural and in harmony with the word of God." Highers denied.

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Highers did a masterful job of showing that we must have authority in religious practice and must not exceed what is written, according to Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 4:6 and Matthew 4:4. He showed that instrumental music was not authorized in the New Testament and could not be done by faith (Rom. 10:17). Blakely countered by saying that "in the name of Christ" stands for his person or character, into which we are baptized, and that everything we do is to be done out of that union with Christ, and that this was the point of Colossians 3:17. Highers showed by Thayer's definition that to do something "in the name" of another person is to do it by his power or authority. Throughout the debate, Blakely admitted: "We have no authority, we give no authority, and we need no authority."

Blakely complained that Higher's proposition was not stated correctly, and was neither apostolic nor godly, and that his proposition and questions did not address reality. He repeatedly said that there is no liturgy, no such thing as approved acts of worship, and no such thing as corporate worship. He finally "out-heroded" Herod, to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare, when he said that the wise men, the leper, a certain ruler, and the women of Canaan all worshipped Christ in an unauthorized act of worship, and Christ received it. He demanded Scripture to show that there is such a thing as corporate worship, that worship can be regulated, and that God can be served. He demanded to know a single reference where those in Christ are instructed on how to worship or where a group of believers worshipped. He charged that such was creed-making and leads to the "have I done it right?" syndrome. He said worship is a right thing to do and there is no wrong way to do it, no regulations, no meticulous routine.

A telling effect was produced when Highers produced a chart with a quote effectively denying and negating all that Blakely had said, finally revealing that the author was Fred O. Blakely, Blakely's father, and closing with the terse statement of Jesus that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." He produced quotes from Don DeWalt, Dwaine Dunning, and Blakely himself which showed that they had taught that worship was prescribed, must be authorized, was corporate and that there were acts of worship, the very thing that Blakely said was unscriptural and ungodly.

He showed from a footnote on Matthew 2:2 (ASV) that the meaning of the word "worship" denotes "an act of reverence." He introduced Matthew 15:9 to show that acceptable worship is inseparable from teaching and obeying the truth. He showed from John 4:24 that worship is regulated and stated that if Blakely's position is correct then we may burn incense in worship, observe the Lord's Supper on Monday, use tea and meat in communion,

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employ rosary beads, do a holy dance and handle snakes. Blakely did not say that such would be wrong. Highers showed that Blakely's introduction of those who he said had offered unauthorized acts of worship thereby conceded that all the Christian Church preachers in the past who had argued that the instrument was authorized were wrong. There are only two ways to prove instrumental music: (1) give New Testament authorization, (2) show that it does not matter.

Blakely argued that instruments were used in the past with God's approval and will be used in heaven with God's approval, but Highers showed that this proved too much for it would allow incense and other parts of the law to be brought in, and that if what is done in heaven is authority for what we are to do on earth, it would outlaw marriage, according to Matthew 22:30. He reminded Blakely that his proposition obligated him to prove what "is" scriptural, not what has been or what will be.

Blakely repeatedly referred to Thayer as "Brother Thayer," and finally confessed that he did not know if Thayer was a member of the church or not because he was not familiar with Thayer, thereby losing any credibility to deal with any original New Testament term.

Highers made a telling point at the end of the debate when he said that if the debate accomplished nothing else, it helped some who are engaged in unity efforts with the Christian Church to see that the only difference between the church of Christ and the Independent Christian Church was not an instrument of music.

The debate between Highers and Blakely has been printed by Valid Publications (Denton, Texas) and should make a valuable contribution to all who are interested in this subject. *Box 110 A, Rt. 6, Lebanon, MO 65536*

Interpreting the Moral Principles of the New Testament

by Raymond Fox

In the teachings of Christ there are some moral laws that describe very specific behaviors such as the prohibition against adultery. There are also moral laws or principles that are very comprehensive, each covering a large range of similar forms of behavior. An example of such a comprehensive moral principle is Jesus' command to seek first the kingdom of God.

The problem encountered with comprehensive moral principles is that a passage containing such a principle is often cited with reference to a specific conduct without showing the relationship of the principle to the specific behavior. The passage loses its force when the relationship is not clarified.

The question is: how can comprehensive moral principles be clarified and taught in such a way to show the relationship between the moral principle and the specific behavior?

The goal of this study then is to demonstrate how to present a logical case that defends the application of a comprehensive moral principle to a specific moral action. A related question is: Can comprehensive moral principles have the same force as other more specific moral principles?

1. The liberal says that the person who binds principles to specific conduct is a legalist, but the liberal is the real legalist because he in effect is saying that he will not follow a moral principle unless it is formalized as a specific rule.
2. Following comprehensive principles in specific applications requires the desire to follow Jesus in every particular. This desire is the motivation to consider how the teachings of Jesus apply in specific circumstances.
3. The mature Christian has the ability to understand how the comprehensive principles of Jesus' teachings apply in specific, everyday conduct. He will apply the moral principles of Jesus with equal force as laws.

The Meaning of Moral Principles

1. The study of morality or ethics deals with the code of laws or principles with which we are able to make a moral judgment concerning the rightness or wrongness of some specific behavior or form of conduct. Morality is a system of judging conduct.

Interpreting Moral Principles

II. Law and principle.

- A. A law is a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority (Webster). There are different kinds of laws: some are moral laws, others are physical laws, others are mathematical laws.
- B. A principle is a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption; a rule of conduct (Webster).
- C. Therefore the word "principle" can refer to a "law" if we mean a "comprehensive and fundamental law" or "rule of conduct." The definitions of both words have these common elements.
- D. Unfortunately sometimes people use the words "law" and "principle" to distinguish between two different kinds of rules of conduct in a system of morality.
 - 1. The word "law" is sometimes used to refer to a very precisely worded rule of conduct with a specific referent such as: do not drive on the left side of the road, do not make unauthorized copies of computer software, do not cheat on your income tax.
 - 2. In contradistinction the word "principle" is used to refer to a comprehensive rule of conduct that may refer to many different but similar forms of behavior. Some examples from the Scriptures include: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"; "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"; "Love not the world."
 - 3. This distinction is misleading because one might assume that since there is a difference between law and principle, then principles are not binding in the way that laws are. (However principles that are moral principles are certainly binding.)
- E. Moral principles are laws.
 - 1. If the word "principle" is used to refer to a rule of conduct, even though it may be a comprehensive or fundamental rule of conduct, it is binding on conduct. A rule of conduct governs the course of conduct and is able to judge whether that conduct is on the "right course."
 - 2. "Law" and "principle" are words that can both refer to "rule of conduct." Therefore the distinction between "law" and "principle" in this context of morality is not a real distinction.

Interpreting Moral Principles

3. If a principle is denominated a moral principle, it is binding on conduct simply in virtue of the fact that morals constitute a code of conduct that judges the rightness and wrongness of actions.

III. The comprehensive nature of moral principles.

- A. Moral principles, with which we judge conduct, are always to some degree or another comprehensive in that many similar forms of conduct may be included within the judgment of a single moral principle.
- B. The distinction between specific moral precepts and comprehensive moral principles is only a distinction of degree. Specific moral precepts are comprehensive in the sense that a specific moral precept judges a number of similar forms of conduct and never simply refers to one specific case of morally responsible conduct in one particular point in time and space. The specific precept against idolatry for instance must apply to idolatry in all of its forms and circumstances if it is a moral precept.
- C. To understand how moral principles always are to some degree comprehensive, we must understand the structure of moral principles.

The Structure of Moral Principles

- I. An identifying characteristic of moral principles is a prescriptive nature.
 - A. Moral principles are prescriptive because they prescribe conduct, that is, they lay down directions or rules for conduct. (Prescription is the act of laying down authoritative directions or rules.)
 - B. Moral principles are not suggestions or preferences for conduct; nor do they intend to propose alternatives for conduct without commending the rightness or condemning the wrongness of such conduct.
 - C. When a person makes a claim that a certain principle is a moral principle, he must commit himself to act on that principle and follow its logical implications or else deny that it is a moral principle.
 - D. The prescriptive language of moral principles.
 1. The word "ought" expresses the obligation of moral principles. If we say, "I ought to worship every Lord's day unless I am physically unable," we are expressing a moral obligation.
 2. Since "ought" expresses a moral obligation, if I say "I ought to worship" and then I do not worship, I have contradicted myself.

Interpreting Moral Principles

3. Any moral principle can be worded in the form, "one ought to."
 4. Most of the moral principles of the New Testament are worded as imperatives or commands.
 - a. An imperative can form a moral principle if the imperative is given with the intention of prescribing conduct, not for just a particular person or group of people, but for everyone who finds himself in the same relevant circumstances.
 - b. Thus if the language of an imperative can be replaced with the language of "one ought to . . .," without changing the meaning or intention, then the imperative forms a moral principle.
 - c. For instance, when Jesus sent the apostles out on a missionary journey he commanded them that they must not take money with them (Mt. 10:9-10). However, this imperative cannot be replaced by "one ought not to take money on a missionary journey" without significantly changing the intention of the imperative. So this particular command is not a moral obligation for everyone.
- II. Another identifying characteristic of moral principles is their universal nature. Moral principles are universalizable.
- A. The purpose of a moral code is to present moral principles that can govern the conduct of society. If a person commits himself to a principle as a moral principle that can judge his conduct, and yet he does not accept that principle as judging the conduct of others in like circumstances, then his principle is not a moral principle. His principle actually expresses a personal preference instead of a moral judgment.
 - B. A system of morality that says, for instance, "abortion is right for me but may be wrong for you although we find ourselves in the same circumstances" is not a genuine system of morality; it is a system of preferences. It is not logically possible to base ethics on preferences.
 - C. Thus the universal element of moral principle requires that we accept our principle as rules of conduct for everyone in like circumstances.
 - D. This element of universalizability is precisely the point of Jesus' saying, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Lk. 6:31).
 - E. In order for a moral principle to be universalizable, there must be some means to establish that the moral principle and the specific instance of conduct share in "like circumstances."

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F. Relevant descriptive characteristics.

1. As stated previously, a moral principle is universalizable because we accept its application for everyone in "like circumstances."
2. The question therefore is: What constitutes "like circumstances"? In other words: how can one determine whether the relevant circumstances expressed by the moral principle are the same as the relevant circumstances constituting the specific conduct in question?
3. Every moral principle will include, implicitly or explicitly, a description of the relevant characteristics of the behavior referred to in the principle.
 - a. Take for instance the principle, "One ought not to abort a fetus."
 - b. To describe abortion as the deliberate termination of a fetus may sound rather innocuous. But if in our description we can show that the fetus is a living person from conception, we have shown that abortion is the deliberate killing of a living person.
 - c. Thus to properly understand the principle, "One ought not to abort a fetus," it is necessary to clarify the descriptive characteristics of "abortion" and "fetus."
4. Likewise one can describe the relevant characteristics of a specific instance of conduct.
 - a. To make a moral judgment, it is necessary to have a specific case of conduct (real or hypothetical) in mind. This specific case must be described in its relevant characteristics.
 - b. As an example we may consider a woman who decides she is not ready to have a baby and aborts the fetus.
5. If the conduct in question possesses the same relevant characteristics as described in the moral principle, then the moral principle and the act of conduct share "like circumstances." The moral principle can therefore be used with certainty as a moral judgment of the particular instance of conduct.
6. Moreover, because of the universalizability of moral principles, the same moral principle may judge various examples of moral behavior with the same descriptive characteristics. The descriptive characteristics of a moral principle enable the principle to be comprehensive, covering many forms of conduct that are relevantly alike.

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- a. Some people claim that it is morally wrong to abort a fetus except in the case of rape. But the means of conception actually does not create a relevant difference in this case and the case mentioned above.
 - b. The case above is also relevantly similar to taking the so-called "morning after" pill that acts on the fetus after conception.
7. The task of the interpretation of a moral principle in the New Testament is to first understand the relevant descriptive aspects of particular moral principle.
- G. What determines the relevance of certain descriptive characteristics?
1. A description of the moral principle must be a description of its "relevant" characteristics.
 2. Descriptive characteristics that are relevant are those that cannot be changed without changing the meaning of the moral principle. Once the meaning of a moral principle is established, the relevant characteristics can be described.
 - a. In the case of "one ought not to abort a fetus," the descriptive characteristics of "abortion" and "fetus" are essential to the meaning of the principle. Describing the fetus as a "non-living entity" changes the meaning of the principle.
 - b. In the interpretation of New Testament principles, the contextual meaning of the words constituting the principle and the intention of the author of the principle will determine the meaning of the principle itself.
 3. Thus those descriptive characteristics that are logically necessary to express the principle will be the relevant characteristics.
 4. Irrelevant descriptive characteristics are those characteristics that can vary without changing the principle or the relation between the principle and specific cases of conduct.
 - a. Once the meaning of the principle, "one ought not to abort a fetus," is established, certain descriptive characteristics in specific cases of abortion can vary without affecting their relation to the principle.
 - b. For instance, irrelevant characteristics would be the age of the fetus and the circumstances of conception.

Interpreting Moral Principles

H. Disagreements about the application of a moral principle.

1. Understanding the relevant descriptive characteristics of a moral principle will enable one to correctly apply the principle.
2. Disagreements about the application of moral principles are usually based on disagreements about the descriptive characteristics of a moral principle and which of these descriptive characteristics are relevant in making an application. (e.g., Disagreements about a moral principle concerning abortion center around the actual status of the fetus.)
3. Disagreements also originate from a failure to properly define the relevant descriptive characteristics of the specific instance of conduct in question and thus a failure to logically show the connection between the moral principle and the specific instance of conduct.

III. At this point we can understand how moral principles are always to some degree comprehensive. No matter how specifically worded a moral law may be, if it is a moral law, it will apply universally to all instances of relevantly similar conduct. The comprehensive nature of all moral laws or principles is thus due to the universalizability of moral principles.

The Comprehensive Moral Principles of Jesus

I. The teachings of Jesus fall into two categories: doctrinal and moral.

- A. The doctrinal teachings include what Christians believe to be true about reality; such as the existential relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- B. The moral teachings include the rules of conduct for the behavior of Christians. The moral teachings comprehend conduct in every aspect of life whether it be in the church or among those of the world. The teachings concerning worship are examples of moral teachings because they instruct man concerning his conduct in worship.

II. The nature of moral principles in the teachings of Jesus.

- A. The moral code of Christianity does not include hundreds of precisely defined moral precepts that apply only to very specific situations. It does not contain precise and minute directions for every specific case of moral conduct that might occur.

Interpreting Moral Principles

- B. There are no specific moral precepts that deal directly with such specific moral actions as gambling, abortion, dancing, specific forms of immodest apparel, going to movies, watching soap operas, social drinking, etc. In order to morally prohibit such conduct, some comprehensive moral principle will have to be found that applies to each one in particular.

III. The comprehensive moral principles of Jesus.

- A. Many of the moral principles of the New Covenant are comprehensive moral principles. A comprehensive moral principle is a principle that covers many specific forms of behavior that are similar by virtue of their descriptive characteristics.

Jesus indicated that the moral principle, "Honor thy father and mother" is a comprehensive moral principle. Although this principle does not mention specifically the economic care of one's parents, Jesus implied that the principle comprehended this form of honor (Mk. 7:10).

2. An adequate exposition or description of the moral precept, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," (2 Cor. 6:14) will show that it not only applies to marriage but to many other moral actions that are descriptively similar.
 3. The contextual meaning of "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mt. 6:33) indicates that this principle refers to any conduct that threatens to place the satisfaction of material desires before obedience of the will of God.
- B. In many instances Jesus used a specific case of moral conduct to illustrate a comprehensive moral teaching. Often he does not elaborate the principle itself. The listeners must deduce the principle and its application from the particular illustration.
1. In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus simply said, "Go thou and do likewise" (Lk. 10:37). This does not mean that Jesus was instructing us in the case that we might find a Jew lying by the road, having been overtaken by robbers. "Likewise" indicates that the truly descriptive properties of this illustration provide for us a moral principle that we will be able to apply in many situations. Thus the specific illustration points to a comprehensive principle: that one ought to love his neighbor by helping someone in a similar situation.

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2. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, he used footwashing to illustrate a moral principle: that His disciples ought to humble themselves toward one another. The footwashers today have missed the point and robotically follow a specific case without realizing that Jesus was teaching a comprehensive moral principle that has many applications of which footwashing is just one. The work of interpretation is to extrapolate from the specific illustration, from the context and from other similar teachings in the New Testament, a comprehensive moral principle.
3. Jesus used a specific contemporary custom to illustrate the comprehensive moral precept of "going the second mile" (Mt. 5:41) that has many specific applications.

IV. Applying the comprehensive moral principles of Jesus.

- A. Either these comprehensive moral principles are meaningless or they apply to some specific form or forms of conduct in actual life.
- B. Because for some students of the Bible these principles express a certain vagueness in regards to specific application, the moral principles have little force and are thus meaningless in their daily life.
- C. If the principles apply to specific conduct then it must be possible to logically define the relationship between the moral principle and the specific moral action.
- D. This relationship is clarified by describing the relevant characteristics of the comprehensive moral principle and comparing this description with the relevant characteristics of the moral conduct in question.
- E. The description of the moral principle may also demonstrate its logical relationship (by identity) to other examples of specific moral conduct. This should be expected if it is a comprehensive moral principle. (This point will be elaborated in the following section.)

The logical Interpretation of the Moral Principles of Jesus

- I. There must be a logical relationship between a moral principle and the specific moral action that this principle judges.
 - A. This logical relationship is one of identity between the relevant description of the moral principle and the relevant description of the specific moral action in question.

Interpreting Moral Principles

- B. The task of interpretation is to elucidate the descriptive characteristics of the moral principle by employing correct methods of contextual interpretation.
- II. The work of contextual interpretation: understanding the meaning of the moral principle.
 - A. The meaning of the words used to express the principle.
 - 1. The precise meaning of a word depends on the contextual usage of the word. Some words have many meanings and shades of meaning. The context must determine the exact meaning.
 - 2. Some principles employ figurative meaning. Figurative meaning must also be determined by the contextual setting.
 - 3. Parallel texts that mention the principle using different wording may also assist in the determination of meaning.
 - B. The intention of the author or speaker in delivering the principle.
 - 1. For whom did he intend the principle?
 - 2. What error or moral wrong called forth the principle? What error did the speaker propose to judge or correct?
 - 3. To discover the complete answer to these questions, contextual information concerning the people who first received the principle and their circumstances will be indispensable.
 - 4. In some cases Jesus taught a moral principle by illustrating the principle without explicitly expressing the principle itself. The principle will have to be deduced from the context of the illustration. The question will be: what principle did Jesus intend to teach by means of the illustration.
 - C. The meaning of words and the intention of the author will help us understand how those first receiving the principle understood it.
- III. What are the relevant descriptive characteristics of the principle?
 - A. An understanding of the meaning of the principle will yield a description of the relevant characteristics of the behavior referred to by the principle.
 - B. The meaning of the principle (the meaning of the words and the author's intention) will determine which circumstances or characteristics of the behavior are relevant.

Interpreting Moral Principles

- C. The relevant characteristics are those characteristics that cannot change without changing the meaning of the principle.
- IV. Comprehensive application of the principle.
 - A. A description of the relevant characteristics of the moral principle will not only provide the logical connection between the principle and the specific conduct in question, but it will also establish a logical relation with other similar examples of moral conduct.
 - B. What other moral actions fall within the confines of the description of the moral principle? What other actions have the same relevant description? If one commits himself to this moral principle, what other forms of conduct does he also commit himself to in order to avoid self-contradiction?
 - C. Usually it will not be possible to list all the applications of a principle not will it be necessary.
 - 1. Our experience is limited in that we perhaps have not been confronted by every possible application of a particular moral principle.
 - 2. The purpose of comprehensive moral principles will remain a guiding principle in the heart and mind of the Christian. He will recall it when confronted by a moral decision that calls for its application.
- V. The failure of principles, or applications of principles.
 - A. Some principles will fail because they force us to accept applications that we cannot accept. (For example, if we were to accept the principle "one ought not to change things for change sake," we might not be ready to accept all of its applications. Sometimes we do want to change things for change sake.)
 - B. Applications of a moral principle will fail if they do not actually share relevant descriptive characteristics with the principle. In such cases one can accept the principle as true and reject false applications without self-contradiction.
 - 1. It has been argued that if we believe in a return to New Testament Christianity, we must not sing scripture songs. But one can accept the principle, "return to New Testament Christianity," and reject the supposed application, "do not sing songs from the Scriptures," without self-contradiction.

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2. It has also been argued that if we believe in doing all things decently and in order, we should never change the order of worship services. But one can consistently accept the principle, "do all things decently and in order," and reject the application, "never change the order of worship services."

VI. Some examples of comprehensive moral principles.

A. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." (Mt. 6:19-21).

1. This principle is virtually meaningless for many Christians because their rationalization enables them to avoid the application.
2. Language: to "treasure up" means to heap up, accumulate, store up in reserve. A treasure refers to an accumulation of things that are not immediately necessary.
3. Intention: In this passage Jesus contrasts laying up treasures in heaven with accumulating material things. His purpose is to instruct his disciples that their treasures should not be material. The principle that one ought to lay up treasures in heaven instead of accumulating material wealth is also taught in Luke 12:16-21.
4. Descriptive characteristics: The principle refers to any accumulation of material things that are not immediately necessary in place of storing up works of spiritual value.
5. Example of application: buying a vacation home or an unnecessarily luxurious home instead of supporting the gospel.

B. "Beware of covetousness" (Lk. 12:15).

1. Language: Covetousness is an inordinate desire to have more possessions, especially those possessions that others have. A covetous person will often do unwise things to obtain what he desires.
2. Intention: Jesus is warning against covetousness. His warning constitutes a moral principle: "one ought not to be covetous."
3. Descriptive characteristics: This principle refers to any action in which is displayed such a desire to obtain material possessions that a person will be unwise things to obtain them.
4. Application: Gambling is an action in which people, motivated by material desire, will bet on an highly uncertain outcome in the attempt to obtain what they want. Gambling is thus a manifestation of covetousness.

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C. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).

1. This verse is commonly (but mistakenly) applied to actions that appear evil though they are not evil in and of themselves.
2. Language: The word translated "appearance" in the KJV expresses the idea of "form" or "kind". According to Thayer the phrase means to abstain "from every kind of evil or wrong."
3. Intention: Paul's purpose is to teach the Christians that they must deny themselves all evil, in all its forms.
4. Descriptive characteristics: Anything that is evil according to God's Word is the subject of this principle.
5. Application: This principle would especially apply to someone taking the position of defending his participation in some sin by claiming that the sin is not as bad as other sins.

D. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt. 12:7).

1. This principle has long been abused as a pretext to commit many actions condemned by the Word of God.
2. Language: "Mercy" in this context is the outward show of compassion. "Sacrifice," figuratively, is obedience to the letter of the law.
3. Intention: In responding to the accusations of the Pharisees, Jesus defended the unlawful act of David when he ate the shewbread in the tabernacle. Jesus shows that David's action was an instance in which mercy had to take precedence over obedience to the letter of the law. What David did was unavoidable. It was not necessary that he die of starvation in order to keep the commandment prohibiting anyone except the priests to eat the shewbread.
4. Descriptive characteristics: In circumstances in which obedience to the letter of the law unavoidably prohibits the showing of mercy, the command to show mercy takes precedence. (It does not apply to situations in which disobedience to the law is avoidable.)
5. Application: When an illegal immigrant is baptized into Christ, one cannot demand that he immediately return home (because he is in violation of civil law) when, upon returning, he places himself in physical or spiritual danger. (This principle does not apply in the case of showing mercy to false teachers by refusing to criticize their doctrines. Their doctrines are clearly avoidable.)

Interpreting Moral Principles

When the Comprehensive Moral Principles of Jesus Are Rejected

- I. People "make the Word of God of none effect by their traditions" when they follow a specific moral teaching without considering the implied comprehensive moral principle.
- II. Those who reject the force of comprehensive moral principles would also reject the force of a detailed set of moral precepts precisely because their heart is not submitted to the will of God. They will always be able to find pretexts for following those teachings that they are already inclined to follow. Man will always search for a plausible excuse for doing what he is inclined to do.
- III. A greater love for the Lord and submission to his will is required by a moral code that includes comprehensive principles. Self-control and maturity is required to follow comprehensive principle because following these principles implies meditation and commitment to learn their application in daily life. It is easy for man to follow only those principles that are precisely described and ignore the more comprehensive principles as vague and meaningless.

Conclusion

The power of comprehensive moral principles can be fully appreciated only when we take the time to properly elucidate their meaning and show the logical connection between the principle and cases of actual moral conduct.

We are under the obligation of teaching these comprehensive moral principles and teaching how to properly apply them. 753 Saucito Ave., Salinas, CA 93906

Repentance and Restitution

Repentance and Restitution

Wayne Fussell

I. Introduction

A. When in Las Vegas, I studied with a young couple. The wife was so uneducated, both academically and spiritually, that I had to break it down into the simplest of terms so she could understand. In telling about the experience, I have often said, "She didn't even know what repentance meant!" Are we really able to internalize its true meaning?

B. We Hear Very Little On Repentance. It needs discussion for at least two reasons:

1. We All Sin (Rom. 3:23).

Since sin is universally prevalent, repentance is universally necessary.

2. So Difficult To Get People To Do. Repentance is an act of will—many are not willing.

a. Illustration: Story of the preacher who preached his first sermon at a new church on "Repentance." The next Sunday, he preached the same sermon again. The next Sunday, the same sermon. Finally, they asked, "Why?" He replied, "When you obey that one, I'll give you another one." It is difficult to get people to repent!

b. J. W. McGarvey: "If God should give spiritual gifts as he did in the first century, I would not ask for the gift of healing, prophecy, or tongues, but the gift that would enable me to help men to repent of their sins."

c. Noah preached 120 years. He converted only his family. The rest of the world remained impenitent.

Jeremiah, with many tears made moving appeals to ancient Israel to repent, but they refused.

John the Baptist failed in case of Herod and Herodias. It cost his life.

Even Jesus, the greatest preacher of all time, was unable to move men to repentance.

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Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (Mt. 11:20-24).

Paul, the prince of preachers, was not able to convince Felix and Agrippa to repent (Acts 24; 26).

C. Great Preachers Have Preached On The Subject.

1. Jonah (Mt. 12:41). Jesus said, they "repented at the preaching of Jonah." (His message: "Repent")
2. John The Baptist (Mt. 3:2). "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
3. Our Lord (Mt. 4:17). "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Lk. 13:3; 24:47).
4. Peter (Acts 2:38). (He urged Simon to repent in Acts 8:22).
5. Paul (Acts 17:30).

D. Sinners Told To Repent (Acts 2:38).

1. Church Members (Acts 8:22).
2. Even Churches (Rev. 2:1-5—Ephesus; Rev. 3:14-19—Laodicea).

The Ephesian church was urged to repent of leaving their "first love;" the Laodicean church was urged to repent of lukewarmness, being dead and false doctrine (see Rev. 2:14; 3:1, also).

E. My Task: To show the relationship between repentance and restitution.

I entered this study thinking that restitution is included in the definition of "repentance," as well as "regret" and other things. I have come to realize that restitution may be one of the results of repentance, but it is not repentance in the strictest sense.

I found a neat outline which I intended to use: Repentance includes: Regret—Resolve—Reform—Restore. (My study has led me to conclude that the one word above which truly expresses repentance is "resolve.")

Repentance and Restitution

- F. Theme Statement: Repentance is a change of the mind which leads to change in behavior. Where restitution is required and possible, true repentance will be followed by restitution.

II. Repentance Defined

[It would be difficult to show the relationship between repentance and restitution without first defining repentance.]

A. Repentance Is Not Sorrow—Even Godly Sorrow.

1. Some sorrow is just sorrow for getting caught! (Some television preachers might fall into this category!)
2. 2 Corinthians 7:10—verse nine says they “sorrowed to repentance” . . . “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

So godly sorrow is not equivalent to repentance—it prompts it.

3. Jeremy Taylor referred to godly sorrow as the “porch” or vestibule of repentance.

B. Not Sorrow With Confession.

1. Matthew 27:3—“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” (“Repented” here is the word for “regret”)

There was remorse—confession—some action—but no repentance (Acts 1:25).

C. Not Reformation And Restitution.

1. Restitution is related to repentance, but it is not repentance.
 - a. Godly sorrow precedes and leads to repentance; restitution and reformation follow repentance—effects of repentance.
2. John said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mt. 3:8). The Amplified Version reads: “Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance—let your lives prove your change of heart.” The TCNT reads: “Let your life, then, prove your repentance.”

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- a. Repentance demands "fruit" (comp. Acts 26:20). Paul preached that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
- b. Goodpasture: "In other words, he said, 'Let your conduct, your reformation of life be evidence of your repentance.'"
3. So, reformation and restitution are effects of repentance . . . fruits.
- D. Note Two Words Translated "Repent": **metamelomai** and **metanoeo**.
 1. **Metamelomai** means "after-care." It carries the thought of remorse or regret.
 - a. Judas regretted his sin, but did not repent (Mt. 27:3).
 - b. Some are sincerely perplexed as to why thousands repented and were baptized on Pentecost (Acts 2:37-41), while Judas repented and hanged himself. This is cleared up in the meaning of the terms translated "repent."
 2. **Metanoeo** means "after-knowledge" and denotes a "change of mind."

This is what Pentecostians did. The regret of sin caused them to cry out "What shall we do?" They were told to "repent" (Acts 2:38).
 3. Kittel (p. 626): "**Metanoein** means a change of heart either generally or in respect of a specific sin, whereas **metamelesthai** means 'to experience remorse.' **Metanoein** implies that one has later arrived at different view of something . . . **metamelesthai** that one has a different feeling about it."
 4. Vine: (**metanoeo**) "lit., to perceive afterwards (**meta**, after, implying change, **noeo**, to perceive; **nous**, the mind, the seat of moral reflection), in contrast to **prono**, to perceive beforehand, hence signifies to change one's mind or purpose, always, in the New Testament, involving change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Lk. 17:34, of repentance from sin." (**metamelomai**) . . . "signifying to regret."
 5. Chamberlain: "The word used of Judas' repentance, **metamelomai**, refers primarily to regret or sorrow for what has been done; the word that is used of Christian repentance, **metanoeo**, marks a complete change in mental outlook and of life design" (*The Meaning of Repentance*, pp. 30-31).

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6. An example of the distinction in the two words: 2 Corinthians 7:8-10. "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent (*metamelomai*, regret), though I did repent (*metamelomen*, regret); for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance (*metanoian*, repentance); for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance (*metanoia*, repentance) to salvation not to be repented (*metameleton*, regretted) of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

"Regret" is a much better translation of *metamelomai*.

E. Every Greek Authority Defines *Metanoeo*, "Change of Mind."

1. Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich (p. 513, 514)
2. Thayer (p. 405), "To change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins: Mt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 1:15."
3. *A Companion To The Bible* (p. 357), "The Greek word which our translations usually render 'repent' means literally: to think again or to change one's mind."
4. Moulton (Bagster) on *metanoeo*: "to undergo a change in frame of mind and feeling, to repent, Lu. 17:3,4, et al.; to make a change of principle and practice, to reform, Mat. 3:2, et al." On *metanoia*: "a change of mode of thought and feeling, repentance, Mt. 3:8; Ac. 20:21; 2 Ti. 2:25, et al.; practical reformation, Lu. 15:7, et al.; reversal of the past, He. 12:17."

F. Gus Nichols: "Thayer's Greek English Lexicon says, in part in defining this word '*metanoeo*', it means 'To change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins.' This is the duty that was to be preached 'Among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' (Lk. 24:47). So, repentance is an act of the mind, an act of man" (*Great Preachers*, p. 145).

1. He agrees with the general definition of scholars: "change of mind."
2. Nichols: "Repentance is an acts performed with the mind . . . '*metanoeo*,' compound word, meaning 'with the mind,' *meta* (with) *nous* (the mind). Such a change of mind is involved in repentance as is for the better, and will cause one to amend one's ways and abhor one's past sins" (*Speaking The Truth In Love*, pp. 144-145).

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G. B. C. Goodpasture: "The word repentance literally means a change of mind which results in a change of conduct" (Great Preachers, p. 6).

H. George Campbell (1788) said "repent" means to "reverse your thoughts." It "marks a change of mind that is durable and productive of consequences" (**Preliminary Dissertations On The New Testament**).

True repentance will not remain static or inactive, but is a dynamic notion which results in change.

I. Repentance Defined: A change of mind and intention. It is laying aside the old mind and assuming a new one.

1. A change of life design: the whole life pattern is changed. The goal of life is different. The aspirations are different. One is committed to a new direction for life.

The penitent mind thinks new thoughts, aspires for better things and acknowledges a new sovereignty (God's will, not one's own).

2. It deals primarily with "springs of action" rather than actions themselves. One has a new motivation in life.

a. We normally call the changes we make in life repentance. In a sense, we can, in the figure of cause and effect (metonymy of the cause—the cause is named to suggest the effect).

For instance, when one does something out of trust in God, we say, "Now, that's faith." It is really an effect of faith (comp. Jas. 2:18).

Likewise, when one makes changes in his life—restores something taken, or reforms in behavior—we say, "That is repentance." Really, it is the effect or fruit of repentance.

3. Moulton and Milligan said that from the papyri, "repentance" calls for a "complete change of attitude, spiritual and moral, toward God" (**Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament**, 1930).

4. So, in repentance you change your mind, your ideals, your set of values. It calls for transformation of the mental outlook.

a. Change from wrong patterns for success, false ideas of happiness, perverted ambitions, misguided aspirations, misdirected quests in life, false standards of values, wrongheaded notions of God.

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- b. The sinner is so out of line with God, he must reverse himself completely. It begins with a complete change of attitude.
- J. Note that the whole movement of Scripture seems to be directed at changing a person's view of life to God's view. It calls for repentance, or a change of mind, a revision of our sense of values, a redirecting of the major quest of life, a new mind (Prov. 23:7).
1. When we think of **metanoia** we might think of metamorphosis. A metamorphosis of mind, heart and will for a new world of outlook.
- K. Lactantius (A.D. 260-330): "For he who repents of that which he has done, understands his former error; and on this account the Greeks better and more significantly speak of **metanoia**, which we may speak of in Latin as 'a return to a right understanding.'" (Quoted by Chamberlain; to him, it was a recovery of one's mind).
1. Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:18-19). Verse seventeen reads, "And when he came to himself . . . I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned." Repentance comes when one says "I will"—return, reform, restore.
- L. We can represent repentance by the figure of a man with his back turned to God and moving away from Him; the figure stops still and then turns to face God and begins to move toward Him.
1. Mentally, he turns in repentance. Then changes in behavior begin to show up. Do an "about face" mentally.
2. Isaiah 1:16-17, "Cease to do evil; Learn to do well."
- M. Nineveh Repented (Mt. 12:41).
1. Jonah 3:4-5, "The people of Nineveh believed God."
People will never repent without first believing.
2. Jonah 3:10 "They turned from their evil way."
So, repentance is to change the mind with purpose to turn from evil.

III. The Psychology of Repentance

- A. Repentance is that change of the sinner's mind which leads him to turn from his evil ways and live. The change of mind is so deep that it affects the whole personality. The intellect must function, the emotions must be aroused, and the will must act.

Repentance and Restitution

- B. Intellectual Change (The sinner changes his thinking about God, His holiness, and his own sin).

He sees his sin as heinous. He sees himself coming short and falling below the requirements of a holy God.

Psalm 51:3, "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (see also Rom. 3:20).

- C. Emotional Change (The sinner comes to love what God loves and hate what He hates)

The emotional element is involved in repentance.

- D. Volitional Change (Change of the will)

This is the most prominent element in the psychology of repentance. Repentance calls for change of the will. We resolve to do better.

IV. Restitution and Repentance

- A. I have stated that restitution and reformation are effects of repentance.

1. Certain things precede repentance:

- a. Sin. Infants do not repent.
- b. Faith. No sinner can repent without faith in God.
- c. Regret (2 Cor. 7:10). One must view his sin as disgusting; he must become dissatisfied with sin.

2. Certain things follow repentance:

- a. Alien sinner confesses Christ and is baptized (Acts 8:37; 2:38).
- b. Reformation of life. The repentant ceases sinful practices, changing his behavior.
- c. Restitution, where necessary and possible.

- B. Genuine repentance implies not only a desire for future amendment of life, but the desire to repair or minimize injuries inflicted by the sin or sins already committed and now repented of. That is restitution. Restitution is the making good of whatever injury has been inflicted.

- C. Webster: "1. an act of restoring or a condition of being restored: as (a) restoration of something to its rightful owner; the making good of or giving an equivalent for some injury (as a loss of or damage to property)."

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D. Restitution Is A Biblical Principle.

1. Luke 19:8-9, "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house."

Restitution in this case was evidently approved by Jesus, even to fourfold.

2. Numbers 5:6-8, "Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty; Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass [make restitution, restore] with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest."

Under the Law, a sin against another was sin against God. He must restore to the party grieved and add one-fifth to it.

3. Leviticus 6:4, "He shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found."
4. Jesus said to a distinguished lawyer, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mt. 22:39) If we do this, we will do by him as by ourselves (Mt. 7:12).

Do we wish others to withhold from us that which they have wrongfully taken, or restore it? This principle binds us to make restitution.

People may steal our possessions or our reputation. Restitution is required. Amends must be made for wrongs done, lies told or harsh treatment rendered.

E. T. W. Brents (*Gospel Plan of Salvation*, p. 239) says,

The determination to reform must be such as will lead the party to a reparation of injuries done to others, as far as may be in his power to make restitution. In vain may any one tell me that he repents slandering me while he refuses to correct his false statements concerning me, or

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that he repents stealing my horse while he continues to ride him without my consent.

Adam Clarke (as quoted by Brents, p. 240) says,

No man should expect mercy at the hand of God who, having wronged his neighbor, refuses, when he has it in his power, to make restitution. Were he to weep tears of blood, both the justice and mercy of God would shut out his prayers if he make not his neighbor amends for the injury he has done him.

1. Sometimes Christians try to do this. One wrongs his brother. Then he expects to right it simply by a confession before the church. He must go to his brother. (Mt. 5:23-24). Deliver us from "the easy way out!" Alexander Campbell:

If then, any one is convicted in his own mind, that he has injured the person, character, or the property of his neighbor, by word or deed, and has it in his power, by word or deed, to undo the evil he has done, or to restore what he has unjustly taken away, he will certainly do it, if his repentance be according to either the law of Moses or the gospel of Christ (*Christian System*, p. 38).

F. Repentance Is Proved By Reformation and Restitution.

1. The Thessalonians demonstrated repentance when they "turned to God from idols to serve the true and living God" (1 Thess. 1:9).
2. The Ephesians showed repentance when they "brought their books together, and burned them before all men" (Acts 19:19).
3. The Jailor—"Took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes" (Acts 16:33).
4. The Corinthians evidenced repentance when they turned from their corrupt and sinful practices (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
5. Whatever is necessary to prove repentance, we must do it. Reformation and restitution demonstrate in life what has taken place in the heart—repentance.

G. Alexander Campbell's Illustration (*Christians System*, p. 256)

Repentance and Restitution

Peccator wounded the reputation of his neighbor Hermis, and on another occasion defrauded him of ten pounds. Some of the neighborhood were apprised that he had done both. Peccator was converted under the preaching of Paulinus, and, on giving in a relation of his sorrow for his sins, spoke of the depth of his convictions and of his abhorrence of his transgressions. He was received into the congregation and sat down with the faithful to commemorate the great sin-offering. Hermis and his neighbors were witnesses of all this. They saw that Peccator was penitent and much reformed in his behavior, but they could not believe him sincere because he had made no restitution. They regarded him either as a hypocrite or self-deceived, because, having it in his power, he repaid not the ten pounds, nor once contradicted the slanders he had propagated. Peccator, however, felt little enjoyment in his profession, and soon fell back into his former habits. He became again penitent, and, on examining the grounds of his falling off, discovered that he had never cordially turned away from his sins. Overwhelmed in sorrow for the past, he resolved on giving himself up to the Lord, and, reflecting on his past life, set about the work of reformation in earnest. He called on Hermis, paid him his ten pounds, and the interest every day he had kept it back, went to all the persons to whom he had slandered him, told them what injustice he had done him, and begged them, if they had told it to any other persons, to contradict it. Several other persons whom he had wronged in his dealing with them, he also visited, and fully redressed all these wrongs against his neighbors. He also confessed them to the Lord, and asked Him to forgive him. Peccator was then restored to the church, and, better still, he enjoyed a peace of mind and confidence in God which was a continual feast. His example, moreover, did more to enlarge the congregation at the cross-roads than did the preaching of Paulinus in a whole year. This was unequivocally sincere repentance."

1. Repentance is a change of the mind for the better, but necessary reparations must also be made.

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2. Illustration: A little boy saw a man praying. He said to his mother, "That man is asking God to forgive him, but he will not be forgiven today." The mother asked, "Why?" The little boy said, "He is down on only one knee. He will never be forgiven until he gets down on both knees." I'm sure God is not concerned about how many knees we pray on, but if one of those knees represents repentance and the other restitution (or sincere intention to do so), we will agree with the little boy that it takes both.

'Tis not enough to say,
I'm sorry and repent
And then go on from day to day
Just as we always went.

V. Restitution When Possible

- A. When necessary and possible, restitution, reparation, and restoration should be made.

1. Notice, I have repeatedly included "necessary" and "possible" in reference to restitution.

Restitution is not always necessary in every case of repentance. Sometimes, it requires one to just stop doing wrong. "Go thy way and sin no more" (Jn. 8:11). Or start doing right.

2. What if it is not possible to make restitution?

B. Some Impossible Situations:

1. In the Case of Murder.

a. Restitution would be impossible. You could not restore the life taken. You might have to suffer for the deed through imprisonment or death, but true restitution would be impossible. You could show sorrow, remorse and regret. You might try to do special things for the family, etc. Could one be forgiven since he cannot restore life?

b. The people on Pentecost were murderers of Jesus (Acts 2:36). They cried out, "What must we do?" The answer: "Repent." But they could not undo the deed.

c. Saul of Tarsus is another good example of one responsible for taking human life. Thank God he "obtained mercy."

2. When The Person Wronged Is Dead.

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You can never make it right with that person. Desire and effort are certainly required. You might make restitution to his family, but never to him.

3. When a Person Takes a Sum of Money Impossible to Repay (Mt. 18:23ff).

Surely, he must make an effort.

4. When a Person Cannot Find the Person Wronged.

Maybe too many years have passed. He has moved. You have.

5. When So Many Sins Have Been Committed, He Cannot Remember.

There are those who have lived their whole life in sin. They have committed so many sins, that they could never repent of each one.

6. When One Has Taken the Virginity of Another.

- a. This could never be restored.

- b. In case of rape, so much damage is done that one can never repair.

7. In A Wrongful Accident Where Someone Is Dismembered.

8. Slander Can Never Be Completely Rectified Or Cleared Up.

Lies told spread so far and wide (like feathers from a pillow that can never be gathered up).

- C. In All These Cases: Intentions are right, but the possibility of restitution is absent. God does not exact the impossible. Do the best you can. Go on and live a godly life. God's mercy is sure.

VI. Conclusion

- A. Repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change in one's life. It is the motivator for change. In repentance the mind is made up to change.

- B. For that reason Repentance Is Not Necessarily a Long Drawn Out Process

1. Three thousand on Pentecost repented in a single service (Acts 2:38, 41).

2. Philippian Jailor, (Acts 16). He repented in the "Same hour."

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3. It might take years to repair all the damage of wrongful acts, or one might never be able to do so.
4. N. B. Hardeman: "Sometimes the question is raised as to how long a man ought to repent. How long does it take him to fulfill this requirement? I think I can answer that correctly by stating that it takes just long enough for him to get the consent of his mind, of his will power, that he is tired of sin and of his former ways, and that now he firmly resolves and coolly decides to turn from his evil way and face about toward the 'city which hath foundations'. Whatever time is required, therefore, to make this decision, is the answer to that query."

His Definition of Repentance: "From these Scriptures I want to frame a definition of repentance, which is this: Repentance is a change of a man's will power. It is brought about by godly sorrow and results in a reformation of life" (Hardeman's *Tabernacle Sermons*, pp. 199, 202-203).

- C. Our theme statement has been proven. Repentance is a change of mind which leads to a change in behavior. Where restitution is required and possible, true repentance will be followed by restitution.

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The Lord's Supper

by Paul Walker

The purpose of the earthly life of Jesus Christ was His sacrificial death. He came into the world to die. In Mark 10:45 Jesus said, "Even the son of man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many." When Jesus died on the cross, that was not a change in the plan: that was the plan! It was not a bad ending to a good beginning. His crucifixion was God's plan from before the foundation of the world. It had to be done—and it had to be done in God's appointed way and in accordance with God's divine timetable.

The death of Jesus Christ is the focal point of all redemptive history. From the slain animals whose skins were used to clothe Adam and Eve to the slain Lamb of Revelation who is worshipped in glory and majesty—the cross is everything. Paul, the great apostle and teacher, knew the supreme value of the cross; so much so that he declared with steel-like conviction: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). And he also said "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). The brethren at Corinth sensed the preacher's zeal and enthusiasm when he walked and talked among them. Had some brother approached him with this question: "Paul, is the cross the beginning and ending of the story?" He would have answered, "I'm convinced, "Brother, the cross is not only the beginning and ending of the story—but more than that—it is the theme of the story!"

The Lord's Supper is a magnificent celebration in worship because it ever keeps alive the theme of the New Testament—the cross of Christ! Not the physical, wooden cross; but the true spirit and meaning of the cross—love, mercy, peace, unity and forgiveness. And those were the things the brothers and sisters at the Corinth congregation needed as we shall see when we view the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11.

The Lord's Supper is a Christian's memorial. It can be understood and appreciated only by Christians who train themselves to discern spiritual things. The great American statesman, Thomas Jefferson, writing about freedom said, "How little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy." And so it is with God's people. We have the wonderful and precious blessing called the Lord's Supper which cannot be enjoyed by the world, for it is spiritually discerned. When Jesus, on that dark night of nights so long ago climbed the stairs to the upperroom with His twelve apostles to eat the final

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Passover and to give birth to the Lord's Supper, He and they were a tiny lot along side the swarm of people who inhabited the earth. But that fact did not embarrass the Lord. He knew full well that the masses did not understand the meaning of the magnificent supper he was about to institute. What did disturb the Master, I'm sure, was the lack of understanding and appreciation for the Supper on the part of His inner-circle of friends, the apostles. And, I am further convinced that our Lord is concerned today by our own lack of sincere love, understanding and appreciation for the Lord's Supper.

The Supper: Our Customs, Good and Bad

In the first part of my topic, "The Lord's Supper," I shall mention some customs often connected with the observance of the communion; customs that may or may not be appropriate in preparing minds for the communion. Not all brethren may use the same words and phrases at the Lord's table simply because brethren have varied gift, temperaments and talents. Many times we visit congregations away from our own and observe that the brother who waits on the table says and does things a little different than we are accustomed to. This is to be expected. I often find that younger men who wait on the table use a fresh approach, a relevant statement, a creative idea—perhaps because they are bored with the familiar; tired of the traditional. They get the job done. They do not dare tamper with what is on the table—the one bread and one cup. And they usually say the correct words while blessing the elements. Yet, their preliminary remarks before the blessing are often new and innovative. If I might borrow from the musician's point of view; they play the same song but in a variety of keys and arrangements. Really, that is not bad; unless played off key!

Since we have no authority except the authority of Holy Scripture and since the New Testament is silent as to what must be said or done by the brother who stands before the table on Lord's Day; our brother has a great deal of Christian liberty to say and do whatever he wishes, as long as he does not tamper with God's arrangement. He must, though, always remember that the table before which he stands is the Lord's table and not his own. Any man who waits on the Lord's table must speak from motives of love and respect for Christ and for the true meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper. I think a good rule of thumb for a brother to follow when waiting on the Lord's table is this: Am I fully persuaded in my own mind that what I am about to say or do is going to focus the congregation's attention and affection on the Lord Jesus Christ?

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I think of Mary's resolve to serve Jesus in her own way, when she poured the costly perfume on the head of Jesus amid whispers of scorn and criticism from the disciples. "Leave her alone," Jesus said, "she has done what she could." Mary dared to dress her life by her own mirror. She dared to be herself. And so it should be with you and me. The only ugly thing that could be said by a sincere Christian brother who waits on the Lord's table is a thing said or done of an ugly motive. As long as our brother has honest, sincere, loving convictions and as long as he does not attempt to change the Scriptures pertaining to the communion service, his position at the Lord's table will be beautiful and honored by the Lord himself. And, if from an ugly motive, we hurl at him destructive criticism, we may hear Jesus say to us, "Leave him alone, he has done what he could."

Good Customs

I would first like to list some customs at the Lord's table which I have observed over the years that are, in my opinion, good, positive ways to focus attention on the Lord and the real purpose of communion. The first custom is a brief statement from the brother calling attention to the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper. Such an opening statement might contain an admonition to turn our minds away from the cares of the world and focus on the care God had for us when He sent Jesus to die on the cross. He might quote Jesus' words, "This do in remembrance of me." In my opinion, such remarks are quite appropriate.

The second custom I have observed is the custom of reading selected Bible passages that deal with the institution of the Lord's Supper. This seems to me to be excellent, because it pictures for us the Lord's love and concern for us in instituting such a simple memorial service in which we might remember His suffering and death and look forward to His coming again to take us home to glory. For a brother to read selected verses about the Lord's Supper from one of the Gospel accounts or from Paul's account in First Corinthians, is always appropriate. One note of constructive criticism here, though, if I may. A brother must pray for wisdom that he might not get carried away and read every verse he can find on the subject, and then launch forth with his own personal commentary as to the exact meaning of every word or phrase in the text. When it comes to the communion service, the simple accounts found in Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22 and 1 Corinthians 11 paint a vivid picture of the purpose and design of the communion service. If we are not careful we may get in the Lord's way with our own words and phrases and commentary so that his direct message is not allowed to fall gently upon the ears of the assembled Christians. And, one other

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suggestion here: it seems to me that the one waiting on the table should allow the simple words of Jesus to be heard for the sake of the children. May we recall the words of wisdom found in the book of Exodus, chapter 12, verses 25-27, pertaining to the Passover.

And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses . . .

God saw the need for the children to be instructed as to the meaning of the Passover service. And I think he delights in knowing that children in our congregations today often ask, "What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper?" They deserve to know, and what better way to know than to hear the tender and loving words from the lips of Jesus when he instituted the communion service so long ago? May I share something with you that illustrates the curiosity of children during communion. A few weeks ago, at our congregation in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, a little eight year old girl was sitting beside my daughter. She had a small bag of candy called "Skittles" beside her on the seat. During communion, whenever the bread come to my daughter and she broke off a piece and placed it in her mouth, out of the corner of her eye she noticed the little girl putting a white piece of candy in her own mouth. Soon the cup came by and the little friend had selected a purple piece of candy, and at the very moment my daughter placed the cup to her lips, her little friend gently placed the purple Skittle into her mouth. You see, children learn by imitation. They do ask questions about the Lord's Supper; just like children in days gone by asked questions about the Passover.

Another custom in many congregations involves an appropriate song before communion; a song that expresses the love of God and the great suffering and sacrifice Jesus made for us at Calvary. There are many such lovely and expressive hymns, both old and new, which magnify the sacrificial death of Christ and His glorious resurrection. Songs help greatly to focus attention on the meaning of the Lord's Supper. In my opinion, such songs do not have to be selected from the index of the songbook marked "Communion Songs." To illustrate: recently a brother in Pa., after hearing a stirring message on "Choices," wisely made the transition from the teaching to the communion by choosing to lead the congregation in a lively

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rendition of "Sing And Be Happy." Such Christian liberty is quite delicate and precious, though, and wisdom must always supersede one's spontaneous desire to be cute, clever or different. Certainly, in a worship service, while preparing hearts and minds to commune is no time to play the game "I've Got A Secret." If the song does not call attention to the real purpose of the Lord's Supper, it should be left unsung!

Bad Customs

Now I shall mention some things said at the communion service that tend to draw, like a magnet, my attention away from the heart of the communion service. First—a brother's long, drawn-out review of the Sunday sermon! A wise man, standing before the Lord's table charged with bringing the congregation to the proper frame of mind to meditate upon the cross and suffering of Christ, will not engage in the rehashing of the preacher's sermon. Perhaps a word or two of appreciation for the message just completed would be appropriate, especially if the content of the message included references to the love of God or the sufferings of Christ. But to review the lesson as simply something to say before the communion is not, in my opinion, a wise thing to do, for it does not draw the Christian's mind immediately to the sacrificial death of Christ.

Another distraction: the brother who takes the plate and "talks over it," tilting it this way and that; putting it down on the table, picking it up again—talking and tilting until the congregation holds it's breath that the bread does not slide off the plate and on to the floor! Such nervous habits are distracting and fails to get one "in tune" with the real meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper. The one who waits on the table should say what he has prepared to say and then pick up the plate and offer thanks for the bread.

Still another distraction: the brother who does not speak loud enough or pray loud enough to be heard by the entire congregation. A wise and thoughtful individual will think about the importance of being heard by the whole congregation; by those who sit on the back benches as well as those up front. We should always remember, too, that some in the audience may have difficulty hearing well. They deserve a little extra effort on our part, for if they cannot hear the prayer, how can they say Amen?

Maybe at this point in our lesson it is good that we recall the timely teaching of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:26, "Let all things be done unto edifying." If what you or I say or do in the assembly does not build up, then we have not done a good job and the church service suffers. In Mark 14:6,

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(Moffatt) concerning Mary, Jesus said, "She has done a beautiful thing to me. Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." How thrilling! "Hand in hand with myself," Jesus said to Mary, "You will walk across the centuries. Wherever my story is told, yours will be told also." And so it is with another memorial, the Lord's Supper. When my brother in Christ stands at the Lord's table, he stands hand in hand with Jesus and when we jointly commune we sit hand in hand with each other and with Jesus. So, while I may offer, at times, constructive criticism, I must not be too critical of my brother who waits on the table, for if I would call for the perfect man to wait on the table, I would have to call on the Master himself—for all others are faltering earthmen!

The Supper: Its Purpose and Man's Responsibility

In the second part of my theme, "The Lord's Supper," I shall note with you some thoughts about the institution of the Lord's Supper; its purpose and the Christian's responsibility to the Supper. In Matthew's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper we find these words, beginning at verse 26 and reading through 30:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat: this is my body. and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

In verse 18 of Matthew 26, Jesus responds to the Disciples' question: "Where shall we prepare for you to eat the Passover?" by saying, "Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, the Master saith, my time is at hand: I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples." In the 22nd chapter of Luke, verse 15, Jesus said to the disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat the Passover with you before I suffer." So Jesus desired to eat the Passover with His disciples before he suffered. Like a ripe fig breaking loose from the tree at exactly the right moment, Jesus said, "My time is at hand." That meant, the fig is ripe; the Passover must fall; its life must end and a new Supper must take its place! The Passover was a dramatic time of year for the nation of Israel. The Israelites were reminded that in-

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nocent lambs had to die to atone for their sins; yet, none of those lambs could take away sin. But their death was a profound example. The sacrificial lamb became a symbol of Jesus, God's Passover Lamb, whose blood enables one to escape the eternal judgment of God. God rules history to bring about the minute fulfillment of His perfect plan. Thus, Jesus had to keep the Passover to fulfill all righteousness, instruct His disciples, and give them a new memorial feast. He had to die as the Passover Lamb. And he had to die at the Father's appointed time. His crucifixion is not something Jesus could arrange for the weekend. It had to have been planned before the foundation of the world by the Providence of God. Christ was not a victim of a plan gone wrong. His betrayal is exactly what God had prewritten in prophetic history. So, before the curtain could be drawn on the Passover, Jesus had to celebrate this divinely sanctioned Supper. Any Passover celebrated after this one is not authorized by God; it is a remnant of a covenant that has been replaced. Jesus celebrated this Passover for the last time so he could bring into existence a new memorial feast; a feast not of the Old but of the New! The old, crusty radio preacher, J. Vernon McGee, said of this last Passover with His disciples, "Jesus ended the final Passover and from those dying embers fanned into existence the hot, glowing flame which he called the Lord's Supper."

And now we take a closer look at the text of Matthew 26:26-30: "As they were eating, Jesus took bread . . ." How simple! Yet how beautiful! And how fitting! Notice that Inspiration does not say that as they were eating Jesus took a magic wand and waved it rhythmically and said "hocus-pocus," and lo there stood before the disciples a golden image of the Master himself to be bowed before and worshipped and adored for ever more. No. It says simply, "He took bread." Bread is temporary, it spoils and perishes before long. Yet, God chose bread to symbolize His Son's body, both His physical and spiritual body. There must be wisdom in God's choice; bread, after all, is so common that it links Jesus to every home under the sun. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." And where does bread come from? It comes out of the seed that dies to live. If the outer shell of the seed did not die there could be no life. Jesus, the Bread of Life, the promised Seed (Rom. 3:16) died, was buried and from that dead state God raised him up to be Bread, real Manna for His people forever more! In light of that fact then, we are not surprised to read these words (Jn. 6:32-33, 35),

Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that Bread from Heaven: but my Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven. For the Bread of God is he

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which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world . . . And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: He that cometh to me shall never hunger.

In 1 Corinthians 10:16, we read, "the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." Yes, bread! Consider its lowliness. Here is no monument in stone; no massive shrine—just bread. And it is ever fresh, tenderly and lovingly prepared by hands that prepare it weekly with love.

There seems to be a presence when we break bread. Like on the Emmaus Road when the two disciples walked and talked with the Stranger (the unrecognized, resurrected Christ) and their hearts burned within their breasts as they talked and communed with him. It was not until they were with him around the table, however, that they recognized him. And as what special moment was the Master recognized? At the moment he broke bread with them in their humble home and gave it to them. Verse 31 of Luke 24 says, "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." I repeat. There was a presence felt in that room! And age on age the brothers and sisters in the church of Christ have met together upon the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7) and to recognize him at the communion service. No wonder the early Christians continued steadfastly in the "breaking of bread," (Acts 2:42); for they had found that when he was remembered in the vivid symbols of the Lord's table, he used the very act of eating and drinking as an highway of His presence, so that suddenly he was in the midst of them to grant pardon and power!

After taking the bread Jesus "blessed it." What does the "blessing" mean? It was simply a prayer of thanksgiving. The expressions "gave thanks," and "blessed" have to do with a specific prayer said at the Lord's table—a prayer that calls attention to none other thing than the elements on the table. The Greek word from which we get the expression "gave thanks" is *Eucharisteo*, from which we get the Eucharist, meaning to "give thanks; to bless." Eucharist is a common name for the Lord's Supper in many religious circles, tho there does not seem to be a concrete use of the word in the New Testament as a name for the Lord's Supper.

Scholars tell us that three things seemed important among the early Christians during special occasions of thanksgiving: (1) Recalling the redemptive acts of God; (2) filling the minds of the communicants with the Spirit of Christ; (3) expressing the sure hope and expectation of His imminent return. In Matthew's account we find hints of the above three points in the

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thanksgiving prayer. Jesus said, "This is my body." That certainly speaks of God's redemptive act. For the Word (Christ) became flesh and died on a cross. Thus, when Jesus says of the bread, "This is my body," he is honoring God's love and mercy for His children. Therefore, when giving thanks and blessing the bread and the fruit of the vine, it appears to me that a brief word of thanks to the Father for His love and mercy is in order. Also, in Matthew's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus makes reference to the "New Testament," or the "New Covenant." Surely it is appropriate in a word of thanksgiving at the Lord's table to thank God for the blessing of living under the New Covenant. The institution of the Lord's Supper was not a farewell talk but an inaugural talk; a pledge that the church would be established and all God's people united in His blood. The church of Christ could be built only within the framework of the New Covenant. Paul ties the building of the church specifically to the blood of Christ which ratified the New Covenant (Acts 20:28). In that vein, then, the early Christians no doubt expressed the great work of the Holy Spirit as he filled the hearts and minds of the Christians with the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is twin brother to the Spirit of the New Covenant. The key to understanding the blood/covenant concept introduced by our Lord at the institution of the Supper is the phrase "for the remission of sins." What is the heartbeat of the New Covenant? It is the blood of Christ that forgives sins. Thus, a prayer of thanksgiving should include that wonderful blessing. 1 Corinthians 11:26 says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." When we "give thanks," at the Lord's table, maybe it would be wise to thank Christ for His sacrificial death and thank him, too, for His wonderful promise to come again.

We may ask about the correct wording of a prayer of thanksgiving at the communion service. The Bible does not give a detailed account of what should be prayed. We, therefore, in the absence of Scripture pertaining to the correct wording, should pray for wisdom and then use some good common sense. I like what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" In light of these inspired words, we might pray thusly: "Father, we thank Thee, and ask Thee to bless this bread, which is the communion of the body of Christ. And, we thank you for this cup of blessing, which is the communion of the blood of Christ." In my opinion, tho, one should not stand at the table and pray a general prayer in which he thanks God for everything under the sun. No. It is the Lord's Supper and the prayer should focus on the elements on the table and what they represent.

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After Jesus took the bread, blessed it, brake it and gave it to the disciples, he then took the cup. Matthew 26:27 says, "And he took the cup . . ." The cup—meaning the contents of the cup, "the fruit of the vine," symbolized the Lord's shed blood. Rather than remembering the physical deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt by the blood of animals, the participants at the Lord's table are to remember Christ's death and the deliverance His precious blood provided. When Jesus held the cup of blessing in His loving hands, what could have been more simple? Like the bread, the cup, with its contents—the blood of the grape—was beautiful because of its simplicity. Like bread, the fruit of the vine is temporary: something that soon perishes!

Let us take a closer look at this "blood of the grape" (Gen. 49:11). Running like a red river through the hills and valleys of the Old Testament writings is the perpetual flow of animal blood. But like many rivers and streams in OK and TX, which dry up underneath the summer's scorching sun, the river of animal blood dried up when the blood was drawn from Emmanuel's veins! No wonder Inspiration cries out—as in Hebrews 9:22—"Almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without the shedding of blood is no remission." There can be no approach to God, no forgiveness from God, no acceptance with God apart from a blood sacrifice. Now, John, we know why you looked at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" You meant, of course, look at the Lamb who is about to shed innocent blood for the sins of the people. Animal blood and our Lord's blood are two different threads of a worthy purpose; but as we commune and attempt to discern the body of Christ, let us glory in the knowledge that the scarlet thread saturated by the blood of Christ is the stronger of the two threads, for it completely blots out sin and binds Satan's deadly power over us! Yes, Jesus took the cup. Like the bread which rises from dead seed, the fruit of the vine is wrung from the wine press. The skin of a ripe cluster of juicy grapes is easily ruptured allowing the blood of the grape to gush out. Jesus died to save us from our sin, but it was not enough for him to die: blood had to be shed! In Matthew 26:28 the word "shed" is used and the Greek words means to "gush out," or "spill." His blood had to pour out, spill out through His hands, feet, side and from the thorn marks in His head. The blood shed—running out—of Christ graphically demonstrates that life was flowing out of him as he offered himself as the final sacrifice for sin. So Jesus, on that faraway night held a cup of blessing in His hands that would soon bear nailprints to remind believers of His blood, which was shed on their behalf, for the forgiveness of sins.

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The Supper: Abuses At Corinth

Our final segment on the theme, "The Lord's Supper," deals with Paul's timely teaching found in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. When we read Paul's message to Corinth, we find that one of the abuses that had arisen in the church involved the Lord's Supper. It seems that the early church attached communion to a common meal. The Gentiles likewise included a potluck meal with their religious festivals. So, it appears that the early church followed those Jewish and Gentile patterns in combining a meal with the Lord's Supper. The "feasts of Charity," often referred to as the Agape (Jude 12), slowly died out for the degenerated into a gluttonous exercise that resembled the idolatrous feast they once participated in. Their practice was very offensive to God. And it was, no doubt, an embarrassment to Paul. The trouble with the "love feasts" was that the well-to-do were supposed to bring food to the Love Feast and share it with the poor. But the rich would arrive early, cluster into their special little elite groups and eat all their food before the poor arrived. Therefore, the poor ended up going home hungry.

Thus Paul admonished them: "My brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto judgment." They had missed the whole purpose of the Love Feast, which was to share with others. The blood shed on Calvary was to bring unity among the Lord's followers. But their selfish and divisive actions destroyed unity and made a mockery of the Lord's sacrifice. Paul made it clear to the Corinthians that their meetings were doing more harm than good. They came together for the Lord's Supper and ended up being worse people than before they came. Their meals had become a meal of bitterness, not betterment. Around the Lord's table is a real opportunity to show forth unity. There both young and old, rich and poor, healthy and handicapped, scholars and high-school dropouts share; and these differences make no difference, because it is around the table that we're reminded that we are united by Jesus Christ.

It was a sad day in the congregation at Corinth when their Love Feast spotlighted the wrong attitude of some Christians. Unity was shattered by class distinctions. Paul had to remind them "When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat" (1 Cor. 11:20). You see, it is not enough just to have bread and drink, we have to have the right attitude. We are kidding ourselves when we think that we can have hatreds, jealousies and competitions with other members in the body and then partake of the Lord's Supper as some sort of tradition that makes everything okay. In this chapter Paul makes it clear that Christ's body was broken so that His church body

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could be united. When Paul says that to eat of the Lord's Supper proclaims the Lord's death, he is not suggesting that it is proclaiming only the facts about His death, but it also proclaims the purpose of His death. And what was the purpose of the death of Christ? He died that we might be saved and be united through the Father and also to one another. Paul was the great preacher of unity. Any time he mentions the death of Christ, he knows that Christ died so that man's divisions could be healed. Nowhere do we see Paul's understanding of Jesus better than in Ephesians 2. Several phrases in that chapter spotlights that unity. Like a skillful boxer Paul jabs away at this thing called "unity"—attempting to drive home the point that Christ died to bring about unity in His church. Some of Paul's phrases on "unity" are the following: "He has made the two one;" "He came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh;" "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a Holy Temple in the Lord."

All of these verses spotlight unity, not factions; peace, no hostility; reconciliation, not alienation. Any time Christians continue to harbor hatreds, unforgiveness, hostilities, separations, or any other attitude that fails to bridge barriers and gaps between them, they are negating what Christ died to bring about. The Lord's Supper must be a quiet, reflective time when we discern the body of Christ in all its dimension. We must see the physical body of Christ, yes! But, too, we must look at the spiritual body of Christ, His church, His ongoing body where we live, worship and work together. If when we assemble and commune and see only the Lord's physical body on the cross; that and no more, then, in my opinion, we have not discerned or recognized the whole truth of the matter. We must recognize that the body of the Lord is the church and that it is indeed one body and one church (as Eph. 1:22-23 makes clear) "And hath put all things under His feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body." Now—that's beautiful! But let Scripture explain Scripture and it all become even more beautiful. Listen to Paul explain what the real body of Christ is in Romans 12:4, 5—"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." In light of these wonderful verses, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, take on special meaning indeed. Paul writes, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." And, in 1 Corinthians 12:27, Paul says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The Lord's Supper

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is a sharing in the blood of Christ and a sharing in the body of Christ. To share the blood of Christ is to share His life. To eat the bread is to participate in the body of Christ. For it reminds us that we are indeed His ongoing earthly body today. When Paul uses the phrase "body and blood" together, he is referring to the first-century historical Jesus. But when he uses the phrase, "the body," without the phrase "the blood," he is talking about the ongoing body of Christ, the church. So, Paul, I believe, makes it clear that two things ought to be remembered in communion: first, the historical, physical body of Christ; secondly, the ongoing body of the Lord—the church. The situation in Corinth was so vile that the verses picturing the lovely communion service are like a diamond dropped in a muddy road. With their ugly attitudes toward one another, they had not the foggiest notion what the church of Christ was about.

Now let us look at the phrase: "But let a man examine himself . . ." (1 Cor. 11:28). What does that mean? To examine means to "check out" your life, your motives; your attitudes toward the Lord, His Supper and other Christians. No, it does not mean that we examine our brother; only that we examine our attitude toward him! To examine self, we need to ask ourselves during communion—what is my standing with Christ at this time? And what is my relationship with others?

We now look at Paul's warning in verse 29 of 1 Corinthians 11—"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." What does it mean to eat drink unworthily? Well, one thing it does not mean (as many have been lead to believe) is that we must be "worthy" to partake of the Lord's Supper. If that were the case, who among us could ever approach the Lord's table? As it turns out, "unworthily" is an adverb and describes the manner in which the Lord's Supper is observed. What are some ways we might eat and drink unworthily? (1) when we assume that the Lord's Supper brings about one's salvation; (2) when we go through the motions without understanding the reason for observing the Lord's Supper; (3) when we refuse to examine ourself—thus, refusing to confess and repent of sin; this is to eat and drink unworthily; (4) by having bitterness in our hearts toward another person—we eat and drink unworthily; and (5) by having a lack of respect and love for God, Christ and for one another—we eat and drink unworthily.

Now—let us examine the words of Jesus ". . . In remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:25). What does that mean? It brings past history to meet us in the present tense. It reminds us that we are New Covenant people. We should rejoice in celebration that God has freed us from Old Testament and given

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us the New. It reminds us what Christ did; he died for each of us personally! It is a communication of the death and return of Jesus. "In remembrance of me" spotlights the fact that we are forgiven people. It is an expression of unity; it is a participation in the ongoing body of Christ, the church.

Conclusion

To sum up and conclude our lesson we note the following: During the Lord's Supper we should be aware of Christ, first of all, remembering His suffering and death. We must ponder the meaning of His death, translating that awesome fact into spiritual meaning; not spending all our time trying to recapture the pain, suffering, the blood, His final breath. But, we need to allow our minds to also ponder the fact that we are aware of our attitude toward those who are united with us in the assembly by the bonding of the blood of Christ. If during communion we ponder only the physical Christ on the cross and fail to ponder the meaning of God's love, mercy, justice—we fail to recognize the real Christ!

What application can we draw for ourselves as we partake of the Lord's Supper next Sunday? (1) Never again think that it is something between you and Jesus. The Lord's Supper is always between Jesus and you and all other Christians seated around you. (2) Call to mind that God gave His Son to die on the cross so that His children could be united together. (3) Meditate upon His ongoing body, the church. (4) Evaluate your own contribution to unity or disunity and make some decisions that you will maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. (5) Resolve in your heart that you will leave the communion service more committed to live for Christ and for all other Christians.

Paul shouted these words: "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God our Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Gal. 1:3-5).

Isaac Watt's great hymn sums up the heart of the communion service so well, I think. He wrote, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands, my soul, my life, my all."

Joel and Acts: "Pouring Out of My Spirit"

An Examination of Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2

by Lonnie K. York

Introduction

- A. The subject of Peter's introduction to the first gospel sermon has been an arena of controversy throughout the Christian era. It is not disputed that the words of Joel refer to the day of Pentecost, rather to the duration and extent of this prophecy. What did Peter have in mind when he used this prophecy to introduce his sermon? To what extent did Peter intend his auditors to understand the use of this prophecy? We shall attempt to answer these questions.
- B. The questions that we need to examine in this study are:
1. What are the limitations of this prophecy? Was this prophecy fulfilled entirely on the day of Pentecost; did it extend only till the end of the Apostolic Age; or are the promises extended throughout the entire Christian Era?
 2. What is meant by the expression "Pour out of my Spirit" in this text? Does it refer to the receiving of the personal Spirit, or to the coming of the promised Spirit?
 3. To what event or events does the last part of this prophecy refer?
- C. To answer these questions, we need to examine Joel's prophecy and Peter's use of it on Pentecost day. By examining both texts in their context, we shall be able to determine the correct answers to our questions. To accomplish this task, the following procedure will be used:
1. What is the contextual setting of this prophecy and its understanding by God's people?
 2. What were the events leading up to Peter's use of this prophecy?
 3. Peter's response to the events, which caused him to use this prophecy to indicate that this was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.
 4. An examination of the prophecy of Joel and Peter's quotation. What are the differences, and do they make a difference.
 5. What is the meaning of the prophecy—its fulfillment.
 6. An examination of Peter's sermon in relation to Joel's prophecy.

Joel 2:28-32

I. Joel the Prophet

- A. Who was Joel? All we really know about this prophet is what he says of himself: "The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel" (v. 1). To assume anything other than this of the prophet, is to go beyond what is revealed.
- B. Briefly, we need to understand the time of Joel's prophecy. Most scholars agree that Joel was one of the earliest of the prophets, prophesying during the time of Joash, king of Judah (835-796 B.C.). This was a period of Judah's history when they still worshipped the God of Israel. Joash was only seven when he began to reign (2 Kgs. 11:21), and the priest guided this young king in the ways of God.
- C. What was the general nature of Joel's prophecy?
 - 1. The main theme of this book is repentance: "The book is an appeal from Jehovah to the people to seek him through repentance. Out of this repentance there would come material blessings followed by an outpouring of spiritual blessings."¹
 - 2. The occasion for Joel writing his prophecy:

The prophecy was occasioned by a calamity that befell the land from locust and drought and from fires that followed in their wake. Some think the locust were an invading army, and that the prophet used the terror of swarms of locust, followed by drought and fire, as a figurative description of the devastation left by the invaders. The stronger possibility is that these were literal locust from which the prophet draws his lesson and his strong call to repentance. Unless there is repentance and righteousness of life on the part of the nation, the locust will be followed by a stronger and more severe judgment, an invasion by the nations.²

II. Events Which Preceded Peter's Quoting the Prophecy of Joel

- A. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (vv. 1-4).

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there

appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1. This event occurred fifty days after Passover, and it was upon the first day of the week, or the day of Pentecost.
2. Only the twelve Apostles received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This can be seen by comparing the pronouns in the last five verses of the previous chapter. Also, Jesus promised to give them the Spirit.

Acts 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (In verse 2: "given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:").

Luke 24:49 "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

3. The word "filled" comes from the Greek *pimplemi* from *pletho*, which means, "what wholly takes possession of the mind is said to fill it: . . . Acts ii.4" (Thayer, p. 509). In effect, the Holy Spirit so wholly filled their minds with His influence and power that the Apostles began to speak in foreign tongues. They spake "as the Spirit gave them utterance," or only what the Spirit directed.
- B. The coming of the Holy Spirit caused amazement and wonder among those who witnessed this marvelous event (vv. 5-11).

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? . . . we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

1. They were confounded (*sugchuno* in the Greek, and Thayer defines this word on page 593: "to confound or bewilder") because of the miracle of hearing the pure gospel in their native tongue, yet, there were over seventeen distinct languages present that day.

- a. The miracle here was upon the ear. Every man heard the apostles speaking in their own language, wherein they were born.
- b. It would be like one man was from Spain, another from France, and a third from England, yet each was hearing the gospel proclaimed at the same time in their own respective language.
2. Those who possessed this ability to so speak were unlearned men, "are not all these which speak Galileans?", thus the crowd knew that they were incapable of accomplishing this on their own, which lead to more confusion.
- C. There were those who possessed a negative reaction to the coming of the Holy Spirit (vv. 12-13). "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."
1. They were all amazed (Gr., *existamai*):
 - a. Thayer, p. 224, under *existemi*, "2. in perf., pluperf., 2 aros. act. and also the mid., a. to be amazed, astounded,"
 - b. The idea is that the whole assembled crowd was spellbound—the wonder of it all, like one who sees a magical act (cf. Simon the sorcerer, Acts 8). They really did not know how to react, they did not understand or comprehend what was occurring before their eyes and on their ears.
2. They were all in doubt as to what this marvelous event meant (Gr. *diaporeo*).
 - a. Thayer, p. 141, "prop. thoroughly . . . to be entirely at a loss, to be in perplexity: absol. Acts 2:12"
 - b. Being in awe of what was going on and being unable to provide any explanation for the events, they were amazed—at a loss for any explanation, or reason for what was occurring before them. This was characteristic of all those present.
3. Some took it upon themselves to mock what they witnessed (Gr., *chleuazo*)
 - a. Thayer, p. 669—(*chleue*, jesting, mocking); "to deride, mock, jeer."

- b. Most of those who were amazed sought an answer to what was happening, but, as with all good events, there were also the mockers. What they say is usually not based upon fact as much as it is upon ridicule and association. Mockers attempt to turn others away from the reality of events by association with the absurd and impossible. Those who mocked the Lord said, "He saved others, now let him come down from the cross." They did not really expect Christ to do what they had mocked. They were mocking and jeering, without any belief.
- c. Their mocking was: "These men are full of new wine (*gleukos*)."
Those who did the mocking did not believe that these men were drunk, but their mocking was presented in an attempt to answer the event, and at the same time excuse them from any responsibility to heed what was happening or what was being said.

III. Peter's Response to the Mockers (vv. 14-16)

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

A. Peter stands up and speaks:

- 1. He stands up with the eleven—Apostles—His role in preaching was to use the keys that Christ had promised him. (cf. Mt.16:18-9)
- 2. They were amazed and wondered, so Peter, under guidance of the Holy Spirit, stands up to let them know; therefore he earmarks for them what they should know—they should hearken to his words.

B. Peter dismisses the mockers in verse 15 by not directly arguing with them, but rather shows the total absurdity of their mocking. It was too early for anyone to be drunk, and especially with new wine (the fresh pressed juice of the grape, which is non-intoxicating), also that it was not the season for new wine.

C. "But this is that which was spoken" (v. 16).

- 1. "But," the contraction *alla* means "in contrast to what was just mentioned." Here Peter gives the explanation for the events occurring before those who witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

2. "This is," or *touto estin*, implies a direct correlation to the events. The use of this expression is not a metaphor, but a direct statement that what caused the wonder and amazement actually "is" what Joel had prophesied.
3. "That which was spoken," (Gr. to *eiremenon*) from (*eipon*), Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, p. 225, "4. regularly used with quotations from the Old Testament . . . Acts 2:16 . . . what is written".
4. Taking this whole phrase together, what Peter is affirming is that the event that caused all the amazement and wonder was exactly what Joel had prophesied. To this point agree all scholars. Even the Jews expected this prophecy to refer to the outpouring of God's Spirit in a manner unlike any that had ever occurred before.

IV. The Prophecy Of Joel—Just What Did He Prophecy?

- A. First, we will make a comparison between the prophecy of Joel and how Peter quotes Joel. Whenever we read Joel 2:28-32 we should understand that in the Hebrew Bible these verses actually make up chapter three. They stand alone in the prophecy. Peter uses this text from Joel much like preachers do today. He quotes the text, then he preaches from that text. Each of the following three divisions of this text forms a major part of this prophecy. The thoughts will be more fully developed as we proceed with the lesson.
- B. The comparison between Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18: This is the first division, or The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit (Joel).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: (Acts).

1. Peter uses the phrase "in the last days" for the word "afterward." This was in harmony with the Jewish interpretation of this prophecy.

That this citation was owing to the fact, that the reference of the prophecy to the Messianic time was the prevailing one among the Jews, is probable; it is also favoured by the rendering of "after this," by "in the last days," which, in the New Testament, always designates the Messianic time.³

2. "And your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions," here Peter only turns this around.
 3. After the part about servants and handmaidens Peter adds the expression "and they shall prophesy." This was added to show that the servants and the handmaidens would also prophesy.
- C. Comparison of Joel 2:30-31 and Acts 2:19-20: The Judgment of the Terrible Day of the Lord.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come (Joel).

And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come (Acts).

1. The additions of "above," "signs," and "beneath" were to give emphasis to what Joel was prophesying. Hengstenberg says that Peter used these words "in order to make the contrast more obvious and striking."⁴
2. The difference between the "terrible day of the Lord come" and that "notable day of the Lord come" is only in the use of "notable" instead of "terrible." For the unrighteous it would be "terrible," or a day to be feared. It was to be a day of God's judgment upon the unrighteous. The word "notable," which means "very manifest" implies that when that day comes, none will be able to deny that it is God who judges the unrighteous. Both expressions refer to the same event, or day.

Joel 2:28-32

D. Comparison of Joel 2:32 and Acts 2:21: The Salvation offered to Man, or the result of this event.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD had said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call (Joel).

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts).

1. There is actually no real difference between "delivered" (which means "to escape") and "saved." Peter did not finish the quotation, although he could have. Indeed it was in that very Jerusalem that this prophecy began its fulfilment and that God began to extend His call for salvation to those who would hear.

E. The whole nature of these deviations from the original text by Peter is put into proper perspective by Hengstenberg: "All his deviations from the original text, as well as from the Septuagint, are therefore of the same kind, designed further to unfold what lies in the passage itself. Not one originated in the Apostle's citing from memory."⁵

V. An Exegesis of Peter's Quotation of Joel

A. "It shall come to pass in the last days."

1. This expression always has the meaning of the ending of the Mosaic Age, or the beginning of the Messianic Age. Note the Old Testament passages:

Genesis 49:1 "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." (Referring to Judah, vv. 8-12 it talks about "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come;" or Christ.)

Isaiah 2:2 (cf. Micah 4:1) "And it shall come to pass in the last days, . . ." referring to the end of the Law or Mosaic Age.

Daniel 2:28b "and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days." A reference to the Messianic Age.

The expression "latter days" can be found in Job 19:25; Dan. 2:28; 10:14; and Hos. 3:5. These have the same meaning as "last days."

2. "'In the last days'—an expression which, as is acknowledged, refers to the days of the Messiah or the last days of the old dispensation."⁶
3. The New Testament also uses this expression to refer to the ending of the Mosaic or Old Testament dispensation.

Hebrews 1:1-2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son."

1 Peter 1:20 "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."

4. The "last days" began with the preaching of John the Baptist. "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Mt. 11:13).
5. The "last days" would end with the ending of this prophecy of Joel, or when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. Therefore, Joel's prophecy came to pass in the last days.
6. Coffman provides four additional ideas in the expression of "the last days":

The day of Pentecost, therefore, ushered in the 'last days'; but the meaning is compound. (1) Those were the last days in the sense of this being the final dispensation of God's grace to men, the same thought appearing in Mark 12:6. (2) Those were the last days in the sense that Israel's day of grace was running short. Their long and repeated rebellions against God were soon to culminate and become final in their rejection of Christ. (3) Those were last days in the sense that Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish state would be utterly destroyed before that generation died (in 70 A.D.). (4) Those were the last days in the sense that the prophecies of Jeremiah (31:31-35) and others of a new covenant were fulfilled in the preaching of the gospel.⁷

6. When Peter used the phrase "in the last days," he intended his hearers to understand that the prophecy was Messianic, and that it was beginning to be fulfilled at that moment. It was the last days!

B. "I will pour out of my Spirit."

1. To understand this portion of the prophecy, we must understand the term "pour out" (Heb., *shaphak* and Gr., *ekcheo*).

- a. Given explains the Hebrew word for "pour out," *shaphak*:

I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: The word *shaphak*, employed by the prophet to express the out-pouring of the Spirit, implies the bestowal of the gift in great abundance, as Calvin clearly pointed out: "For *shaphak*," he says, "does not mean merely to give in drops, but to pour out in great abundance. But God did not pour out the Holy Spirit so abundantly or copiously under the Law, as he has since the manifestation of Christ." The Spirit was indeed communicated in the Old Testament times, but that communication was restricted in two ways—in quantity, and in the number of recipients; the former was comparatively scanty and the latter few, whereas the word here applied to its communication implies a rich supply, like a copious rainfall.⁸

- b. Thayer defines the Greek word *ekcheo* on page 201: "b. metaph. i. q. to bestow or distribute largely . . . the abundant bestowal of the Holy Spirit, Acts ii.33 fr. Joel ii. 28-29 (iii.1, 2); . . . Acts ii.17 sq; x.45; Tit. iii.6."

- c. It should be noted that the expression is "pour out of my Spirit." In the original Greek, this is the preposition *apo* which is translated by "from." Thus, it is not the Spirit Himself that is poured out, but it is what comes from the Spirit, or that which was to be poured out—The Holy Spirit's Gifts.

Crawford explains this concept:

Again, we have learned that the Holy Spirit is a Person. How, then, would it have been possible for God to pour out one person upon another person or upon a multitude of persons? The meaning is, of course, that God would pour out the graces, gifts and influences of the Spirit, upon people of all races and nationalities, without regard longer to distinction between Gentile and Jew. The Spirit, a Person, is one thing; His gifts, graces and influences are another. The prophet is writing here of

the gifts and influences of the Spirit which would attend the Spirit's advent and follow His assumption of His official duties as the Viceregent of the Godhead upon earth.⁹

McGarvey also expresses a similar conclusion in a footnote. He distinguishes between "pour out" and the baptism of the Spirit. He is saying of this verse that it merely refers to the sending of the Spirit to all flesh.

The use that has been made of the expression "pour forth" in connection with the controversy on baptism (Alexander on Acts, *in loco*) is a specimen of partisan zeal which is worthy of notice only because it is made to figure in discussions on the subject by men of little discrimination. It is used figuratively for the sending of the Holy Spirit, for it can not be used literally of a person. The mission of the Spirit thus designated, and the baptism in the Spirit, are two distinct conceptions, and the term in which the former is expressed can have no possible bearing on the meaning of the term by which the latter is expressed. Moreover, the term baptism is also used figuratively in this connection. It expresses the power which the Spirit exerted over the minds of the apostles after he entered into them; while the term pour forth (*ekcheo*) expresses the act of Christ in sending the Spirit from heaven.¹⁰

2. There are actually two aspects of this "out pouring" of the Spirit.
 - a. The first meaning was the event of that day. A great demonstration of the power of God. In effect, the opening of the door of salvation for the Jews. Later, this same event would occur with the Gentiles.
 - b. The second meaning would be the bestowal of spiritual gifts to various individuals. This can be seen in the next section of the prophecy.
 - c. The normal gift of the Holy Spirit does not appear until the last section of this prophecy.

3. As we have already noticed, this outpouring of, or from the Spirit had occurred in Old Testament times, but in a limited manner. Now, however, this influence of the Spirit upon mankind would be greater than any previously experienced by God's people. It is the abundance of the Spirit and the number of recipients that is important to notice. Also, the time frame for this would be the same as the "last days," or the ending of the Jewish state (70 A.D.). This point leads naturally to the next portion of this prophecy.

C. "Upon All Flesh"

1. We are not to take "all flesh" in its literal sense, that is all kinds of flesh. We know that the pouring out of the Spirit is restricted to the flesh of man, not that of the animals, birds, etc. God would pour out from His Spirit upon all mankind.
2. Crawford adds to this understanding of "all flesh" that only a select group would actually receive this blessing, although it would in truth be a great out-pouring, greater than in all the Old Testament.

all flesh . . . Does the expression, then, include all humanity, all human flesh? Evidently not, for it would then take in the wicked and irreligious as well as the most pious of Christians. Surely no one would contend that the Spirit is poured out on people who live in sin and debauchery. It is obvious, therefore, that the term as used by Joel must be pruned down to fit the facts in the case . . . It becomes obvious, therefore, that the term "all flesh" in Joel's prophecy means all peoples, all nations, that is, without regard longer to the age-old distinction between Jew and Gentile. Hence, after the outpouring of the Spirit in baptismal measure upon the Jews in the person of the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, and several years afterward upon the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius and his house at Caesarea, Paul could truthfully write: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized [i.e., incorporated] into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).¹¹

3. Those who were present that day, the Jews, viewed this only as applying to the Jews. It was beyond their concept to consider that the Gentiles could ever receive this grand gift of the Spirit.

Lightfoot, regarding the Jewish view of "all flesh," says,

The Jews cautiously enough here, though not so honestly, apply this prophecy to Israel solely; as having this for a maxim amongst them, "That the Holy Ghost is never imparted to any Gentile." Hence those of the circumcision that believed were so astonished when they saw that "on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost," chap. x.45. But, with the Jew's good leave, whether they will or no, the Gentiles are beyond all question included within such-like promises as these: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God;" (Isa. xl.5 [Lk. iii.6]) and, "All flesh shall come and worship before the Lord," (Isa. lxvi.23).¹²

4. We can find that both Jew and Gentile received this outpouring of, or from the Spirit. First the Jews on the Day of Pentecost, then the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10).

a. Acts 10:44-48

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

- b. Later, Peter was to recall this event to the council in Jerusalem (Acts 11:15-17):

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

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5. This, then, would fulfil this part of the prophecy. The Spirit was poured out upon all flesh—Jews and Gentiles. It must also be noted here that this outpouring of the Spirit did not impart Spiritual gifts. The Apostles already were in possession of spiritual gifts prior to Pentecost (John 20:22; and the ability to cast out demons and heal the sick). But there was a more general sense to the pouring out of the Spirit. This can be seen in the next portion of the prophecy.

D. "And your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

1. These words expand the meaning of "all flesh." We have several categories of flesh that would receive the outpouring from the Spirit.

a. "Young men and old men." This shows no distinction between age, they would be young and old alike. The use of visions and dreams refers to the two principal means of divine revelation.

Numbers 12:6 "And he said, Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream."

b. "Servants or Slaves." Under the Old Testament we cannot find a case where a slave received the gift of prophecy. Keil makes this comment regarding slaves: "Not a single case occurs in the whole of the Old Testament of a slave receiving the gift of prophecy . . .¹³ The Gospel has therefore also broken the fetters of slavery."

We do not have a direct statement regarding a particular slave in the New Testament that received this gift, however, the implications are that there were those who possessed the gifts of the Spirit. Perhaps even Onesimus, who was a runaway slave, possessed one or more of the spiritual gifts.

c. "Handmaidens." This refers to female slaves, thus the sexual barrier is also removed. This is shown to be fulfilled by the four daughters of Philip who prophesied (Acts 21:9) and the comments of Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:5.

2. Hengstenberg makes this comment:

To render prominent this perfect equality of birth, is also the design of the addition, "and they shall prophecy," after "I will pour out of my Spirit." That Peter held it necessary to make this addition, which, as we have already shown, is entirely suitable to the design of the prophet, seems to show, that, even at that time, interpretations were current which tended to deprive servants and handmaidens of their part in those blessings.¹⁴

3. One of the consequences of the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh would be the receipt of the various gifts that the Spirit had to offer. This did not have to occur on that day, but during the duration of this prophecy.
4. This particular part of the prophecy refers to the various gifts of the Spirit which came by the impartation of the Apostles' hands. Peter qualifies this by the expression "and they shall prophecy." To "prophecy" does not always mean to "foretell the future," rather, its common meaning is to teach under the influence of the Spirit. The only ones which qualified were those who had the hands of the Apostles laid upon them.

E. "Wonders and Signs in Heaven and Earth"

1. Peter now continues to quote the prophet Joel beyond the present experience. To what point in time does this portion of the prophecy refer? There are two interesting points to consider.
2. There exists some evidence that these wonders and signs could have a reference to the events just 50 days prior to Pentecost. The events that occurred at the death of Christ and His resurrection.
 - a. Coffman describes these events in relation to this portion of the prophecy.

Several of the most spectacular wonders ever seen on earth had occurred right there in Jerusalem the day Jesus was crucified only fifty-three days before Peter thus spoke. The very sun's light failed; and, as it was the full moon, the satellite appeared as blood. Pontius Pilate wrote to the Emperor Tiberius that, "The moon, being like blood, did not shine the whole night, and yet she happened to be at the full." Thus the sun and the moon were "wonders in heaven;" and the earthquake, the

rending of the vail of the temple, and the resurrection of the many dead, were signs on the earth beneath.¹⁵

b. F. F. Bruce also makes this association:

The wonders and signs to be revealed in the world of nature, as described in vv. 19-20, may have more relevance in the present context than is sometimes realized: it was little more than seven weeks since the people in Jerusalem had indeed seen the sun turned into darkness, during the early afternoon of the day of our Lord's crucifixion. And on the same afternoon the paschal full moon may well have appeared blood-red in the sky in consequence of that preternatural gloom. These were to be understood as tokens of the advent of the day of the Lord, "that great and notable day," a day of judgment, to be sure, but more immediately the day of God's salvation to all who invoked His name.¹⁶

3. Most agree that these signs have reference to the events that accompanied the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Homer Hailey makes the following comment:

Blood suggests bloodshed; fire upon the earth suggests the burning of cities, during which the pillars of smoke billow heavenward . . . The rejection of the truth of the Spirit by the Jews, and their persecutions of Christians, became the forerunner of God's great judgment upon Jerusalem by the Romans, A.D. 70. The destruction of Jerusalem, which fulfilled the prophecy, in turn becomes a prophetic type of the ultimate end of the world and of the judgment of God on the world of the ungodly—that is, on those who reject the Spirit of God in refusing to hear His Word.¹⁷

4. The "great and notable day of the Lord" has reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, this also being a type of the end of the world. This day is mentioned in prophecy in Malachi 4:5, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the the LORD."¹⁸

F. "Those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1. The conclusion of this prophecy is that those who will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Hailey makes the following comment:

In the midst of His judgments, God always provided a means of escape: "Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered." "Whosoever" indicates anyone. As the Spirit's work was for all, so the escape through his provision is for all. To call on the name of the Lord is to respond by obeying His command or revealed will. On Pentecost, in response to the question of the Jews, "What shall we do?" God's answer by His Spirit, through Peter, was "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38). This was in accord with Peter's quotation of Joel (Acts 2:21). Paul was to call on the name of the Lord by arising and being baptized, washing away his sins (Acts 22:16). The "mount Zion" and "Jerusalem" are used to indicate the spiritual dwelling place of God among His people. It was to this spiritual Zion and heavenly Jerusalem that the Hebrew saints had come; it was here that they had come to God, the judge of all (Heb. 12:22-23). It was from among the remnant that escaped the divine judgments that God called His spiritual remnant "according to the election of grace" (cf. Rom. 11:5)¹⁹

2. In the original words of Joel, we have "for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hadt said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call." What more would one desire to show that this prophecy referred to the events of that day. Here in the city of Jerusalem, the spiritual mount Zion of God's people, the first gospel sermon was being preached.
3. To call on the name of the Lord implies obedience. Paul was asked why he had not been baptized in Acts 22:16. Notice the text: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Notice, that the calling on the name of the Lord was after Paul had been baptized, not before.

Joel 2:28-32

4. This portion of the prophecy is not limited by time. It is extended to all till Christ comes again.

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

G. The point of time for this prophecy.

1. From the evidence that we have thus far examined, it can be said that the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel began on the day of Pentecost. To this fact, none disagree.
2. The prophesying element of the prophecy, or the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, continued until the ending of the Apostolic Age.
3. The pouring out of the Spirit occurred only on two occasions: The Day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius.
4. The effects of the Spirit, or the promise of salvation, continues till the end of this age, or the second coming of Christ.
5. The wonders and signs in heaven and earth have primary reference to the judgment of God on Israel in 70 A.D., with a typical reference to the judgment at the end of this age.

VI. How Peter Used Joel's Prophecy In His Sermon

- A. The main body of his sermon was to show that Jesus was the Christ. He begins, after quoting Joel, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth." (v. 22). He uses the following facts to prove his point:
 1. Jesus was approved of God by the miracles and signs which He did in their presence (v. 22).
 2. They had determined and God had foreknowledge of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, but God raised Him from this death (vv. 23-24).
 3. To support this statement, Peter quotes David regarding the Christ (vv. 25-28).
 4. Now he says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David." From this statement, Peter shows that David was dead, buried and his grave could still be visited wherein his bones lay. But, none could find the body of Jesus (vv. 29-31).

B. Peter returns to the prophecy (vv. 32-33). "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

1. It was God fulfilling this prophecy. It was because Christ had died, been buried, and rose victorious over death and the grave that God was now fulfilling Joel's prophecy. He was now at God's right hand according to Psalms 110:1 (which Peter quotes in these verses).

2. Bruce explains these words:

He who had earlier received the Spirit for the public discharge of His own messianic ministry had now received the same Spirit to impart to His representatives on earth, in order that they might continue the ministry which He began. His present impartation of the Spirit to them, attended as it was by sensible signs, was a further open vindication of the claim that He was the exalted Messiah. And the claim was clinched by another Scripture proof, this time Ps. 110:1.²⁰

C. Peter's forceful use of this fact, that Christ was exalted and sitting on God's right hand was the moving force that stirred in the hearts of those who heard this message to ask: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (vv. 34-37).

D. Peter's answer also refers to Joel's prophecy.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation (vv.38-40).

1. First, Peter offers to those who asked the question the opportunity to share in the result of this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit—salvation. To receive this blessing, they had to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins—then they would receive the gift that the Holy Spirit had to give in this outpouring: the gift of salvation that had been promised by Joel.

2. To expand upon this, Peter now shows that the promise of salvation recorded in Joel was to each of them; to their children; and to those that were afar off (the Gentiles in prospect). Peter, perhaps, did not understand this concept until he had his vision in Acts 10, and his finally preaching to Cornelius.
 3. The direct pointing to the prophesy of Joel is found by "even as many as the Lord our God shall call."
 4. Peter was not finished with his sermon, because he spoke many other words, which were spoken in an effort to convert those before him. He urged them to save themselves.
- E. The result that day was the baptism of three thousand souls into Christ (v. 42).

Conclusion

The study of the prophesy of Joel reveals the workings of God's scheme of redemption for mankind. We have seen that this prophecy began on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, and in one sense still continues today. This being the fact that all who obey the gospel receive the promise blessing of the Holy Spirit. In all practical matters, its basic fulfillment came to an end at the destruction of Jerusalem. Today, we can still receive the final portion of Joel's message of hope, that being our own salvation by obedience to the Gospel which was preached that day so long ago.

End Notes

- ¹ Hailey, Homer, *A Commentary On The Minor Prophets*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mi., 1972, p. 41
- ² Ibid, p. 40
- ³ Hengstenberg, E. W., *Christology of The Old Testament and a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*, Kregel Pub., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1976, p. 532.
- ⁴ Ibid, p. 534
- ⁵ Ibid, p. 534
- ⁶ Given, J. J., *The Pulpit Commentary*, Joel, Edited by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Excell, Vol. 13, Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids Mi., 1975 reprint, p. 27.

- ⁷ Coffman, Burton James, *Commentary on Acts*, Firm Foundation Publishing House, Austin, Tx., 1976, pp. 44-45
- ⁸ Given, J. J., *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- ⁹ Crawford, C. C., *The Eternal Spirit: His Word And Works*, Vol. II, College Press, Joplin, Mo., 1973, p. 477.
- ¹⁰ McGarvey, J. W., *New Commentary on Acts of Apostles*, The Standard Publishing Foundation, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1892 (reprint), p. 26.
- ¹¹ Crawford, C. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 476-477.
- ¹² Lightfoot, John, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica, Matthew—1 Corinthians*, Vol. 4, Acts—1 Corinthians, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, reprinted from 1859, 1979, p. 30.
- ¹³ Keil, C. F., *op. cit.*, p. 212.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 534.
- ¹⁵ Coffman, Burton James, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.
- ¹⁶ Bruce, F. F., *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Wm. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids Mi., 1980, p. 69).
- ¹⁷ Hailey, Homer, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
- ¹⁸ This prophecy has reference to the coming of John the Baptist, therefore the timing of this event must be close to the time of John's day, not some far off time in the future.)
- ¹⁹ Hailey, Homer; *op. cit.*, p. 42.
- ²⁰ Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

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