

1991
Preachers'
Study Notes

1991 Preachers' Study

Introduction

As carpenters are helpless without good tools, so also serious Bible students are handicapped without proper helps. This volume of the **1991 Preachers' Study Notes** is offered with the hope of helping the reader better understand God's Word.

The Preachers' Study is conducted every year for the purpose of allowing preachers and interested Christians an opportunity to gather for four days of undisturbed study of God's holy message. The speakers normally present topics designed to challenge Christians to greater service for the Master. Topics for this year's Study included those to help the preacher, mission work, and Christianity in general.

The Study was hosted by the 21st Street congregation in Oklahoma City, on the dates of December 23-26, 1991. Bill Davis and Doug Edwards were asked to arrange the Study and serve as moderators.

Many participated to help the Study be a success. The 21st Street congregation provided encouragement, support, and hospitality for all visiting. Different preachers contributed with topic suggestions and helpful insight during the discussion sessions. We hope this volume will assist the truth-seeker in better understanding God's will.

Bill Davis, Doug Edwards

Coordinators and Moderators for the 1991 Study

The views expressed in the Preachers' Study Notes are those of a particular writer, and are not necessarily the views of the editors, moderators, other writers, or host congregation. Each article has the address of the writer appended if you desire to respond.

From the Editors

We are pleased to be able to present this volume of **Preachers' Study Notes**. Many hours of labor go into writing, compiling, typing, proofing, editing and typesetting this book. Of course, we do not do all of this work ourselves.

Special thanks go to the sixteen gentlemen who labored to put this material together, present it at the annual Preachers' Study, and submit it to us in manuscript form for publication. Each article that you read represents many hours of research and writing on their part.

We also wish to acknowledge the following individuals, without whose help we would have had great difficulty publishing this work on time. **Tracy Hernandez** of Oklahoma City expended time and energy typing manuscripts into the computer. And **Martha Morris** of Ft. Worth donated many hours proofing most of the articles. Thanks!

The article from Taylor Joyce was actually presented at the 1990 Preachers' Study, but because of uncontrollable circumstances, we were unable to include it in that volume. We offer our thanks to him for including it for our readers in this volume. Only two participants in the 1991 Preachers' Study were not able to submit articles: Ron Courter ("The Will of God") and Jimmy Cutter ("Methods of Exegesis"). Both presentations were excellent. These men will be invited to include their writing in next year's volume.

This is the fourth volume of the **Preachers' Study Notes** that we have published. We are very happy to be able to provide quality reading material in this format, and hope that it will prove valuable in your own study and research. May God bless you in your study of His Word!

Smith Bibens, Jim Crouch

Editors of the **Christian's Expositor**

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The Servant of the Lord and Strife

(2 Tim. 2:23-26)

by Brian Burns

Paul is not addressing any new problems here in this passage. Instead, he brings up one of the first instructions he ever gave to Timothy in his initial letter. Notice his words in 1 Timothy 1:3-6:

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling.

Ephesus already had the reputation for false doctrines, fables, and empty meaningless talk. Barnes said, "The Greeks and the Hebrews were greatly given to controversies of various kinds; and many of the questions discussed pertained to points which could not be settled, or which, if settled, were of no importance." There were, and still are, much more important matters to deal with than these that lead to more problems. Paul was so determined to get this point across that he also wrote it in 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:16, 23; and Titus 3:9.

Destructive questions were prominent then, as well as now, and needed to be properly handled, as they do now. As with any type of evil, the course to take is plain according to Paul. In this chapter he says one should "shun, purge, flee, and refuse." But, this is not all there is to combating evil. The Holy Spirit inspired positive instruction to follow the prohibitions. Let's look at what Timothy was to avoid and what he should employ.

Definitions

1. "foolish" (Greek, *moros*, Strong's #3473): "impious, godless" (Thayer, p. 420).

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2. "unlearned" (**apaidutos**) (#521): "(only here in the N.T.) 'without instruction and discipline, uneducated, ignorant, rude' (Thayer, p. 525) (All sources seem to agree).

3. "questions" (**zeeteesis**) (#2214): "(controversial) question, issue" (Arndt & Gingrich). "a subject of questioning or debate, matter of controversy" (Thayer, p. 272).

4. "avoid" (**paraiteomai**): "to refuse, decline, avoid" (Vine's, p. ?)

5. "knowing" (**ido**): "The tenses coming from **ido** and retained by usage form two families, of which one signifies 'to see,' the other 'to know.' "

6. "gender" (**gennao**): "lit. become the father of 3. fig. bring forth, produce, cause" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 155) [as in our text—BB].

7. "strifes" (**makee**): "in our lit. only in the plural and only of battles fought without actual weapons—fightings, quarrels, strifes, disputes" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 496).

8. "servant" (**doulos**): "an adj., 'signifying in bondage,' is used as a noun, and the most common and general for 'servant', frequently indicating subjection without the idea of bondage" (Vine's).

9. "must" (**dei**): "moral obligation" (Vincent).

10. "strive" (**makomai**) (#3164): "to quarrel, rangle, dispute" (Thayer, p. 394).

11. "gentle" (**eepios**): "affable, mild, gentle" (Wuest).

12. "apt to teach" (**didaktikos**): "skilled in teaching" (Vine's).

13. "patient" (**anexikakos**): "putting up with evil. Here only in the N.T." (Robertson).

14. "meekness" (**praotees**): "gentleness, humility, courtesy, consideration" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 699).

15. "instructing" (**paiduo**): "to train children, to teach" (Vine's).

16. "oppose themselves" (**antidiatithemenos**): "signifies to place oneself in opposition, oppose (**anti**, against, **dia**, through [intensive], **tithemi**, to place) (Vine's).

17. "peradventure will give" (*mepote*): "is used with various meanings according to the context" (Vine's).

18. "repentance" (*metanoya* or *-noia*) (#3341): "a change of mind" (Thayer, p. 405).

19. "acknowledging" (*epignosis*): "more correctly, 'the' knowledge" (Vincent).

20. "recover" (*ananeepho*) (#366): "to return to soberness" (Thayer, p. 40).

21. "snare" (*pagis*) (#3803): "whatever brings peril, loss, destruction" (Thayer, p. 472).

22. "who are taken captive" (*zogreo*): "signifies to take men alive" (Vine's).

23. "by him" (*autou*) and "his (*ekeinou*) will" (see discussion).

Discussion

Paul's statement here seems to make it plain that such questions will definitely arise. Some believe that Timothy may have been trying to satisfy every inquisitor that came his way and that he needed to learn how to avoid these circumstances. Matthew Henry said,

It is very remarkable how often, and with what seriousness, the apostle cautions Timothy against disputes in religion, which surely was not without such design as this, to show us that religion consists more in believing and practicing what God requires than in subtle disputes.

So, there are times that we refuse certain types of questions. Earnest R. Campbell, Greek student and instructor, said,

The word 'questions' basically speaks of seeking, inquiries, and looking for something. It is used pertaining to questions and disputes about cleansing (Jn. 3:25), about circumcision (Acts 15:2, 7), and with respect to that which is contrary to sound words (1 Tim. 6:3, 4). In actual usage it seems to speak of questions which border on becoming disputes.

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This is the same word used in 1 Timothy 1:4 that is the product of "fables and endless genealogies," and what is "unprofitable and vain" (Tit.3:9). When the end results are obvious, we are not bound by 1 Peter 3:15 to answer; instead, we reject it. Paul reminds Timothy that he already knows this. This word is often rendered "see". Whether it is translated "see" or "knowing," the experience always seems to be an absolute. Some examples:

Matthew 2:2 "we have 'seen' his star"

Mark 5:6 "when he 'saw' Jesus"

Luke 12:30 "Father 'knoweth' that ye have need"

Luke 19:41 "he 'beheld' the city"

The use of "knowing" indicates that Timothy knew, on the basis of past experience, that such questions do breed fights. Lenski said, "Having gotten to know that point of 'knowing' this; he is no longer uneducated even on this point." It is interesting to note that such questions gender or "become the father" of strifes, plural. Vine and Arndt & Gingrich point out that this word is always in the plural. In other words, many fights may be the offspring of just one godless and uneducated question that is argued instead of rejected.

These fights and quarrels are not consistent with the conduct of the Lord's servant. Paul puts the servant under moral obligation to comply with the following instructions. "Must" is used in the same way here as it is in 1 Timothy 3:2. There it requires an elder to have all of the stated qualities, and here it requires the servant to meet these. Thayer calls this servant "one who gives himself up wholly to another's will." This describes every true Christian, not just the preacher or teacher. The first obligation given to the servant is a negative. "Do not fight, quarrel or dispute" (Vine's, p. 83). Wuest shows the Greek to be *machomai*, the word from which we get the word "macho." This is not the same word that is used in the following verses.

2 Timothy 2:5—"strive lawfully", *atheo*, from *athos*, meaning "a contest, to engage in a contest."

Luke 13:24—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate", *agonizomai*, "to endeavor with strenuous zeal" (Thayer, p. 10).

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Romans 15:30—"strive together with me in your prayers", *sunagonizomai*, "to help one" (Thayer, p. 600).

Jude 9—"earnestly contend for the faith", *epagonizomai*, similar to above.

To the faithful men of 2:14, Timothy was to "charge them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit." "Strive" here is *logomakeo* meaning "to wrangle about empty and trifling matters."

In summary, inspiration does not allow the servant to be quarrelsome at all. This is not limited to the questions of verse 23. This command should be coupled with the instructions of James 1:19-20. Gentleness should take the place of fights. Vine tells us that the Greeks applied this word to a nurse with trying children, a teacher with refractory scholars, or of parents toward their children. This is the very way Paul used the word in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." This gentleness is not allowing others to walk all over us, but it is the outlook of a person seeking the good of others even if they are obstinate.

In order to fulfill this gentleness, the servant must be qualified to teach. This word is *didaktikos*, from which we get the English word "didactic," meaning "used or intended for teaching." Context would also demand the desire to teach as well as the ability. A nurse, teacher, or parent lacking the desire to assist others would perform poorly. Matthew Henry ties this in with the preceding items by saying, "Those are unapt to teach who are apt to strive, and are fierce and froward." The only other time this word is used it is required of the elder, but here to the servant of the Lord "which might not always be an evangelist" (E. M. Zerr). If you work with people very long the need for patience will be evident. This is the only time this word is used in the New Testament Vine shows this to be a compound word from *anecho*, "to hold up", and *kakos*, meaning "evil." E. R. Campbell believes this to be very close to *anekomai*, which involves holding up another that is weak, or in trouble, as in Ephesians 4:2 and Philippians 3:13, where it is rendered "forbearing." With this characteristic we are able to work out the evil without resentment toward the person. Not a compromise or acceptance of evil, but work-

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ing it out with the qualities listed above. All of these accomplishments are achieved through meekness. Vine elaborates by saying,

It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believers is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he can not help himself; but the Lord was 'meek' because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest.

This same attitude is needed when we try to restore an erring brother (Gal. 6:1), and Paul says meekness is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). "Meek" does not mean "weak", but is "strength under control." To the casual reader these words may seem to be soft and feeble but these methods are used in "instruction." Instruction is a stronger word than "teach" in verse 24, because it includes correction and discipline. Thayer uses the word "castigate," which means "to punish or rebuke sharply, esp. by harsh public criticism" (Webster's). The Lord "chastens" those that he loves (Heb. 12:6-7; Rev. 3:19). Paul wrote of Hymeneus and Alexander that he delivered to Satan "that they *learn* not to blaspheme." This instruction cannot be misunderstood as condoning the practice of those in opposition. They have set themselves against what is good and right. Although they are "opposing" what is good for them, this word mainly means that they oppose God, as the men did that blasphemed in 1 Timothy 1:20.

We now learn that repentance is the goal of all of this work. Is repentance a decision of the individual or of God? This part of the verse says, "if God peradventure will give them repentance." Peter tells us that the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). Now we know the answer, but what does this phrase mean? This phrase is a 2 *aorist active optative* which expresses a desire and denotes action, but does not indicate if it is completed.

The Calvinists find their doctrine of the elect in this verse, but it is not taught here. As Lenski said, "the thought is not that God ever withholds repentance, but that men so often refuse to accept it." The choice is up to the one in opposition that is being instructed by the Lord's servant in the way of truth. Paul told the Ephesians that he

wanted God to give them (same as "give" above) "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17). This too was a wish and not something that God would do to them without any action on their part. In Chapter 3:1-4, they found out that they needed to read his letters and then they would gain wisdom and knowledge from the revelation of God. Another example is found in Acts 5:31. The apostles are explaining to the Jews about Jesus and his mission here on Earth. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." We know that this giving of repentance and forgiveness was not unconditional, but was contingent upon their belief and obedience to the words Peter spoke to them that day in Acts 2:36-41. Repentance is brought about by an "acknowledging" of the truth which means a "correct knowledge" (Thayer). The acknowledging is not a proclamation of the truth, but gaining a full knowledge which enables one to understand where they are and what they need to do. With this insight to the truth the individual repents. To repent is "to change one's mind or purpose and it always involves a change for the better in the N.T." (Vine). Knowledge of truth and repentance leads one to "recover" themselves or "to return to soberness" (Thayer). There is a picture here of a Christian, intoxicated with error, and suddenly the truth shows him where he is, and he makes a change for the better. Arndt and Gingrich say it means to "come to one's senses again." Although it is a different phrase, this does remind us of the prodigal when he "came to himself" (Lk. 15:17). A person brought to his senses would never want to remain in the snare of the devil. It is a sad predicament to be captured by Satan, but even worse not to know it. The Laodiceans did not even know how pitiful they really were, but Jesus enlightened them so they would have the occasion to repent and open the door of their heart to Him (Rev. 3:14-19).

Snare capture alive but continue to tighten so that they always maim and eventually kill. Many animals are drawn to a snare because it appears to be an easy passage or doorway, but they learn too late that it is a deadly trap. Satan makes the allurements of evil attractive and easy, thus capturing many that think they can pass by unharmed. But this verse deals mainly with the escape not the capture. The individual spoken of here has been patiently taught, nursed, and instructed in the truth, so that they may repent and sober up, but then

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they are taken captive again. The word "captive" always means "taken alive or held captive." Luke 5:10 is the only other time it is used, and the Lord is telling the disciples that "henceforth thou shalt catch men."

The last phrase of this verse, "by him at his will," has given rise to much discussion. "If Paul had stopped at this point, much ink would have been saved, but he added the perfect participle and two pronouns *autou* ("him"), *ekeinou* ("his"), and this divides the commentators into three groups:

1. Caught by the devil to do the devil's will.

2. Caught alive by God to do His will.

3. Captured alive by the devil—then the last phrase—"for God's will" is then thought to modify the whole clause—"sobered up again . . . for God's will" (Lenski).

There are notable and accepted works that are divided on this last part of the verse. Most translations checked seem to agree with the first view. Bullinger takes number two and Robertson says of the third view, "This is probably the best, 'taken captive by the devil' 'that they may come back to soberness to do the will of God. There are difficulties in either view.'"

Since we usually want to settle on one, the second view seems to be the most logical. Jesus told his followers long ago that they were to capture men, using the Gospel of course. Here the servant of the Lord is trying to lead the trapped individual out of the devil's snare and into the safety of God's will. Having been created beings and not creators, we are destined to be under someone or something's control. Paul shows us the two choices in Romans 6:16 "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" So the choice is still the person's. We can have sin or righteousness, repent or reject the truth, sober up or stay in intoxication, be a captive of God to do His will or stay in the snare of the devil. This whole passage is a progression, so it seems best that it ends with God as the total victor. E. M. Zerr says that "the captive is freed and taken captive by the Lord and put to service that is in harmony with His will." Lenski explains,

The devil's snare does not catch alive, it always implies spiritual death; or, if you will, when his net closes, the devil hits his victim on the head. God catches alive so that his catch remains alive. One should not disregard this perfect participle: a recent past being caught alive and so remaining caught and alive. Is that not what the gospel does? So we see why 'autou'(him), which refers to God, occurs in the last phrase and is properly followed by 'ekeinou'(his) and not merely by another 'autou'. This last pronoun is very emphatic because it repeats the first: 'caught alive by him (who alone ever so catches and holds men) for that One's will (who alone so catches).' Yes, 'if perhaps,' such a result is achieved; out of the devils snare (negative) and caught alive to remain so by God and for his will, it would be a blessed result.

MacKnight also takes this position.

Summary

Being written for the Lord's servant makes this passage as applicable today as the day that Paul held his own pen. There are disputes that can and must be avoided so that precious time is used to spread the Gospel and not giving birth to strifes. There were times that Jesus refused to answer certain questions. We too need to learn how to evaluate the ones that come our way. The Lord's servant is morally bound not to strive. Ensnared Christians need to be approached with these attributes and abilities so that they may be able to make the correct choice and escape the devil's snare. They then return to being productive servants of God, performing His will with the rest of the servants. 402 Blanco St., Duncanville, TX 75137

The Christian and the State

The Christian's Relationship to the State

by Terry Baze

The issue of the Christian's relationship to government has been an important matter throughout the history of the church. For centuries, she has existed under all kinds of governments and rulers. The church in the United States has had fewer problems in its relationship to government than brethren in other countries. Our circumstances today are far different than those that the church experienced over 1,900 years ago, when Paul wrote to the saints in Rome. It is with some difficulty then, that we attempt to apply the principles found in Holy Writ to our present situation.

Our difficulty becomes greater when we realize that Christians through the years have responded to this dilemma of living as citizens of two different kingdoms in a variety of ways. From the outset of the "Restoration Movement" until today, great preachers have disagreed over and debated these matters.

Things become further complicated when we remember that the founding fathers of this great nation were convinced that they were carrying out God's will in establishing a nation under God's direction and influence. Throughout America's history, presidents and law makers alike have mentioned their determination to follow God's directives in leading this "Christian" nation.

The most important thing for us to do is not to become bogged down by the mass of information compiled by untold hundreds with their varying viewpoints, but rather to come to as clear an understanding as possible of what the Scriptures say on the matter.

David Lipscomb's View

There are two views that I would like to mention briefly, which I believe are two extreme positions regarding a Christian's relationship to the government. To the far right of the spectrum, we find the view presented by David Lipscomb in his book entitled *Civil Government*. Lipscomb was a student of the esteemed restoration preacher, Tolbert Fanning, who had influenced Lipscomb heavily in his views on civil government. Lipscomb expanded his thoughts on the matter, and in order to lead the brotherhood to his way of think-

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ing, he wrote the aforementioned book and began publication of the *Gospel Advocate* as a vehicle to enlighten them.

Lipscomb believed that all civil government was originated by men who were rebelling against God. He held that civil governments exist to oppose and displace the government of God on earth. He believed civil government to be the work of the devil, with the results being confusion, strife and bloodshed. The Christian's response to government then, according to Lipscomb, should be total noninvolvement in any way. Be a good citizen and stay as far removed from it as possible.

Most of the preachers in the southern states leaned toward the right, with a more moderate view than Lipscomb, while many of the preachers from the north leaned more toward the left. The Civil War tended to cause most brethren to go one way or the other. Earl West wrote, "After the Civil War a deep sense of the futility of earthly things and of the instability of human governments filled the South, making a fertile field in which to plant the seeds of Lipscomb's theory."

There have been many outstanding preachers, however, who have strongly disagreed with Lipscomb. T. B. Wilkinson wrote, "Civil government is one of the elemental needs of man, and next to the church it is man's best friend in the world. And it is Satan's worst enemy, second only to the church." Foy E. Wallace Jr. severely criticized Lipscomb's theory as well as pacifism. He and his editors in the *Bible Banner* assailed the book as being subversive, speculative, heretical, unprovable, impractical and damaging to the church in general. It was suspected of being akin to Russellism and tainted with premillennialism.

I believe Lipscomb to be close to the truth, having gone too far to the right. His work is certainly worthy of study, but I believe there to be too many problems in his reasoning, to wholly accept his teaching as truth. He misunderstood the origin of civil government taught in Romans chapter thirteen. His explanation of Nimrod and Babel being the origin of civil government is highly speculative. He failed to recognize the government of Melchizidek that was clearly approved by God. Although there have undoubtedly been times when civil governments have tried to fight against the reign of God, it is simply not true that all governments are trying to thwart the purposes of God.

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America Is God's Country

To the far left of the spectrum is the idea held by many that America is God's country. Many believe that the existence of this nation is by Divine providence. They liken America's existence to that of ancient national Israel. Beginning with our founding fathers and continuing until today, they see America as one nation under God.

Few spoke as fervently about the destiny of America as did Thomas Jefferson. He proposed that the national seal picture the children of Israel in the wilderness led by a cloud by day and a pillar by night. In his second inaugural address he said, "I shall need . . . the favor of the Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessities and comforts of life."

In 1845 in the **Democratic Review**, John O'Sullivan coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny." He wrote, "The far-reaching, boundless future, will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles, to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High."

Teddy Roosevelt never questioned that the will of God included the use of American power to civilize and Christianize the savage nations, leading to world improvement. In World War II, the Allied cause was frequently equated with the righteousness of God and the Axis powers with Satanic evil.

Such views almost make America become a church. Total involvement and association with the government is thus demanded for the Christian.

Many in the church have held to similar views. Foy E. Wallace Jr. said, "A Christian can and is even commanded to operate in other realms than the church." T. B. Wilkinson wrote, "Christians are citizens of civil government, partakers of its benefits, and owe it the duties which pertain to that citizenship, including the use of the 'sword' in executing wrath on evil workers."

Often people cite the examples of Daniel, Joseph, Esther, Mordecai, Moses, Cornelius and others showing that the people of God can and even should be involved in politics. They ask, "What would

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happen if all the Christians were not involved in politics?" "The country would come to ruin."

We can readily see then, that there is a vast difference of opinion, even in the church, concerning what the Christian's relationship to government should be. Now let us appeal to the Scriptures.

Jesus' Teaching

First, we will examine what Jesus had to say on the subject. In Matthew 22:15-22, Jesus taught that the authority of earthly rulers is valid in their own realm. This implication is also found in John 19:11 in Jesus' conversation with Pilate. Jesus understood what Paul affirmed in Romans 13:1-7, that government is ordained of God. He recognized government's purpose in maintaining order and bearing the sword against the evildoer (Lk. 13:1-2). Civil government is legitimate, necessary and proper, but limited in its sphere. Jesus warned not to confuse the State with the Divine. Do not give to Caesar what belongs to God, but pay the government the taxes due it to accomplish its purposes.

In Luke 22:25, Jesus saw the irony of government officials who oppressed the people, yet call themselves benefactors. He rebuked tax collectors (Mt. 9:10; 18:17; 21:31). He called Herod a fox (Lk. 13:32). He offered seething rebukes to the Jewish authorities (Mt. 23).

Yet in a society of cruel slavery, high taxes, persecution, and absolute monarchs, He avoided any attempt to overthrow the Roman government. He avoided political office (Jn. 6:15). He refused to judge civil matters (Lk. 12:13-15). He did not seek social change. He did not try to overthrow slavery. He did not delve into political, social and economic issues. He did not burn flags, picket, or protest. He came to seek and to save the lost (Lk. 17:19).

Jesus obediently paid his taxes, healed a Roman officer's servant, and enjoined His disciples to go the extra mile. Oscar Cullman wrote, "Jesus was in no sense an enemy of the State on principle, but rather a loyal citizen who offered no threat to the state's existence."

From Jesus we learn then, that the Christian's relationship to the government is one of submission and noninvolvement. He pointed out the irreconcilable difference in the attitude of earthly rulers toward their subjects as compared to the attitude of His disciples toward one another (Mt. 20:25-28). The implication here is that the

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actions necessary for one holding political office is not consistent with those required of His disciples. He offered the people citizenship in a spiritual, heavenly kingdom (Jn. 18:36), where love and humility would reign supreme (Mt. 18:1-4; Mk. 9:33-37).

Jesus did involve Himself with people and their problems, but He sought change through converting their hearts to God and preparing them for the Life beyond this sinful existence. The kingdoms of the earth are merely temporal, while His is eternal (Dan. 2:44). Jesus was a social conformist in many ways, yet he challenged society's racism, sexism, materialistic values, and openly condemned the commercialism in the temple. All such efforts were based on His desire to bring people to the Father, rather than improve the State.

Romans 13—Submission to the Government

The apostle Paul wrote the most lengthy dissertation on civil government in the Scriptures. It is found in Romans 13:1-7. From this passage we learn first that the Christian is to be in submission to the governing authorities. The statement is unqualified, unlimited and unconditional. It makes no distinction between good rulers or bad, fair laws or unjust ones. The principle applies even if the ruler is a Nero or Hitler. Our duty is to submit. Paul reiterates this principle in Titus 3:1-2, which also forbids us to even speak evil of them.

The one exception to this principle of submission is found in the example of Peter and John in Acts 4 and 5. When the authorities in power forbade them to preach the gospel (4:16-18), there was a conflict between what the Lord had told them to do (Mt. 28:19-20) and what the authorities told them to do. In such cases Peter affirms that the Christian is to obey God rather than man (4:19; 5:29). If the Christian is to be condemned by the governing authorities, it should be for his faith, not his political stance. Other examples of justifiable disobedience are found in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednigo.

The Origin of Government

The second lesson we learn from Romans 13 is that God is the one who ordains the authority of civil government. This does not imply that God is responsible for wicked rulers. God instituted the church, but He is not to blame for churches who apostasize. God instituted marriage, but He is not the cause of bad marriages and divorce. People can and often do fail to carry out His Divine prerogatives in

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any institution which He has ordained. So it is with civil government. Also, the form of government is not at issue here. The Bible never determines what form of government man should use. Whether a government is capitalistic or socialistic, a democracy or a monarchy, doesn't matter. God ordained the institution of civil government and gives it the authority to govern society.

At this point I want to address what Lipscomb taught regarding the idea that governments were instituted by man or Satan. There are many passages dealing with the sovereignty of God among the nations of men (Ps. 22:28; Pro. 8:15-16; 21:1; Is. 1:21-23; 10:5-19; 13:1-22; 41:24; Dan. 2:21-22; 4:17, 34-37; 5:17-23). There is also a passage in Hosea 8:4 that mentions kings being set up without God's approval. God does not necessarily determine every leader that is put in authority, yet He often has done so to accomplish His purposes, and it is not for us to determine when He does or does not do so. Some believe that God limited this intervention to the preparation of the coming Messiah, yet such a view is found wanting by lack of scriptural evidence. Nevertheless, His sovereignty is clearly established in Scripture. His purpose for government is established as we will see. And finally, His will has always been that men be gathered into different nations (Acts 17:26-27; Gen. 10:5, 20, 31-32; 11:1-9; Deut. 32:8).

At the same time, there seems to be some evidence supporting Satan's control of government (Lk. 4:6; Eph. 6:12; Jn. 12:31; 14:30; Dan. 10:13). The problem is easily resolved when we realize that Satan often dominates the church and the home, as well as the government. This does not mean that Satan originated these Divine institutions.

The Bible reveals the necessity of government to deter wickedness. Before the flood, the implication from Scripture is that there was no organized government other than the family head (Gen. 4:13-16, 23-24). This led to a wicked, chaotic state for humanity that brought upon itself God's wrath in the form of the flood (Gen. 6:5-11, 13). Later, in Israel, a state of anarchy existed (Jdg. 17:6) and the implication there is that wickedness prevailed uninterrupted. God in His infinite wisdom and love provided for the social welfare of humanity through civil government. The first implication in Scripture of God's direction in this matter is in Genesis 9:5-6.

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The Purpose of Government

Thirdly, we learn the purpose of civil governments. God instituted them to maintain order and preserve justice. God's purpose was that in society, evil must be punished. Therefore, the government is God's servant to strike fear in men to discourage bad conduct, while punishing those who commit evil (Pro. 29:4). The Bible recognizes the State's right to rule (Mt. 20:25-28; Tit. 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:1-4), judge civil disputes (Lk. 12:13-15; 1 Cor. 6:1, 6), punish civil disorder (Lk. 13:1-2; Acts 19:39-40; 21:30-34), and even administer capital punishment (Acts 25:11; Rom. 13:4). God gives everyone moral law that He writes in their hearts (Rom. 2:14-16), and the government is responsible for maintaining that morality in society, by punishing the wicked. Some governments carry out their Divine mandate, others woefully fail.

The purpose of government is limited to these things and in no way should conflict or interfere with God's purposes for His church.

Reasons for submission

Next, in Romans 13 we learn the Christian's reasons for submitting to the governing authorities. First and foremost is for conscience sake. Peter's parallel treatise of the subject in 1 Peter 2:13-17 says to submit "for the Lord's sake." Surely this is what Paul meant. Because of our desire to please God, we willingly submit to the very institution that He ordained. It is noteworthy that Peter was writing to people who were at that time being severely persecuted. Secondly, Paul writes that we submit to avoid possible punishment.

Responsibilities to Government

Finally, we learn from this passage that the Christian's responsibility lies not only in submission, but in paying taxes. Again, there is nothing that qualifies this statement. Whether fair or unfair, whether or not you agree with how the government uses the money, pay your taxes. Paul was writing to people who were taxed unmercifully. Paul further elaborates on our responsibility to the governing authorities by telling us to pray for them (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

In summarizing our thoughts on the Christian's relationship to government, we conclude that the Scriptures teach complete submission to their authority, except when there is a contradiction in God's will for us. We are to pay taxes due them, pray for them, and live a

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quiet and peaceable life so as never to give the authorities nor anyone else an occasion to accuse us.

We must remember that we are citizens of the kingdom of God. Our allegiance is to Him. Concerning our relationship to the world, the Bible says that we are in the world, but "not of the world" (Jn. 17:14). Peter said that we are "strangers and pilgrims" in the world (1 Pet. 2:11). The first century Christians did not involve themselves in the social and political structures of society. They were for the most part non-involved or non-attached. They did not see that it was their responsibility to transform or reconstruct political institutions in order to harmonize them with the teachings of Jesus. There is no evidence that they exerted any political pressure or action to influence the policies of their rulers. It seems they understood that morality cannot be legislated, rather that it is a result of a heart transformed by the power of the gospel that will result in changed behavior.

Church and State

There are basic fundamental differences in the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world.

COLUMNS(2), DIMENSION(IN), HGUTTER(.0555), VGUTTER(.0555), BOX(Z_DOUBLE), HGRID(Z_SINGLE), VGRID(Z_SINGLE), KEEP(OFF)

TABLE TEXT, TABLE TEXT

Church, State

universal, provincial

spiritual, physical

eternal, temporal

redemptive, retributive

absolute, relative

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Jesus taught a separation of the two kingdoms, Paul implied it, and early Christians recognized it. Their devotion to God's kingdom was primary, while that to the state was incidental.

As we continue our study, it is interesting to note that for the first 200 years or so of the church's existence, there is no record from Scripture or history of Christians participating in politics. Origen wrote, "Christians decline public offices not in order to escape these duties but in order to keep themselves for a more divine and necessary service in the church of God for the salvation of men."

Conclusion

Based on the teachings of Jesus, His inspired apostles, and the evidence found in early Christian writers, we conclude that a Christian should not hold political office or be involved in the political process.

People often ask, "What about voting?" Again, we conclude that noninvolvement is probably the safest course. Because of God's sovereignty, Satan's dominance, and the absence of scriptural precedence or authority, I recommend abstinence. I realize, however, that there may be some exceptions. It seems reasonable to many, that when given the opportunity a Christian might be at liberty to vote on moral issues such as abortion, the sale of liquor, or some such thing, therefore taking advantage of the political system to leaven the world with good. I certainly respect a Christian's decision to vote on such issues, and would never make a test of fellowship over someone voting on things that he felt would violate his conscience by not voting. I firmly believe that we can be of far greater help to our leaders in government by praying for them, than we ever could by voting for them.

We would do well to remember that Jesus never attempted to change government policy. He was not a political activist. He also recognized that the evils and problems of society will always exist in a world dominated by sin (Mk. 14:7). Jesus was not indifferent to the problems of society and He always did what He could, just as we should (Gal. 6:10). God's mission for His church is much higher than simply addressing the consequences of sin upon society. God provided man with the institution of civil government to help control society's problems, but the government is never authorized to deal with spiritual matters.

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There are untold thousands of heinous crimes committed as evidence that morality cannot be legislated. The punishment of evil-doers does help to control evil in society, but clearly true morality and godliness must come from the hearts of men who have been transformed into the image of Christ, who live lives led by the Spirit. Only then will man be delivered from this present evil world. In conclusion, please consider Paul's statement to Timothy when he said, "No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer" (2 Tim. 2:4). 16852 Timberidge, Tyler, TX 75703

Appendix

Purpose:

Rom. 13:1-7	1 Pet. 2:13-17	Acts 16:37-39	Acts 19:38-41	Acts 25:10-12
Acts 22:25-29	Esther 10:3	Isaiah 1:21-23	Luke 13:1-2	Luke 12:13-15

Sovereignty:

Isaiah 10:5-19	Isaiah 13:1-22	Isaiah 37:33-38	Isaiah 41:2-4
Isaiah 44:24-28	Isaiah 45:1-25	Isaiah 60:12	Jeremiah 18:5-11
Jeremiah 27:1-15	Jeremiah 51:11	2 Chron. 36:22-23	Revelation 1:5
Revelation 4:11	Deut. 32:8	Psalms 22:28	Psalms 47:7-8
Proverbs 8:15-16	Proverbs 21:1	Daniel 2:20-21	Daniel 2:44, 47
Daniel 4:17, 34-37	Daniel 5:17-23	Amos 1:1 - 2:16	Acts 17:26-27

Subjection:

Romans 13:1-7	1 Peter 2:13-17	Titus 3:1
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Disobedience:

Acts 4:19	Acts 5:29	Daniel 3:28
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Temporal and Spiritual Nature:

John 18:36	1 Corinthians 2:6-8	Ephesians 6:12
Luke 4:5-7	1 Corinthians 15:24	Daniel 2:4; 4:2-3

Without God's approval: Hosea 8:4

Without Any Government: Gen. 4:13-24; 6:5-11, 13; Judges 17:6

Separation: Matthew 20:25-28; 22:15-22; Romans 13:1-7

The Importance of Genesis to Christianity

by G. V. Ayers

Genesis is the first book of the Old Testament and, therefore, of the Bible. It is the beginning of God's written self-revelation to man. It is the first of "The Five books of Moses," or "The Books of the Law" called the Pentateuch (from the Greek, penta, "five;" teuchos, "tool, roll, book"). These books trace the origin of the created earth and of mankind, then God's call of Abraham, and the progress of his descendants as God's chosen people into the nation of Israel. They show God's dealings relative to Israel, for Israel was the nation through which the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Redeemer would come. The Hebrews called these the Torah (Hebrew, "Law." The idea of the word being "instruction").

The name "Genesis" is from Genesis 2:4 in the Greek Septuagint, genesis (beginning or generation). The word occurs in the title of each of the ten sections of the book:

1. Generations of Heaven and Earth (Gen. 2:4)
2. Generations of Adam (Gen. 5:1)
3. Generations of Noah (Gen. 6:9)
4. Generations of the Sons of Noah (Gen. 10:1)
5. Generations of Shem (Gen. 11:10)
6. Generations of Terah (Gen. 11:27)
7. Generations of Ishmael (Gen. 25:12)
8. Generations of Isaac (Gen. 25:19)
9. Generations of Esau (Gen. 36:1)
10. Generations of Jacob (Gen. 37:2).

The Hebrew title for Genesis is **Bereshith** ("in the beginning"), from the first word of the book in Hebrew. Genesis is truly the book of beginnings. It reveals the beginnings of: creation, mankind, the family, sin, death, God's redemptive plan, sacrifice, worship, tribes and nations, civilization, languages, God's chosen people Israel, the preparation for Jesus the Messiah.

Genesis is an historical account beginning with creation and tracing a redemptive history through the death of Joseph after the descent

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of Jacob and his sons into Egypt. As a redemptive history it does not deal with every detail of history, but with the development of events which unfold God's provisions for the redemption of mankind. The book of Genesis is the foundation of the Story of the Bible; The Story of Jesus; The Story of Redemption.

Narratives in Genesis

Genesis is bound fast to Christianity and the New Testament by many various threads carefully laid together in a divinely woven tapestry. As narratives they are individually like strands of colored thread; but when viewed as a whole they weave a portrait of the coming Messiah and Savior of the world.

Genesis is largely a collection of stories known as narratives. Narratives are the main literary style of Genesis as well as of the whole Bible (The Old Testament makes up seventy percent of the bulk of the Bible, and over forty percent of the Old Testament is narrative).

Bible narratives relate a wide variety of events, but not just any events. "Their purpose is to show God at work in His creation and among His people." They honor God, and illustrate his care, justice and mercy. They illustrate many important lessons for our lives.

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, in **How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth**, suggest three levels of Biblical narratives. Although I do not follow them in exact detail, I do agree with their basic idea:

1. Top level—God's eternal plan at work throughout history. Major elements are: the creation, the fall, sin, the need for salvation, Jesus the remedy for sin, the church.
2. Middle level—God's secondary plans in history. Major elements center on Israel God's chosen people, the call of Abraham, his lineage, the Egyptian bondage, Israel's deliverance and conquest of Canaan. Israel's wavering loyalty, the division of the kingdom, the exile, the return.
3. Bottom level—Individual narratives.

To understand the full significance of an Old Testament narrative, it is important to understand where it falls within these three levels. Each Genesis narrative (bottom level) is part of the greater narrative of Israel's history (middle level), which is a part of the narrative of

God's creation and his redemption of it (top level). "This ultimate narrative goes beyond the Old Testament through the New Testament. You will not fully do justice to any individual narrative without recognizing its part within the other two."⁴

Fee and Stuart go on to say that it is beneficial to study individual narratives by themselves. But to fully appreciate it, the narrative must at some point be seen in its larger contexts.⁵

When studying Old Testament narratives one should be aware how they function as God's revelation. Bible narratives are not merely stories about people who lived in Old Testament times. Rather, they tell of what God did to and through those people. Bible narratives are not allegories or stories with hidden meanings. Bible narratives do not always teach directly, but they demonstrate God's and revelation in the lives of men. Also, every point of a Bible narrative does not teach a moral or lesson on its own.⁶

In studying the importance of Genesis to Christianity we shall notice: (1) The Fall, (2) The Promises to Abraham, (3) Some Difficult Narratives.

The Fall

God made man the crowning glory of his creation. He made them (Adam and Eve) in his own image (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7). God gave man (mankind, both the male and the female) the power of choice—he is a moral being. God told him what to do and what to not do—gave him a law. Man then chooses between obeying and disobeying God. One prohibition was placed upon man: he should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). This was a positive, not a moral law. Neither was the law given to tempt man, but to test his faithfulness to God. God does not tempt man (Jas. 1:13-15). Satan was the one who tempted Eve and she ate of the tree and her husband also with her.

The capacity for righteousness through obedience implies the capacity for evil through disobedience. The image of God means the power of self-direction, the ability to choose between alternatives. There could be no personality, no selfhood, without the capacity for choice, and therefore there could be no holiness

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without the possibility of sin. This does not mean that sin was necessary. It does mean that in a moral universe evil is possible.⁷

When man sinned, God pronounced penalties upon Adam, upon Eve, and upon Satan the Tempter. The penalties announced because of sin are:

1. Upon Adam—God no longer provided food from the garden. Man must earn his living by "the sweat of his brow." The ground is cursed to produce thorns and thistles.

3. Upon Eve—Pain in childbirth, dependence on and submission to the man.

4. Upon the Serpent—Cursed above all animals by being humbled to crawl and eat dust. The object of hatred of all mankind. He is called: Satan, "the adversary"; Devil, "the accuser, slanderer."

But God had said: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). What does this mean? Does it mean their physical death? The penalty must undoubtedly mean "spiritual death."

Robert Milligan lists the following reasons that the penalty is comprehended by spiritual death:

1. In no other sense did Adam and Eve die on the same day they sinned

2. Spiritual death seems to be the root of all evils

3. The chief object of the gospel is to unite man to God spiritually

4. By eating of the tree of life, Adam might still have escaped physical death (Gen. 3:22)

5. The second death is an eternal separation from God, and not the separation of the soul and body (Rev. 20:14) 8

To these we might add:

6. No where in the sentences pronounced upon man is the term "death" used, even when speaking of "physical death" (cf. Gen. 3:19)

7. After he had sinned, the Lord spoke of many days of Adam's life (Gen. 3:17)

8. It is emphatically stated that Adam lived many years (Gen. 5:5)

9. If the "days" of the creative week in Genesis 1 are normal, twenty-four-hour days, then shouldn't the "day" of Genesis 2:17 be also?

Adam and Eve died the day they sinned (Gen. 2:16-17), they died spiritually—they were separated from God's presence (Gen. 3:24). This is not unusual language in Scripture; Paul speaks of living men being spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-5).

How then, is physical death related to the fall? Adam and Eve died physically as a consequence of their sin rather than a direct penalty for sin (Gen. 3:17, 19). A bank president may be convicted of embezzling money. When he is fired from his job and put in prison, he loses his house because he cannot make the payments. The loss of the house is not the penalty for his crime, but it is certainly a consequence of it. In the same way, Adam and Eve were separated from fellowship with God (spiritual death), and from the tree of life (which consequently brought physical death) (Gen. 3:22-23). Revelation restores man to the tree of life in heaven (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14).

Spiritual death because of Adam's sin is considered by Paul: "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" (Rom. 5:12). Paul also considers physical death as a consequence of sin: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:21-22).

In keeping with his gracious nature, God also gave the promise of redemption: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Carefully notice the wording of the promise of Genesis 3:15:

1. "Enmity"—the strong feeling of an enemy, antagonism, hostility, strong hatred—a war.

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2. "Thy seed"—the serpent's seed. Concerning the Jewish authorities of Jesus' day, we read:

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it (Jn. 8:42-44 cf. vv. 38-44).

3. "Her seed"—the seed of the woman. Here is an "unmistakable reference to the virgin birth. In biblical genealogies the seed is reckoned to the man, not the woman."⁹

The virgin birth of Jesus, as prophesied in Isaiah 7:14, and fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-23, is the fulfillment of "her seed." The Savior is the only one who is uniquely the seed of the woman. He is not the offspring or seed of any earthly man. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

4. "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"—Jesus suffered death so that he might crush the head (or power) of Satan. This theme is noted in Hebrews 2:14:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Satan held the power of death. The sting of death is sin (1 Cor. 15:56); so Satan had the power to hold men in bondage to sin. "Jesus succeeded in destroying the Devil's ability to condemn men for their sins."¹⁰

This is the basic theme of the entire Bible. John writes, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8).

The Promise to Abraham

Sin and wickedness brought man to a low state. God purged the world by a great flood, saving Noah and his family. Soon after the flood mankind again began to be self-reliant, building the great tower of Babel, and God dispersed them by confusing their language. Man rapidly begins to drift into idolatry, and it is then God calls Abram from Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11:31; 12:1; Acts 7:2-4). It is likely that Abram's family were idolaters (Josh. 24:2). We do not assume that Abram was himself an idolater. Archaeologists have excavated the city of Ur and have found it great in culture and power but also great idolatry.

To this point, Genesis has traced man's progress from: individuals, to families, to nations. Now God chooses: an individual—Abram, to make a family—Abram's descendants, to become a nation—Israel. God does this to bring forth: an individual—Jesus Christ, to bless all nations.

When God calls Abram, he promises wonderful blessings. Genesis records God repeating these promises to Abraham in various degrees six times (12:2-3; 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-8; 22:15-18); to Isaac, Abraham's son, twice (26:2-5; 26:24); and to Jacob, Isaac's son, four times (from Isaac, 27:28-29; 28:3-4; and from God, 28:13-15; 35:9-12). They are repeated and elaborated upon a total of twelve times in Genesis. The Bible often uses repetition to emphasize an important point. This being so, then the central message of the book must revolve around God's promise to Abraham.

God's promise to Abraham may be broken down in several ways. Some have itemized it into eight or more promises. And yet at the same time they may all be said to be component parts of a single promise. Indeed, it seems that the terms "promise" and "promises" are used almost interchangeably in Scripture (cf. "promise," Acts 7:17; 13:32; 26:6-7; Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:17-19, 22, 29; Heb. 6:12-17; and "promises," Rom. 9:4; 15:8; Gal. 3:16; Heb. 6:12; 7:6).

For the sake of simplicity, we will notice three main promises: (1) The Nation Promise, (2) The Land Promise, (3) The Seed Promise.

The Nation Promise. God promised that Abraham's descendants would become a mighty nation. "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a

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blessing" (Gen. 12:2; cf. 13:16; 15:5; 17:2-4; 22:17; 26:4, 24; 28:3, 14; 35:11).

The Land Promise. God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, but it was not to be given to him but to his descendants (Gen. 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7-8, 18-21; 17:8; 26:3-4). This promise was fulfilled by the end of Joshua's life.

The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 1 Kgs. 4:21; Neh. 9:7-8).

The Seed Promise. The greatest of these promises is that God declared that Abraham's seed would bless all nations. "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:18).

The seed promise is not always worded in exactly the same way. This variation in the wording of the texts brings up several questions: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3); compared to, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18).

First, who shall bless all nations, Abraham or his seed? It is apparent that both are implied when either are mentioned, because it is also stated "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 28:14).

Second, who shall be blessed, all nations or all families? Again, both are implied when either are mentioned. "Families" (*mish-pachah*) means "a family, i.e. circle of relatives . . . A tribe or people." It is used in Genesis 10:5 with "nations," (cf. 10:18, 20, 31, 32; 12:3; 28:14; 36:40; 47:12). The word does not imply the modern American idea of a family, but it includes much larger groups. The "house of

Israel" (Is. 5:7), includes the whole nation. "Families" has more the meaning of "clan" than the smaller "family."

"Nations" (*goy*), means "a foreign nation; hence a Gentile." It is used in Genesis 10:5 with "families" (cf. 10:20, 31, 32, 32; 14:1, 9; 17:4, 5, 6, 16; 18:18; 22:18; 25:16, 23; 26:4; 27:29; 35:11; 48:19). So, families and nations are essentially equal terms in the promise. "Nations" appears to be the larger term, and more inclusive; while "families" or "clans" are smaller and more specific. Some smaller clans might not be included in the larger term "nations." So, the wisdom of Scripture includes all by using both terms.

Specifically, the blessing is to come upon: (1) the Jews,

Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 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 3:25-26).

and, (2) the Gentiles,

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gal. 3:8).

As Paul said, "The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God for salvation . . . to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Third, who is the seed? Galatians 3:16 provides the clearest answer: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

The term "seed" is also used in the promises of more than just Jesus, the one promised Messiah (12:7; 13:15-16; 15:5, 18; 17:7-19). Who are the seed of Abraham who inherit the promises? The seed which was to inherit the promises was not merely the offspring of Abraham. Ishmael was also the seed of Abraham (Gen. 21:13) and was blessed by God, but he did not inherit the promises. Abraham also had other sons (Gen. 25:1-4), but God's promise was "In Isaac

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shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7; Heb. 11:18)). The seed of Abraham is the nation of Israel (Is. 41:8; Jer. 33:26; Ps. 105:6; Rom. 11:1; 2 Cor. 11:22).

Still, in a greater sense the New Testament teaches that Abraham's seed are those who are in Christ (Gal. 3:29); those who have faith in Christ (Rom. 4:16-18). It calls those in Christ "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:15-16). Still Christ is the unique seed which would bless all nations.

Fourth, what is the blessing? The blessing is: turning from sins (Acts 3:26), salvation through the Messiah (Acts 13:23, 26), a joint inheritance as members of the same body (Eph. 3:6). This is referred to as the "hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20; 26:6-7). The hope was spiritual and obtained in Christ by the gospel.

Some Difficult Narratives

We shall notice three difficult narratives in Genesis, and place them in the greater context of the book and show their significance as they relate to Christianity. They are: (1) the defilement of Dinah (Gen. 34); (2) Reuben defiles his father's concubine (Gen. 35:22); (3) Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38).

The defilement of Dinah (Gen. 34). Jacob, the grandson and inheritor of the Abrahamic promises, bought a piece of land near the city of Shechem. There, a man named Shechem, the son of Hamor a ruler of that country, lay with Jacob's daughter Dinah and defiled her. Afterward, when he desired to marry her, the sons of Jacob deceitfully agreed that if Shechem, along with all the men of the city, would be circumcised, then the marriage could take place. But soon after the circumcision Simeon and Levi, full brothers to Dinah by Jacob's wife Leah, took revenge upon the city by violently murdering all the men, and plundering all their goods.

There is nothing commendable about the treachery of Simeon and Levi, who were to be patriarchs over two of the twelve tribes of Israel. Neither is there anything commendable about any other part of the narrative. It is not told, as some have assumed, merely to show the failings of some of God's chosen people. Although it does unblinkingly show their sin, that is not the purpose of the narrative. The significance is only seen when placed in the greater context of the

promises God made to Abraham and the still greater context of the story of Jesus the Messiah.

The defilement of Jacob's concubine Bilhah, by Reuben (Gen. 35:22). This brief narrative does not hesitate to show Reuben's sin, but, again, its real importance will only be seen when placed in its greater contexts.

Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38). One of the strangest chapters in all of the Bible, Genesis 38 is also only to be understood in the light of its greater contexts. This story of shocking immorality is oddly inserted within the Joseph narrative (Gen. 37-50), and is written with no immediate comment or explanation.

Judah, Jacob's fourth son, had three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er, the eldest married, Tamar but died before having children. Jacob then instructed Onan, his second son, to take Tamar as his wife and "raise up seed to thy brother" (v. 8).

This is the first recorded occurrence of a Levirate marriage. Levirate marriage was the practice of a man begetting children by his brother's widow when he had died childless. The practice was later prescribed by the law of Moses (Deut. 25:5-10; cf. Mt. 22:23-25). The child then born to Tamar would be reckoned as the first born son of Er and would receive his father's inheritance—chief of which was the blessings bestowed upon Judah.

Because of wickedness, Onan also died childless. When she was not given to the third son, Shelah, Tamar deceived Judah and became pregnant by her father-in-law. Tamar then gave birth to twins, Phares and Zarah. Because of Levirate law, Phares, the first born of the twins, now occupies the position of first born of Er, the first born of Judah. So the birthright would pass from Judah to Er to Phares.

These three narratives obtain their full significance only when viewed in the light of the Abrahamic promise and the tradition which governs inheritances. Inheritances were divided among sons with special privileges given to the first born. The birthright privileges of the first born son were: a double share of his father's inheritance, status as head or ruler of the family, and foremost recipient of the his father's blessings. For Abraham's descendants the latter two were of great spiritual importance, for in them lay the promise of the Messiah and king of Israel—Jesus.

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The importance of each of these narratives finally unfolds when Jacob blesses his sons, the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 49:1-28). When Jacob is about to die, he as patriarch bestows prophetic blessings upon his sons. These blessings map the course of the history of the nation of Israel (vv. 1-2).

Reuben, the eldest, is unfit to receive the blessings of the first born because he defiled his father's bed (vv. 3-4; cf. 1 Chron. 5:1-2). This is the significance of the Reuben, Bilhah narrative (Gen. 35:22).

Simeon and Levi, the next two in order of age, are also disqualified because of their anger and cruelty (vv. 5-7). This is the significance of the Dinah, Simeon, Levi narrative (Gen. 34).

Jacob then bestows upon Judah, his fourth son, the blessings of the first-born (vv. 8-11).¹¹ He is made head of the family, and chief receiver of the promises God made to Abraham. This is the reason that the genealogy of Jesus is traced through Judah, and not Reuben, the first born (cf. Mt. 1; Lk. 3). Jacob describes Judah as a lion (v. 9), indicating strength and courage, of the man and the tribe, and especially of his great offspring of whom it is written: "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:5).

Jacob further states, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (v. 10). "Shiloh," meaning rest or man of rest, is commonly taken to be a name for the Messiah.

The significance of the Judah, Tamar narrative (Gen. 38) is now seen. Since Phares ("Perez" in the New Testament) is in the direct ancestry of Jesus, it is necessary to note the unique circumstances which surround his birth. God saw fit to reveal nothing further of his life, but this much was necessary so that many years later it would be written:

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Tamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram (Mt. 1:1-3).

This validates the divine truthfulness of the Genesis account. Indeed, Genesis is The Book of Beginnings. It is the foundation for all that follows. 2706 Forest Ridge Court North, Puyallup, WA 98374

End Notes

1. W. T. Purkiser, ed. *Exploring the Old Testament*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1955), p. 69.
2. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie, 1982), p. 74.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
7. Purkiser, *Exploring the Old Testament*, pp. 75-76.
8. Robert Milligan, *Scheme of Redemption*, (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate, 1977), pp. 56-57.
9. Edward C. Wharton, *The Scheme of Redemption*, (West Monroe, La.: Howard Publishers, 1972), p. 27.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
11. The birthright or blessings of the first born (a double share of the inheritance) was given to Joseph, the first born son of Jacob's favorite wife Rachel (1 Chron. 5:1-2). How Jacob gave Joseph a double share of the inheritance was by elevating Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh to the status of sons, and therefore, tribes of Israel (Gen. 48). In the history that follows, the tribe of Joseph is not mentioned; instead, the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are found.

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Church Organization in the Absence of Elders

by Alan Bonifay

We have reached a point of crisis in our churches. One of the identifying marks of a New Testament church was its system of governance. The Bible's teaching is clear—God intends for congregations of Christians to be governed by duly qualified, specially selected, and officially ordained bishops. Yet, by and large, we do not have the mature congregations such an arrangement stipulates. The vast, overwhelming majority of our assemblies do not have elders, and most are not likely to have them in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, a high percentage of the few congregations who do have overseers are experiencing grave difficulties in maintaining New Testament organization. Consequently, we are hindered in our labors for the Master's cause as decision-making degenerates into an arduous, unhappy, and ineffective enterprise. Leadership, direction, guidance, and training are skills which are profoundly lacking among us.

Decision-making among us most often derives from one of three unscriptural mechanisms. A few of our congregations operate on what Alexander Campbell called an American system of "wild democracy" (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1835; p. 493). Decisions are made on the basis of majority rule. In some cases, even the necessary margin of majority has been legislated. Such a system has absolutely no biblical basis upon which to rest, and its fundamental principle of rule is rooted in pragmatism, which teaches that whatever the most say is best is best. Nothing could be farther from the truth of God's Word.

However, most of our brethren realize that such an approach is wholly without biblical authority, and these usually opt for a consensus method. If anything, this is worse than the democratic method, because it not only lacks biblical support, it is also woefully ineffective, since virtual unanimity must prevail before anything can be done. As a result, what becomes everybody's business ends up being nobody's business.

Still a third method is employed more often than we like to admit. It is rule by one man who often represents the largest family of the congregation. The principle driving this leadership style is that con-

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trol lies in the hand of whoever gets the maddest, the loudest, the longest. Needless to say, this alternative is not scriptural either.

In view of this state of affairs we need to begin again. We must discover a biblical system of church government which will sustain our congregations, and enable them to function effectively and peaceably during the interim when they are developing men to receive the eldership. This system should be a temporary one which actively encourages the development of shepherds for the flock. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33), and confusion prevails now. Therefore, we must search the Scriptures for a Bible plan.

In beginning, we once more remind ourselves that ultimately all authority in heaven and earth rests in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is expressed to us in the written Word of God. In all of our activity the Word of God must be exalted to the position of absolute preeminence. The New Testament reveals to us the entirety of God's will for us. Therefore, any plan of church government must be authorized by God's Word. Furthermore, any member of the body of Christ who can teach us the truth of God's Word must be given an opportunity to do so within the confines of biblical limitations. The supreme authority for all our action must ever be the teachings of the gospel.

As I mentioned, "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33). He is a God of order and precision, and has given us a detailed plan for the government of mature churches. Is it consistent with God's character that He has left immature congregations bereft of any plan for governance? Has God left churches who do not have men qualified to be elders under the authority of mob rule? We believe that He has not done any such thing. In His Word, God has given us a plan whereby congregations are to be governed by the teachers until leaders can be developed who qualify to be elders.

Many, if not most, of our churches have corrupted this plan. We have allowed the principle of democratic government, with its emphasis on the rights of the individual, to hold sway in our congregations. Chiefly, we have derailed God's plan for teachers in two areas.

First, in our drive to encourage mutual edification, we have created a monster by insisting that virtually every male member who can be cajoled into doing so must become a teacher. However, in all

too many cases we have provided no more training than to say, "Here is a Bible, and here's Zerr's commentary. You take the chapter next Wednesday." Or what is even worse, "Here is a sermon outline book. Work something up for the third Sunday night." Not surprisingly, we have many teachers who have difficulty edifying the body.

Second, we have compounded the problem by equalizing every male member and expecting them all to participate in the final decision-making process of the congregation. Don't misunderstand! Good leaders consider the thoughts and views of all the membership. Even elders should stay in close touch with the desires of everyone in the congregation. There is no question that every brother and sister should have some method of input. However, when all of that has been considered, teachers, operating under the authority of God's word, should be the leaders and decision-makers in a congregation which has not yet attained elders.

The Scriptures teach that in the absence of men qualified to be elders, a congregation's teachers should be its leaders. In the demonstration of this concept we shall consider several New Testament congregations which had rulers who are not designated as elders in the record. We shall then inquire whom these rulers may be. Discovering that they were unmistakably the teachers, we shall endeavor to delineate the distinction between teachers and speakers that must prevail. Finally, we shall proffer a few suggestions concerning the implementation of this Bible plan.

Congregations of the New Testament Who Had Rulers Who are Not Called Elders

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

In verse 12 we note that the congregation was exhorted to recognize the authority of those men who were over them in the Lord—that is, those who were their admonishers. In verse 13, these leaders were to be respected highly for their work's sake and the congregation was to be governed by peace. These verses describe the congregation's relationship to its leaders.

Then in verse 14, in what Conybeare and Howson call a postscript, Paul addresses those who are the admonishers. As Chrysostom noted, those who are directed to admonish are the same

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who are described immediately before (v. 12) as giving admonition (p. 310).

In verses 14b-28, Paul details the responsibilities of the rulers to the congregation, and in verse 27 he charges the leaders to have this epistle read to all the holy brethren.

But who are these leaders? It is often assumed that they were presbyters, but that is purely an assumption. The record does not refer to them as elders at all. In fact, due to the chronology of events, it seems evident that they were not elders.

According to Conybeare and Howson, 1 Thessalonians "was written not long after the conversion of the Thessalonians (1:8-9), while the tidings of it were still spreading through Macedonia and Achaia and while Paul could speak of himself as only taken from them for a short season (2:17). St. Paul had been recently at Athens (3:1), and had already preached in Achaia (1:7-8). Timotheus and Silas were just returned from Macedonia (3:6) which happened soon after St. Paul's first arrival at Corinth (Acts 18:5)" (p. 304). In their chronological table they date both Paul's first visit to Thessalonica when he established the church and his first epistle to them as occurring in the same year—52 A.D. (p. 833).

Peloubet's *Dictionary of the Bible* states first that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians "a few months" after leaving Thessalonica, and then later narrows this time factor to "probably within three or four months" (p. 686,687).

A. T. Robertson's "New Testament Chronology" deviates from these dates by about one year, dating Paul's initial visit in 50 A.D. and his epistle in 50 or 51 A.D. However, Robertson does recognize the short span of time between the two events (*The Master Bible*, p. 143).

The point to be registered is that conservative scholarship widely attests that this letter was written only a few months after the church at Thessalonica was established. Accordingly, it is not surprising that we encounter no mention of the presence of elders in this congregation. It seems evident, even by New Testament standards, that the time between the church's inception and the writing of Paul's missive was too short for the congregation to have had men qualified and ordained as elders. In addition, we should recognize the

predominantly Gentile nature of this congregation: these were not "Gentiles of the gate," for they had turned from idols to serve the true and living God (1:10). The likelihood of there being men among former idolators who had attained the moral height expected of presbyters was remote. Nevertheless, the congregation did have recognized leaders—the congregation knew them and Paul knew them, but they are nowhere designated as elders.

Finally, it is well to note that 1 Thessalonians 3:1-3 reveals that during this time when a congregation is being ruled by leaders who are not elders they may find it advantageous to work with an evangelist from time to time.

1 Corinthians 16:15-16

Nowhere can bishops be found at Corinth. As far as the record is concerned, the congregation had no elders, yet they were instructed to submit to Stephanus and to men like him. The word "submit" (*hupotassesthe*), means "to place under; to subordinate . . . to submit one's self, render obedience, be submissive (Lk. 2:51; 10:17; Rom. 10:3; 13:1)," (Bagster, p. 418).

If the congregation was instructed to submit to Stephanus and men like him, then Stephanus and men like him who had addicted themselves to the ministry were to be regarded as the congregation's rulers or leaders. Notice that the men under consideration were men set for or devoted to the ministry. In verse 18, the church was to acknowledge men like Stephanus, Fortunatus and Achaicus. That is, they were to recognize and show respect to such men.

Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24

It has been generally assumed that the word "rulers" in these verses was a reference to presbyters, but such a view cannot be sustained by the Word of God. There is no question that elders are rulers in the congregation, nor that they are included here in this passage. But the point is that the reference is broader than an exclusive reference to elders. The word means "to lead the way, to be chief, to preside, to govern, to rule" (Bagster, p. 184). It is translated "a guide, a leader, a chieftain, a prince, and a Roman provincial governor" (Bagster, p. 184). In many English translations it is given as "leaders." In Luke 22:26, it is used by Jesus to show that church leaders are to be recognized by their servitude.

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In verse 7, where Paul instructs the brethren to "remember their leaders," his reference is to the example of Christianity set by those who have been martyred for the faith. No doubt he has in mind Stephen, a servant of tables and the church's first great debater; and James, the brother of John and an apostle of Jesus Christ, as well as others who were swept away in the fires of persecution. He particularly stresses their teaching of God's Word and their faithful example.

Obviously the meaning of the word "rulers" in these verses is broader than a reference to elders. The church at Jerusalem had apostles (Acts 11:1; 15:6); elders (Acts 11:30); prophets (Acts 11:27); evangelists (Acts 6:5; 8:5; 21:8); teachers (Acts 5:42, et. al.); and leading men (Acts 15:22).

By the time the book of Hebrews was written, the church in Jerusalem was in danger of a mass apostasy, and they were commanded to call to remembrance their former great leaders who had spoken to them the Word of God, and who had set the example of faithful endurance to the end. A congregation's leaders are those who instruct the congregation in the Word of God and set the example of faithful, diligent service.

In verse 17, the apostle counsels the believers to submit to their leaders and to obey them. He further admonishes leaders concerning their grave responsibilities—they are to watch for the souls of their brethren and give account to the Lord for their leadership.

Finally, in verse 24, Paul tells the Hebrews "metaphorically to welcome to their heart or understanding" their leaders (Bagster, p. 56). Here there are two points to be gained: (1) the congregation is to remember, to obey, to submit, and to mentally embrace its leaders; and (2) the leaders are to speak to the people the Word of God, to set the example of faithful Christian service, and to watch for the souls of the brethren as men who must account for their leadership to the Lord. These leaders may be elders, evangelists, or teachers, depending on the circumstances of the congregation.

Having now established that there were congregations in the New Testament who had rulers who were not designated as elders, let us now see whom these rulers might be in our non-miraculous age. Specifically, let us consider the office of the teacher.

It is true that in New Testament times, evangelists were leaders of congregations that did not have presbyters, and they are leaders of similar congregations today—particularly of those they have planted. However, we have many congregations which were not established by an evangelist, or if they were, they are no longer working closely with him. It was no different in New Testament days.

The dispersion in Acts 8:1-4 is evidence of this type of situation. Thousands of Christians went everywhere preaching the Word and establishing congregations (Acts 11:19-26). Such congregations are to work under the leadership of their teachers until such time as they have attained the maturity to have bishops directing them.

The New Testament recognizes the office of the teacher, and this fact is one that has been minimized, and at times, entirely overlooked among churches today. The office of the teacher is one of legitimacy and importance. It is the forgotten office of leadership.

The Forgotten Office of Leadership: The Teacher

Romans 12:7

This passage lists teaching as one of the gifts given to the church. The word used for gifts in verse 6 designates spiritual gifts. During the age of revelation, men were given gifts which enabled them to teach by inspiration the Word of God and to exhort men to obey it. Alexander Campbell said, in the *Millennial Harbinger*, October 1835:

A teacher and an exhorter may sometimes be found in the same person; but they are not the same office, nor the same work. The establishment and the development of truth is the work of the teacher . . . a teacher ascertains and develops truth, and supports it by arguments. . . It would greatly enhance the value of their public services if they would always have some point or points in view when they arise to speak.

1 Corinthians 12:28

In his discussion of spiritual gifts, Paul declares that God "set" some in the church to be teachers. The word "set" is *etheto*, which means "to set, fix, establish, to make, appoint, to make, set or appoint

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for oneself" (Abbot-Smith, p. 445). It is used in several interesting passages. For example, in Acts 20:28, "the Holy Ghost hath *made* you overseers"; in 1 Timothy 1:12, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, *putting* me into the ministry"; in 1 Timothy 2:7, "Whereunto I am *ordained* a preacher, and an apostle . . . a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity"; and in 2 Timothy 1:11, "Whereunto I am *appointed* a preacher, and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles" [emphasis mine—AWB].

It seems to be in accord with the usage of this word "set," that the congregation which does not have men who qualify to be elders should appoint men who are qualified to be teachers to be their leaders.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Spiritual gifts were given to these men to enable them to fill these offices during the age of revelation. Verse 13 states the limitation of the miraculous powers—"until we come to the unity of the faith." Miraculous gifts were given to these men so that they could equip the saints to do the work of the ministry and edify the body until the revelation was completed.

However, after the completion of the record, the saints still need to be equipped for the work of the ministry and the edification of the body. The roles of apostles and prophets have ceased because they are by nature miraculous ministries; but evangelists, pastors, and teachers continue to equip the saints, by using the completed revelation as their basis for instruction.

Five offices are described here. As Beet notes, "The pastors and teachers are grammatically closely joined as describing either the same office or offices closely allied" (J. Agar Beet, **Commentary on Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon**, p. 337). In view of the fact that in both Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, the rulers or governors are separated from the teachers, it is apparent that these last two offices share the same article because their work is so closely aligned. In other words, it seems evident that the elders and teachers here share the same article because both work so closely together in the local congregation. Godet says, "In the enumeration, Eph. 4:11, the teacher is at once associated with and distinguished from the pastor" (Godet, **Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans**, p. 432).

The following two passages clearly indicate that there was the office of the teacher in the New Testament church:

Acts 13:1-3

In this passage the church at Antioch is reckoned to have prophets and teachers. No elders are mentioned here, yet the congregation had a scriptural system of government. Evidently, these men were gathered in session together either discussing or doing the work of ministering. They were doing the work of leadership. The teachers and prophets ordained Barnabus and Saul and sent them out. Teachers are accredited a position of equality in authority with the prophets in this matter. This passage illustrates all that we have been teaching to this point.

2 Timothy 2:2

This passage clearly carries the work of the teacher beyond the age of miracles. Paul writes to Timothy who is laboring with the elders at Ephesus and assigns Timothy, the evangelist, the duty of training teachers so that the work of instructing the body can be carried on by the next generation of leaders. The word "commit" is *parathou*, and means "to inculcate, to deposit, commit to the charge of, entrust, to command" (Bagster, p. 306).

The office of the teacher was to be continued throughout the Christian age. But who are the men who should fill this office today? Is every speaker in the congregation a teacher? How should the brethren choose their teachers? These are vital, pressing questions that must be answered so we can begin to correctly implement God's will for our congregations. The Scriptures clearly delineate who is a teacher.

Who is the Teacher?

2 Timothy 2:2; Romans 12:7

A teacher is a man who has demonstrated by his life that he is a faithful, dependable, trustworthy man. Furthermore, he is a man who is capable of instructing others in the doctrine of God's Word. Not all who understand the doctrine are capable of teaching it to others, and not all who are capable of teaching it to others are de-

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pendable and trustworthy men. Both qualities are essential in the life of a teacher.

Ephesians 4:12

The aim of evangelists, pastors, and teachers must be the full development of the church. They are to equip the church for the work and battle of the Christian life. The first preposition translated "for" is **pros**; the other two are **eis**. As Beet notes, they are used for the further and nearer objects in view (p. 338). In other words, the officers are to equip the saints (which is the nearer object in view) so that the saints can do the work of the ministry and edify the body (which is the further object in view). "God designs that, through the agency of the officers of the Church and through the consequent progress of the Church as a whole, each individual Christian, standing as he does in special relation to God, may attain his full development," (Beet, p. 338). Where there are no evangelists and pastors then, this work of equipping the saints falls into the capable hands of teachers.

Hebrews 5:12-14

Teachers are thoroughly conversant with the fundamental truths of the gospel. They are men who have grown beyond the dependence immature or newborn Christians have upon basic simple teachings. These fundamental doctrines have become so ingrained they are automatic. Teachers are men who desire the strong meat or difficult teachings of God's word, who have become skillful or experienced in the word of righteousness. They are sound in doctrine—mature Christians, not newborn babes nor slow-learning children. They are of full age, and their senses have become well-trained by constant practice in distinguishing good from evil. These men can read and understand the Word. They can examine the trends of the world and rightly apply the knowledge they have learned. In summary, they are wise men.

The word rendered "having been exercised" is from **gegumnasmena**. It is used for the training an athlete undergoes, and is suggestive of the tremendous self-discipline an athlete must exhibit in order to develop his muscles. Just as the athlete practices in order to develop his skill, the teacher is an avid spiritual exerciser. He is not dull or sluggish. His training is by habit rigorous.

All of these are the characteristics of mature men properly exercising the office of the teacher.

James 3:1

The work of the teacher is not for every one. We have many good speakers who are not mature enough to be teachers; we need them and they should be encouraged to continue in their development, but they are not teachers. Teachers are mature Christians who are willing to shoulder a grave responsibility—training the brethren in the Word of God. This passage (Jas. 3:2-12) is usually interpreted to inveigh against backbiting, talebearing, whispering, and the like, and by legitimate extension it does. However, the direct application must not be missed. Specifically, the object of the passage is the teacher and the grave responsibility that he assumes when he accepts that office. The writer's point is that it is through the power of the spoken word that men's lives can be turned around (3:2-5), and it is the duty of the teacher to do it correctly. It is very easy for the simple and unsuspecting to be led astray by persuasive but incorrect purveyors of God's Word. Manifestly, the office of the teacher involves far more than making a talk once a month. God's teacher should be guided by the principle of the watchman on the wall which God gave to Ezekiel. The watchman's obligation was to sound the warning promptly and accurately. In so doing he delivered himself from the blood of his hearers. This is precisely the principle to which Paul referred when he told the elders at Ephesus that he was "pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

How Shall Congregations Implement This Plan?

Perhaps you are thinking, "How can I go back to my home church and put this system into action?" Implementation of this scriptural plan should be slow but sure. It will not be easy. It will take time. We are not advocating the ouster of current leaders and speakers—instead, let us begin by teaching and training the members the truth on this matter. Give people time to think about it and opportunity to study and question the parts they find unclear. If you are a teacher, begin to do the work of a teacher if you are not already doing it. Begin to train men to teach others.

When the time is propitious, allow the congregation to choose and appoint its teachers. Remember, the New Testament church often set apart men for special works with fasting, laying on of hands, and

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prayer. Examples are found in Acts 6 (the seven who waited on tables); Acts 15 (Judas and Silas); 2 Corinthians 8 (the messengers to deliver the money to the needy saints). These are all works of lesser significance than the instruction of the local church in the doctrine of God's Word.

Having set these men apart in the office of teachers, continue to practice mutual edification, but make it essential to train those who participate. Continue to encourage your speakers to develop into teachers. Stay in touch with all of the members. Begin to study and prepare for the eldership.

Remember, God is not the author of confusion, and confusion is what we are experiencing now in many churches. God has left us a plan for immature churches; if we use it we will develop mature churches with biblical and effective elderships. We cannot allow the difficulty of achieving this to deter us. Let us begin where we are and grow from there into mature congregations.

Postscript

Why are so many of our current elderships experiencing such grave difficulties in carrying on the work? I believe we overstress a few qualifications—husband of one wife; faithful children; not given to wine; apt to teach—to the neglect of other, equally important qualifications. “These ought ye to have done and not left the other undone.” What of the characteristics of holiness, justice, soberness, vigilance, and not being self-willed?

We have not discussed enough the function of elders. Eldership is a life work. It does not start happening the day a man is ordained. It began when he was a teacher and even before. Men do not become leaders when they are old, if they have not been developing that skill virtually all of their lives.

We have also overlooked the need for elders to be able to resolve the differences among their own number amicably and scripturally.

Most of all, we have overlooked the God-given maturation process. Consequently, we should not be surprised if Acts 20:28-31 comes to pass before our eyes. 1349 Ferrari Ct., Manteca, CA 95336

Predestination

(Eph. 1:1-12)

by Murl R. Helwig

Ephesus was a city of Ionia in Asia Minor. It was once a great metropolis in that part of the world, and it was located at the mouth of the Cayster River on the shore of the Aegean Sea. This letter was addressed to the church at Ephesus, but it is thought to be a general letter that was circulated among several churches. The instructions contained in the epistle are of such a nature that they could be applied to almost any church or congregation.

The Ephesian congregation consisted of both Jews and Gentiles according to Acts 19:8-10. The Apostle Paul wanted to show that both Jew and Gentile are accepted and received equally by the Lord. The Jews had always been reluctant to receive the Gentiles because they believed they were God's people and the Gentiles were not. Therefore, it was almost inconceivable to them that the Gentiles could be received of God in the same manner as the Jews. Both Jews and Gentiles were to be received by faith and not by works of the Mosaic law.

Verse 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God: The Apostle Paul thought it an honor to be one of the apostles. The position, his apostleship, that he held was given to him by the will of God and not by the will of men. He was personally selected by Christ to be an apostle. Therefore, his employer was Christ and not man. This is apparent because of what he wrote in Galatians 1:10, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

to the saints which are at Ephesus: The Apostle Paul had spent a good deal of time in the city of Ephesus, but his salutation was almost like that of a stranger to the church there. The most logical reason for addressing the church in this manner was because the let-

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ter was possibly meant from the beginning to be a general letter. It was a letter, not only for the saints at Ephesus, but for the faithful everywhere. However, it was probably first sent to the church at Ephesus, and then later distributed to other churches. Therefore, the phrase "to the saints which are at Ephesus" has reference to those who professed Christianity, and were members of the Lord's church at Ephesus. It has reference to "holy persons," but these persons are not any different than that which the gospel of Jesus Christ expects and requires of every Christian.

to the faithful in Christ Jesus: This expression refers to the believers who reside outside of the city of Ephesus and may come in contact with this letter. It also gives the letter a general appeal to all Christians. The material or content of this epistle is of a general nature and not limited to certain regions or to specific congregations. Paul addressed the letter to the Corinthians after the same fashion in 1 Corinthians 1:2 stating, "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Verse 2

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace describes a gift that a Christian may obtain. It is that which attracts and beautifies the Christian life. At the very mention of the word "grace," it should draw one's mind to the generosity of God.

"Peace" should not be thought of as the absence of trouble, hardships, and distress. Instead, it refers to all that makes for man's highest good. It is that which makes life worth living. The Christian's peace is independent of external circumstances. It is that confidence in the heart when one knows he is following and obeying the Lord's commands. It refers to all the satisfaction that one receives when he is in friendship or fellowship with God and Christ.

Verse 3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: The word "blessed" describes the intrinsic character of God. He should have universal and eternal praise for several reasons: First of all, He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all who obey Him. Second, He is the Father of mercies; all mercies and blessings flow from Him. Third, He gives comfort, consolation, and happiness.

who hath blessed us: It has reference to the apostles and to all Christians, or, in other words, to all the saints in general. They were a peculiar people who had been separated from the world, and they were expected to remain separated and consecrated to God. It refers to individuals and not to particular nations.

with all spiritual blessings: This phrase refers to every possible blessing for time and eternity. The Christian has been blessed with the pure doctrine of the gospel, salvation, justification, and sanctification which builds up his faith in God, the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian or believer is a citizen of heaven, and, therefore, the spiritual blessings have more meaning and significance to him than the temporal things of life. The spiritual blessings are to be noted in contrast to the temporal blessings. God gives to man both types of blessings, spiritual and temporal. However, the blessings he should long for the most should be, and are, the spiritual blessings, not the temporal blessings. The spiritual blessings are those that transcend the bounds of earth. Health, riches, and the daily necessities of life are merely temporal blessings.

in heavenly places in Christ: In this phrase the word "places" is supplied by the translators in an effort to make the passage clearer, but the word does not appear in the original text. Some have thought it to be more properly translated to mean "all spiritual blessings in things pertaining to heaven," "fitted to prepare one for heaven," or "tending toward heaven." It would appear to be more logical to say "things" rather than "places." This then would apply to the church and the Christian's sojourn upon the earth. The ultimate dwelling place for the Christian, the citizen of Christ's kingdom, is not on this earth, but it will be in heaven. While the Christian is here on the earth, he is dwelling here as a stranger and sojourner. Therefore, the Christian is blessed with all spiritual blessings in things preparing him for heaven or his final abode. He should learn to think and

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meditate on the spiritual or the heavenly things. His affections should be on the things above.

Verse 4

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

According as he hath chosen us in him: The phrase "hath chosen" is from a word which originally carried the meaning "to lay out together." It has the idea of making a selection from among different objects or things. Therefore, those that were chosen by God were chosen from what consisted of many varied groups and persons.

Before going further in this study, it is important that we try to determine who is referred to by the pronouns "us" and "we" that are found throughout Ephesians 1:4-12. One thing that must be noted is that not all commentators or students of the Scripture are united on this point. I believe that it would be fair to say that the majority of them whom I have consulted believe they refer to "all saints." I would not dispute the fact that these pronouns do refer to "saints," but I am not sure that in each passage they refer to "all saints." The Apostle Paul, the writer, includes himself with those who were referred to by these pronouns. He uses several expressions in this passage that lead me to believe that he was referring only to the "apostles and prophets of the New Testament," and not to "all saints," in some of these verses. The following are several passages where these expressions are found referring to the apostles and/or the New Testament prophets: Ephesians 1:8, "he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." Ephesians 1:9, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will . . ." Paul also supported what he just mentioned in Ephesians 3:3-5 by saying, "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery . . . as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Ephesians 1:12, "who first trusted in Christ." The Apostle Paul said all of this in contrast to what he said in Ephesians 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

The purpose of the election of the apostles and prophets was not for their own benefit, but it was for the benefit of everyone. Benjamin Franklin, in *The Gospel Preacher*, said:

The grace of election, of being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, was to preach the Gospel; to unite the Jews and Gentiles in one body, and to make all men see, or to make a revelation to the world.

before the foundation of the world: This election was made before the foundation of the world or before the world was made. Therefore, it must refer to the physical world and not to the people in the world. He elected that holy persons of all nations were to be His children or His people. This plan was not made on the spur of the moment, but its planning went before the foundation of the world. There was nothing temporary in these plans which shows the great love that the Father has for all mankind.

Before the religious system of the Jews was put in place, God had chosen the Gentiles to be saved by faith and obedience to Jesus Christ. The Jews thought of themselves as being God's chosen or elected people. They wanted to monopolize all of the salvation of God. He wanted the Jews to know that God had chosen the Gentiles before the world was made to be his people through faith. This should have humbled the proud Jew. Paul wants to show that the Gentiles had just as much a part of the plan of God as did the Jews.

that we should be holy and without blame before him: Christians are not to have spot, blemish, or imperfection, but having their inward holiness agreeing with their outward consecration. It was to be a moral righteousness and not a superficial righteousness that is only displayed outwardly. The righteousness of the Pharisees was an outward showing, but it was lacking the inward conviction necessary to please God. It would be well to remember that, according to the Jewish law, an animal that was to be sacrificed had to be inspected first. If the animal was blemished in any way, it was then rejected as being unfit to offer to God. Therefore, those who were without spot, blemish or imperfection, were the ones elected or chosen to be holy. This, however, should not be construed to mean they were made holy and blameless as a result of this election, but because they were holy, they were then elected.

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in love: Love should be the motive that prompts every action. It was God's love for man that prompted Him to give to mankind the plan of salvation. Love should prompt man also to obey the will of God. Love should direct him in all his relations with his fellowman. The love that was lost when man fell because of sin was restored by the redemption that is obtained in Christ.

Verse 5

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

God's love for all mankind was what prompted or caused Him to predestinate them unto the adoption of children. The predetermining or predestinating of them was done before the foundation of the world.

Having predestinated: The word "predestinated" in the original language is defined by a limit or a boundary. The word would literally mean "to define a boundary beforehand." Originally, it was a geographical term, but it can be applied to anything concluded, or determined. In the **Emphatic Diaglott** it is translated "having in love previously marked us out for sonship through Christ Jesus himself." Here the word is used to indicate God's predetermination to admit the Gentiles to sonship by adoption. Their admission would be without circumcision or any of the rites of the Mosaic law. They would have all of the privileges of His people or His church. Therefore, the bringing in of the Gentiles into the church, and giving to them all of the blessings and privileges of the saved, was according to His divine and eternal will or purpose.

Albert Barnes had this to say when speaking of those things that are in the mind and will of God before and after they have been revealed:

What God does, he always meant to do. What he permits, he always meant to permit. I may add further, that if it is right to do it, it was right to intend to do it. If there is no injustice or partiality in the act itself, there is no injustice or partiality in the intention to perform it. If it is right to save a soul, it was always right to intend to save it. If it is right to condemn a sinner to woe, it was right to intend to do it.

us: There is no specific designation of races or nations of people referred to in this verse. It must be concluded that it refers to individuals or a group of individuals. A nation is made up of individuals, but they are limited by an ethnic distinction or a geographical area. The Apostle Paul has included himself with those who were predestinated. Paul was not a heathen, but he of his own free will believed and obeyed the will of the Lord.

unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself: This term belongs to the believers of all nations being adopted into the family of God. It is interesting to note that Jesus was never described as the adopted Son of God. These believers are God's children by adoption. They are the children of God by the resurrection (Lk. 20:36). Therefore, because of the adoption, they are made partakers of the Divine nature.

William Barclay makes the following comments on the subject of adoption and the significance of it for the Christian:

The ritual of adoption must have been very impressive. It was carried out by a symbolic sale in which copper and scales were used. Twice the real father sold his son, and twice he symbolically bought him back; finally he sold him a third time, and at the third sale he did not buy him back. After this the adopting father had to go to the *praetor*, one of the principal Roman magistrates, and plead the case for the adoption, and only after all this had been gone through was the adoption complete. But when the adoption was complete, it was complete indeed. The person who had been adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family, and completely lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law he was a new person. So new was he that even all debts and obligations connected with his previous family were canceled out and abolished as if they had never existed.

That is what Paul says that God has done for us. We were absolutely in the power of sin and of the world; and God, through Jesus, took us out of that power into His power; and that adoption cancels and wipes out the past and we are made new. We have passed

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from the family of the world and of evil into the family of God.

From Barclay's comments one can see that the adoption process brought about a radical and complete change in an individual's life. Therefore, the adoption into the family of God will also bring about a complete change as one becomes a partaker of the spiritual blessings.

according to the good pleasure of his will: It is according to the eternal benevolence of God. He showed mercy on them because He chose to show mercy on them. When He did this, He did not act nor react to something that man had done but did it freely, just as He had done in the original creation.

Verse 6

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

To the praise of the glory of his grace: Christians are to praise God for the richness and fullness of His grace. His grace is not only a gift, but it also shows the divine and benevolent character of God. Those who have been adopted into the family of God are the same as those who have received the glorious gift. The plan to adopt both Jew and Gentile into the same family was formulated before the foundation or creation of the world. God planned it without any prompting or encouraging by man; therefore, it must be concluded that it was God's unmerited love toward mankind that provided it. Those who have been adopted into the family of God have the responsibility to live and conduct their lives in such a manner that His grace may be magnified. His grace is worthy of the highest praise. We should remember what M. R. Vincent said about the word "grace" used in this verse: "Grace is an act of God, and not a state into which He brings us."

wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: It is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ that one is made acceptable to the Father. Therefore, without coming in contact with the shedding of the blood of Jesus there is no remission of sins, which makes it impossible to be accepted of the Father.

Verse 7

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins: The ransom that was paid to bring man redemption was the shed blood of Jesus. Redemption is being free from the power, the guilt, and the penalty of sin. Both Jews and Gentiles have redemption through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. His death brought a full and complete pardon from sin.

It should be remembered that one did not have the power to redeem himself. This was true under the Old Testament law according to Leviticus 25:48, which says, "After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him." A bond servant could not redeem himself, but one of his kinsman could redeem him. Therefore, Christ redeemed man when he could not redeem himself, as it says in Matthew 20:28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

according to the riches of his grace: The redemption was according to the greatness and the goodness of the Father.

Verse 8

Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

James Macknight interpreted the verse by saying: "The knowledge of which he hath made to abound in us apostles; with all the wisdom and prudence necessary to the right manifestation of the same to the world."

The apostles were given complete instructions in the heavenly things by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to them God's plan for redeeming man. The plan and the devising of such a plan was the wisdom of God.

However, prudence is the practical application of wisdom. It concerns the future regarding how something will be done. Prudence then would be the executing of the wisdom of God that was revealed to the apostles. They had to exercise prudence in making all of the

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required arrangements for the carrying out of God's redeeming plan for mankind.

Verse 9

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will: The adoption of children, and the timing for the revelation of His plan for redeeming mankind, were always in the mind and will of God. Therefore, it was regarded as a mystery because it had not yet been revealed. God waited for just the right time, or the fullness of time, in which to reveal this mystery that had been hidden from the beginning. The word "mystery" is commonly used today to mean something that is unintelligible or above our comprehension. However, it was never used as such in the New Testament. Therefore, it was a mystery only because it had not been revealed. It was, however, not a mystery because one was incapable of understanding or comprehending it. In regard to the word "mystery," Albert Barnes said:

It means there is some doctrine or fact which has been concealed, or which has not before been fully revealed, or which has been set forth only by figures and symbols. When the doctrine is made known, it may be as clear and plain as any other.

The mystery was revealed to the apostles. The plan of God to bring in the Gentiles, so that they would receive the same privileges as the Jews, was a mystery in that it was a hidden plan of God: God did not choose to reveal it in the beginning. The individual should rest assured that the things that are not revealed are those things that he does not need to know. The revelation that God has made through the inspired Scriptures is sufficient for him.

according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself: It was the benevolent plan of God to redeem mankind through the shedding of the blood of Christ, therefore, making the Gentiles heirs of the everlasting salvation just as the Jews. The plan was made without any prompting by man or the creation, but God did it by His own free will or design.

Verse 10

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times: It has reference to the gospel dispensation when all things that had been preparing before the foundation of the world came together. It was the consummation of all preceding dispensations, and the completion of God's plan to redeem both Jew and Gentile in one body, the church.

he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: Christ had power over all things because of the part that He had in the creation. However, the unity that was established in the beginning was taken from Him by sin, even though He knew no sin. When Jesus died on the cross, being a voluntary sacrifice, all that had been lost by sin was restored in His resurrection. All believers, without discrimination of peoples, kindred, or tongues, are made one in Christ. The ultimate and supreme power of Christ is demonstrated by His ability to bring all things together in Him, both in heaven and on earth. Therefore, Christ being the head of the church has all power and authority over every Christian. Matthew Henry made this comment concerning this verse:

All the lines of divine revelation meet in Christ; all religion centers in him. Jews and Gentiles were united to each other by being both united to Christ. Things in heaven and things on earth are gathered together in him; peace made, correspondence settled, between heaven and earth, through him.

God looks forward to the time when the perfect unity that was lost will be restored. That perfect unity was broken by sin and can only be restored through Christ.

Verse 11

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

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In whom also we have obtained an inheritance: The word in the original language translated "have obtained," according to M. R. Vincent, literally means, "to determine, choose, or assign by lot." The assigning of a portion of land was common under the Old Testament, and it was easily understood by the people to whom the Apostle Paul was writing. They had been assigned an inheritance, both Jews and Gentiles. The promise was first made to Abraham and his descendants, the Jews, but now includes both Jews and Gentiles. They have been adopted into the kingdom of Heaven. All of this has been brought about according to God's eternal plan which was formed before the foundation of the world. His will was not changed or altered, but all things happened according to the divine plan which He devised without the influence of any man. His will is always good, wise, and gracious.

being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: Please refer to the notes on "predestinated" that are found in verse 5.

Verse 12

That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

The apostles, the messengers of God, were the first to trust in Christ. They were the praise of His glory and were the means of preaching the gospel of Christ to all the world. Therefore, by the preaching of this message, the gospel, the Gentiles were brought to salvation by God's foreordained plan.

Conclusion

The plan to bring all men together in one body has been the mystery of God before the foundation or formation of the world. This plan was predestinated or determined beforehand that God would bring all this about through His Son, Jesus Christ. It was not a recent plan that God thought of at the last moment, nor was it prompted by some act of man. It was a plan that was motivated by God's love for mankind. The fact that it was planned before the foundation of the world shows God's great love for mankind. The perfect unity that had been destroyed by the entrance of sin into the lives of men has now been restored. Through the process of adoption, both Jew

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and Gentile are brought into one body, the church. All things are united in Christ because of the blood that He shed for the remission of sin. Let us, therefore, as Christians live our lives "to the praise of the glory of His grace." 7446 Saddlewood St., San Antonio, TX 78238

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

"The Gift of the Holy Spirit"

by George Battey

Acts 2:37-39 ³⁷Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸Then 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. ³⁹For 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.

Our desire in this study is to focus in on the phrase "gift of the Holy Ghost." Exactly what is it? How was it received? What did it do for Christians? Is this gift still available for Christians today? These are some of the questions we hope to answer.

Mark 16 (A Parallel Passage)

To begin our study of Acts 2:38, let us remember this important point: Peter is preaching exactly what Jesus told him to preach, and he is promising men exactly what Jesus told him to promise them. The question, then, is: What did Jesus tell Peter to preach to men and to promise them? The answer is found in Mark 16:15-18:

Mark 16:15-18 ¹⁵And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Here was Peter's assignment: He was to preach that men were to believe and be baptized in order to be saved. Also, he was to promise them that miraculous signs would follow "them that believe."

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The second half of this passage has been the center of much controversy through the years. Was Jesus promising miraculous power to all believers, and if He was, why don't all believers today have these powers? There are three popular explanations for this passage.

Interpretation # 1

First, some men say: Jesus was promising miraculous power **ONLY TO HIS APOSTLES**. This interpretation is based on the grammar of the passage. In Mark 16:15 Jesus was speaking to "them," that is, to the apostles. In verse 16 Jesus speaks of "he" who believes and gets baptized. Finally, in verse 17, Jesus uses the plural pronoun "them" again, when He says, "These signs shall follow them that believe." It is argued that the plural word "them" in verse 17 cannot refer back and include the singular "he" that believes in verse 16; therefore, it must refer back to the apostles mentioned in verse 15.

Now, if this reasoning is valid, it is easy to understand why we don't see men today with these miraculous abilities. Jesus, according to this reasoning, was actually promising miraculous abilities only to the apostles, and when they died, the gifts would have died with them.

Keep in mind, though, that this argument rests on grammar alone. It would become necessary to prove that the word "them" absolutely cannot include "he" that believes. However, if the plural pronoun "them" can include the singular "he" that believes, this interpretation becomes worthless.

The question before us then is this: Is it possible for this plural pronoun "them" to refer back and include the singular "he" that believes? The answer is: YES! Let us consider a similar example in John 15:6. Here Jesus speaks of a single individual: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." But in the same sentence the Lord switches to the plural: "Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The "them" that are being gathered and cast into the fire is a collection of every single person that does not abide in Jesus. It would be wrong to argue that the plural pronoun "them" cannot include the singular "man."

This example proves it is grammatically and logically possible for a plural pronoun to include a singular individual.¹ Furthermore,

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if Jesus was speaking only to His apostles, He likely would have said something like: "These signs will follow you who believe . . ." Finally, since we read in the New Testament of more than just the apostles performing these miracles, it seems safe to say that Jesus was speaking of more than just the apostles in Mark 16:17!

There still remains a puzzling question. If Jesus was saying that miraculous signs would follow the one who believes and is baptized, why didn't He just say, "These signs shall follow him that believes"? In other words, why did He use the plural word "them" if He had in mind the singular man that believes?

The Lord had a good reason for wording this exactly as He did. If He had said, "These signs shall follow him that believes . . ." Jesus would have been saying that every single person baptized would be able to perform every single miracle mentioned. Everyone would be able to cast out devils, speak with new tongues, take up serpents, drink deadly poison without harm, and heal the sick. However, by wording things as He did, He is saying believers as a whole would be able to work these miracles, but no one person would necessarily be able to do them all! This fits well with what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:29-30, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" The answer to these rhetorical questions is: NO! Not everyone could work every single miracle, but Jesus never promised they could! As a whole, believers could perform all the miracles mentioned, but no one person could do them all.

Interpretation # 2

Having demonstrated that Jesus was not speaking of just the apostles in Mark 16:17, we come now to the second most popular interpretation which says: Jesus was promising miraculous power to ALL BELIEVERS throughout ALL AGES and miracles are still possible today!

The problem with this explanation is that it isolates this text from all other passages that speak about miracles. One of the greatest mistakes made in Bible study is to read a single passage and draw conclusions without hearing any other passage on the subject. To illustrate, some read the passage about "give to him that asketh of thee," and without reading any other passage on giving, they con-

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clude we must give to every man whatever he may ask us without exception. This is a mistake. There are other passages on the subject of giving and lending, and we must take them all into consideration before drawing a conclusion. Again, some read the passage about obeying the king, and without reading any other passage, they conclude we must obey the king even when he requires something sinful! This is a faulty conclusion because it fails to consider other passages which speak on the subject of obeying the king. Finally, we might mention the most common example of men who read a passage about faith in Christ, and without reading any other passage, they conclude that faith only will save. Again, this is a faulty conclusion for it fails to consider other passages on the subject of salvation.

This is exactly what some have done with Mark 16. They read this passage as though it was the final word on miracles—as though there was not another passage in the entire Bible about the nature, purpose, and duration of miracles. This is a mistake! Mark 16 is not the final word on miracles. All the passage does is state a fact: Miracles shall follow baptized believers; and this is exactly what did happen. The passage does not say how long the miracles would continue, how men would receive these abilities, whether they would receive these abilities immediately after baptism, whether every single Christian would receive these miracles, or whether each Christian would possess the same powers. To learn the answers to all of these questions we must turn elsewhere. We must be willing to accept the testimony of all passages before drawing any final conclusions. Again, all Mark 16 does is state a fact: Miraculous signs will follow believers! By reading Acts 8:18, we learn how men received these powers: “through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given.” By reading 1 Corinthians 12:29-30, we learn that not all Christians possessed the same powers. And again, by reading 1 Corinthians 13, we learn when these miracles would end. Notice verses 8-10 of that chapter:

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

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Before all the New Testament Scriptures were completely revealed, Paul said he and the other apostles "knew in part and prophesied in part." No one knew the entire story of God's will. But "when that which is perfect is come," when the New Testament Scriptures are perfected and completed, "then that which is in part shall be done away." Miracles would end when the revelation of the New Testament Scriptures was perfected—completed!

By taking all of these passages together, we get the whole story about miracles, but if we isolate any one passage and ignore the rest, we lose the true meaning of the text.

Interpretation # 3

Now, we have seen it will not do to argue that Jesus was speaking only to the apostles in Mark 16:17. Also, we have seen that we cannot isolate this text and ignore other passages which speak on the subject of miracles. This now brings us to the third, and what I consider the only possible conclusion: Jesus was promising miraculous power to baptized BELIEVERS OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

Admittedly, you cannot read Mark 16 alone and reach this conclusion. You must be willing to read and accept other passages to reach this conclusion, but that is okay; this is what the Lord intended! If the Lord had intended that Mark 16:17 be the final word on miracles, He would never have written anything else on the subject! The fact that He did reveal more about miracles proves we must look beyond Mark 16:17 for further information as to whom the Lord was speaking about, and how long these miracles would continue.

Summary

In summary, the Lord gave Peter this assignment: (1) he was to preach that men must believe and be baptized so as to be saved, and (2) he was to promise these believers that miraculous signs would follow them if they believe.

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Looking at Acts 2

When we come to Acts 2:38 there is a striking similarity to Mark 16:16-18.

Mark 16: (1) believe + baptized = saved, (2) miraculous power

Acts 2: (1) repent + baptized = saved, (2) "gift of the Spirit"

It is tempting to say that when Peter promised the "gift of the Spirit" to these people who obeyed, he was promising them the same thing Jesus told him to promise in Mark 16:17.² Here's the important question: Do the Scriptures ever use the expression "gift of the Spirit" to refer to miraculous power? The answer is: YES! The phrase "gift of the Spirit" occurs only twice in the Bible, and in this second reference it clearly refers to miraculous power. Notice Acts 10:44-46:

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.

From this key passage we learn that the expression "gift of the Spirit" can indeed refer to miraculous power. We have now two passages before us: Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:45. Both passages use this expression "gift of the Spirit." Acts 10 is the easier of the two to understand—it refers to miraculous power. Acts 2 is more difficult to understand. Now, when two passages speak on the same subject, common sense would seem to say that the easy passage ought to help explain the more difficult passage. Many reputed scholars concur with this approach to Scripture. Milton Terry in **Biblical Hermeneutics** writes:

When a writer has treated a given subject in different parts of his writings, or when different writers have treated the same subject, it is both justice to the writers, and important in interpretation, to collate and compare all that is written. The obscure or doubtful passages are to be explained by what is plain and simple (p. 186).

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If we follow this line of reasoning, we must say: The "gift of the Spirit" in Acts 2:38 is a promise of miraculous power to those who would obey the gospel.

Testing the Definition

It is one thing, though, to define a phrase and say, "This is what it *could* mean," and it is another thing to say, "This is what it *does* mean"! What we want to do is focus on the context of Acts 2 and see if this definition will fit comfortably in the chapter. In other words, does a promise of miraculous power fit naturally in the setting of Acts 2, or are we forcing upon the text an unnatural interpretation? Let us go back to the context of Acts 2 and see.

Acts 1:4-8

The apostles were given a promise. Jesus promised them that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in just a few days just as John had predicted.

Acts 2:1-4

We see this wonderful event taking place.

Acts 2:5-13

Unbelievers flocked into the street to investigate the commotion they were hearing. When they assembled in the street, they witnessed the disciples of Christ speaking miraculously in various languages.

An important question is asked by the audience in verse 12, "What meaneth this?" Take note of the pronoun "this"—What meaneth "this"? This pronoun will occur several times throughout the chapter.

Acts 2:14-21

Peter became the spokesman on behalf of the disciples. He answers the question the audience asked:

Acts 2:16-18 ¹⁶But *this* is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ¹⁷And 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

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your old men shall dream dreams: ¹⁸And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

In other words, "this" display of miraculous power was exactly what God had "promised" through the prophets!

Look carefully now at these groups mentioned by Joel:

Pour out my Spirit on ALL FLESH (that is, upon Jews and Gentiles)

Sons and Daughters—indicating there would be no discrimination based on gender when it came to pouring out the Spirit upon "all flesh."

Young and Old—indicating there would be no discrimination based on age.

Servants and Handmaids—indicating there would be no discrimination based on social positions.

Remember these groups. They will become very important when we look at verse 39.

Acts 2:22-36

Having explained the miraculous power of the disciples, Peter now turns his attention to preaching the Gospel to these unbelievers.³ He spends a great deal of time speaking of Jesus' resurrection, trying to prove that Jesus is not a dead prophet, but a living Saviour.

Peter offers three forms of proof that Jesus is resurrected. First, in verses 25-31 Peter appeals to the Old Testament and demonstrates that the resurrection should be believed because of the sacred Scriptures; second, in verse 32 he appeals to himself and the other apostles as being eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ; and third, in verse 33 he appeals to the miracles which the audience is beholding as proof of the resurrection.

Notice carefully what Peter said in regard to this third proof: "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" (v. 33). Focus on the pronoun "this." The audience had asked, "What meaneth this?" (v. 12). Peter told them that "this" miraculous power was the fulfillment of an Old

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Testament prophecy (v. 16). Once again, in this verse, Peter returns to "this" display of miraculous power which was being witnessed by the audience.

Jesus is the One who has shed forth "this" power of the Holy Spirit. If He were still dead, He could not have done "this"!

An Important Note

Verse 33 is admittedly difficult to understand, but it seems to be saying that what Jesus received from the Father He then poured out on the disciples.⁴

If this is the true import of the verse, let us ask two questions. First: What did Jesus receive from the Father? The answer is that He received the "promise of the Holy Spirit." Second: What did Jesus pour out on the disciples? Again, the answer is that He poured out the very thing He received from the Father. He poured out the promised Spirit which He received from the Father.

If this is an accurate interpretation of verse 33, then the miraculous power which Jesus poured out on the disciples is here called the "*promise of the Holy Spirit*"! This will be very important when we look at verse 39.

The Definition Tested (Continued)

Acts 2:37-38

Having heard this very convincing sermon, many of the Jews believed and asked what they must do to be saved. "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" (v. 38).

Now, we learned earlier from Acts 10 that this phrase "gift of the Spirit" can mean miraculous power given by the Spirit. Let's go back and read that passage again and pick up on some information we left behind the first time:

Acts 10:44-46 ⁴⁴While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. ⁴⁵And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because

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that on the Gentiles also was poured out *the gift of the Holy Ghost*. ⁴⁶For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God . . .

The "gift of the Spirit" here in Acts 10 is obviously *miraculous power from the Spirit!*

You may recall that Peter had said in Acts 2:38 that before the "gift of the Spirit" could be received one would have to repent and be baptized first. But God, in His infinite wisdom, decided to give this "gift" to Cornelius before he was baptized, to make sure no one would forbid him being baptized! Peter asked in verse 47, "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." Implied here is that if Cornelius had not received the "gift of the Spirit" first, someone might have forbidden water that he might be baptized. But, since he did receive the "gift" first, no one in his right mind could forbid water now.

This obviously was a special case. Men did not ordinarily receive this miraculous power before being baptized. Later Peter explained to the Jewish brethren what happened when Cornelius was converted:

Acts 11:15-17 ¹⁵And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, *as on us at the beginning*. ¹⁶Then 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. ¹⁷Forasmuch 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?

Notice the phrase "like gift" in verse 17. The word "like" comes from the Greek word *isos*. This word means "equal," or "same." Compare Matthew 20:12, Luke 6:34, and John 5:18, where this word also occurs.

According to verse 17, then, God gave the Gentiles the same equivalent gift as the Jews received in the beginning. This is a very significant statement! The miraculous "gift of the Spirit" which the Gentiles received is the exact same thing the apostles received in the beginning. Therefore, when we read in Acts 2:4, "They were all filled

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with the *Holy Ghost* and began to speak with other tongues . . ." we could just as scripturally say "They were all filled with the *gift of the Holy Ghost*, and began to speak with other tongues . . ."

Now, when Peter in the same chapter tells people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins and they too will receive the "gift of the Spirit" is there any doubt what he had reference to? He was referring to the miraculous power of the Spirit which the apostles themselves received just moments earlier!

Acts 2:39

Let us advance now in our study of the context. Verse 39 reads, "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." What is "the promise" which Peter refers to in this verse? It is the promise of miraculous power given by the prophet Joel (vv. 16-18). It is the promise of miraculous power which Jesus received from His Father and then in turn poured out upon His disciples (v. 33).

Compare Joel's prophecy with what Peter is saying here in verse 39:

Joel	Peter
Pour out my Spirit on all flesh (Jews and Gentiles)	Promise to you and your children and to all afar off (Jews and Gentiles)
Sons and Daughters (no discrimination based on gender)	Even as many as the Lord calls (no discrimination based on gender)
Young and Old (no discrimination based on age)	Even as many as the Lord calls (no discrimination based on age)
Servants and Handmaids (no discrimination based on social status)	Even as many as the Lord calls (no discrimination based on social status)

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Peter was not saying the "gift of the Spirit" was for all believers throughout all ages to come. He was merely demonstrating and applying what Joel's prophecy had said.

No one, then, since the days of the apostles, has ever received the "gift of the Spirit" and no one ever will because the "gift of the Spirit" is miraculous power promised to believers of the first century; and this power was to end when the revelation of God's will was perfected (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

Objection # 1

Now, there are two common objections we need to address here even though they have already been answered.

Objection # 1: If the "gift of the Spirit" was miraculous power that ended in the first century, how can we say repentance and baptism still apply today?

The answer to this objection is the same as our reply to Mark 16. The passages are parallel:

Mark 16	Acts 2
(1) The terms of salvation, and	(1) The terms of salvation, and
(2) The promise of power from the Holy Spirit	(2) The promise of power from the Holy Spirit

If we can see that the terms of salvation in Mark 16 still apply even though the miracles do not, we should be able to see the same thing in Acts 2.

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Keep in mind that neither Mark 16, nor Acts 2, is the final word on miracles. Other passages must be considered! We cannot isolate one passage to the exclusion of others that speak on the same topic. Other passages teach that miracles would come to an end, but no passage teaches that repentance and baptism would come to an end! This is why we say the terms of salvation still apply, but the miracles have ceased!

Objection # 2

Objection # 2: The promise of the "gift" is for all Christians throughout all ages! Verse 39 says, "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." How much more inclusive can you get?

At first glance this passage does seem to say the "gift of the Spirit" is for all Christians throughout all ages, but we have already demonstrated that Peter was merely explaining and applying Joel's prophecy. To help illustrate, look at Mark 16:17 again: "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues." At first glance this passage also seems to say that miracles shall follow all Christians throughout all ages! And, as mentioned at the beginning of our study, this is exactly how many people interpret the passage. We must always remember two important things:

1. Passages that seem universal can be limited by other passages!

For example, Psalms 91:11-12 says, "God shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in *all thy ways*. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." This passage seems to be universal. It seems to be saying that the angels of God will protect His saints in every single thing they may do— in "*all thy ways!*" This is exactly the way Satan quoted it to Jesus when he was tempting Jesus to jump off the temple (Mt. 4:6). But Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 to show that "*all thy ways*" is limited; it does not include ways that tempt God! By quoting Deuteronomy 6,

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Jesus demonstrated that one passage of Scripture can limit another passage.

In like manner, Acts 2:39 seems to be a universal promise that the "gift of the Spirit" would be given to all men throughout all ages. But it must be remembered that other passages can, and actually do, limit this miraculous ability to the first century (e.g. 1 Cor. 13:8-10).

2. *Anytime a promise is given, ALL CONDITIONS THAT APPLY must first be met before the promise can be received.*

For example, Acts 16:31 says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Here is the promise of salvation. To receive this promise, *all* applicable conditions must first be met.

Likewise, to receive the "gift of the Spirit" mentioned in Acts 2:38 *all* conditions must first be met before one may receive the promise.

In regard to Acts 16:31, many people make the mistake of thinking that all the conditions necessary to receive the promise of salvation are listed in that one verse. Since only belief is mentioned, they conclude it is therefore the only condition necessary for salvation. It is necessary, however, to realize that Acts 16:31 may not contain all the biblical data regarding salvation and that other passages can, and actually do, contain other conditions necessary to receive the promise. From other passages we learn that repentance (Lk. 13:3), verbal confession (Rom. 10:10), and immersion in water (Mk. 16:16) are just as necessary as belief, and unless all of these conditions are met, a man will not receive the promise of salvation. Not even the jailor in Acts 16:31 received salvation until he was baptized "the same hour of the night" (Acts 16:33).

In like manner, when many people read Acts 2:38, they make the mistake of thinking that all the conditions necessary to receive the "promise of the Spirit" are listed in that one verse. Since only repentance and baptism are mentioned, they conclude that these are the only conditions necessary in order to receive the "gift of the Spirit." It is necessary, however, to realize that Acts 2:38 may not contain all the biblical data regarding reception of the Spirit and that other passages can, and actually do, contain other conditions necessary to receive the gift. By reading Acts 8:14-18, it is evident that a necessary step in receiving the Spirit is the laying on of apostolic hands. Since

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this is a necessary condition, men today would not be able to receive this promise because men today cannot meet the final necessary condition. None of the 3000 converts on Pentecost received the Spirit until they met all these conditions.

Summary

Now, put yourself in the sandals of those people on Pentecost and imagine what you would naturally think. You have just seen the Lord's disciples receive the "gift of the Spirit" (miraculous power). Peter quotes an Old Testament promise that miraculous power would be poured out on "all flesh." He explains that Jesus received the "promise of the Spirit" and then poured it out on the disciples. Now he explains that if you repent and are baptized for the remission of sins, you too can receive the "gift of the Spirit." Furthermore, he states positively that this "promise" is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off.

Be honest! What would have gone through your mind upon hearing this? I believe the most natural thing for those people to think is that if they repented and were baptized they would somehow receive miraculous power.

If this is truly what is happening in Acts 2:38, we would naturally expect to see men receiving miraculous power after they obey the gospel. Is this in fact what we see in the Book of Acts? Let us look at the overall picture which the book portrays.

Acts 5

First, let's look at Acts 5:32. There the Scriptures say, "We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." This passage has suffered much abuse through the years because the context is generally ignored.

Peter was the spokesman for all of the apostles as they stood on trial before the Jewish council. He preached to these Jews about the resurrection of Christ. In verse 30 he declares, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things . . ." Focus in on the phrase "these things." What are

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"these things" that are being referred to? "These things" refer to the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. The apostles were eyewitnesses of "these things," and men ought therefore to believe in the resurrection!

The apostles, however, are not the only witnesses of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus. Peter said, "So is also the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit was also testifying to and verifying the resurrection of Jesus. How did He do it? Through a "non-miraculous personal" indwelling of the Spirit? No! A "non-miraculous personal" indwelling of the Spirit testifies of nothing and proves nothing to anyone! Rather, the Spirit testified of Jesus' resurrection by miraculous power. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, "Ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . ." In Acts 4:33, the Bible tells us, "With great *power* gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus . . ." Again, in Hebrews 2:3-4, we read, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; *God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*"

Acts 5:32 is simply saying that the miraculous power of the Spirit to testify of the resurrection has been given to men that obey the gospel! This fits exactly with what Peter said in Acts 2:38.

Acts 8

Acts 8:14-17 ¹⁴Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: ¹⁵Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: ¹⁶(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) ¹⁷Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

This fits perfectly with what Acts 2:38 says: (a) the Samaritans repented, (b) they were baptized, and (c) they received the "Holy Ghost"—exactly what Peter said would happen.

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Over and over we will see this demonstrated: The "gift of the Spirit" is miraculous power given to men that obey God (Acts 5:32).

Acts 18

Next, we come to Acts 18:8—"Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Here is the conversion of the Corinthians. By reading Paul's first epistle to these brethren, we learn that they had received miraculous power from him after they had been converted.

What do we have then? We see once again (a) the Corinthians repented, (b) they were baptized, and (c) they received the "Holy Ghost" —exactly what Peter said would happen in Acts 2:38.

Acts 19

Acts 19:1-6 ¹And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ²He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. ⁴Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Again notice: (a) these Ephesians repented, (b) they were baptized, and (c) they received the "Holy Ghost." Once again we see the fact that the "gift of the Spirit" was miraculous power given to men that obey God (Acts 5:32).

Summary

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In summary, Peter taught the Jews in Acts 2 that if they would repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, they too would receive the "gift of the Spirit."

It was a promise for everyone who would: (1) meet all the conditions, and (2) it would last as long as miracles lasted. Never will you read in the Scriptures of anyone being denied this gift because they were too young, or too old, or because they were a female, or a slave, or a Gentile.

The Scriptures indicate in Acts 5:32 that this wonderful gift was given to all Christians of the first century provided, of course, that they met the necessary condition of having apostolic hands laid upon them. Acts 8:14-18 indicates that all the Samaritans received this wonderful gift. No one was left out. Acts 10:45-46 specifically states that everyone in Cornelius' household received the gift. No one was left out. In Acts 18:8 there is no reason to think things were different at Corinth. As far as we can tell, all the Corinthians baptized by Paul received the gift. None was excluded. In Acts 19:1-6 it appears that all the Ephesians received the gift. No one was excluded. Why should we conclude anything different in Acts 2? Why should we think it strange that *everyone* who repented and was baptized would then have apostolic hands laid upon him or her, and that person would then receive the Spirit in a miraculous measure? It seems most natural that this is exactly what happened. It fits the context and harmonizes with the overall teachings of the New Testament.

Conclusion

Today people read this wonderful passage and get it all turned around backwards. They are searching for miracles. They are searching for the "gift of the Spirit," and they are rejecting the terms of the gospel as though they no longer applied! But Jesus is trying to tell us it's just the opposite of this! Men *ought* to seek after the terms of salvation and realize the "gift of the Spirit" no longer applies!

My friend, do not expect a miracle to come! You will die in your sins if you wait till a miracle comes! In contrast to the "gift of the Spirit," the terms of salvation have never been repealed! They apply as much today as when they were first spoken, and if you want to be saved like the 3000 on Pentecost, you must do the same things

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they did—repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. 2710 *Some-
rton Dr., Morrow, Ga 30260*

End Notes

1. For a fuller discussion of this point see **Miracles or Mirages?** by James D. Bales, pp. 223-257. This is an excellent article which proves conclusively that Mark 16:17-18 includes more than the apostles only. T. W. Brents in **The Gospel Plan of Salvation** wrote concerning Mark 16:17, "By this we see that signs were not confined to the apostles alone, but were to follow them that believe" (p. 477).
2. Several brethren take the position that the "gift of the Spirit" was indeed miraculous power. Included are such men as Z. T. Sweeney in **The Spirit and the Word**, pp. 81-97; Guy N. Woods in **Questions and Answers—Open Forum**, vol. 1, pp. 54-59; Robert R. Taylor, Jr. in **What Do You Know About The Holy Spirit?**, pp. 177-185; Franklin Camp in **The Work of the Holy Spirit**, pp. 130-156; John F. Rowe in **The Holy Spirit**, pp. 32, 37, 38; and even T. W. Brents made this admission: "... it may not be amiss to state that, as the apostles had power to communicate the Spirit in an extraordinary measure to such as believed and obeyed the gospel under their ministry, and as they deemed it so important that the primitive Christians should thus extraordinarily receive it, as to send Peter and John from Jerusalem to Samaria to confer it upon the disciples first made there, we are inclined to think that Peter intended to promise something more than the ordinary measure of the Spirit to those he addressed at the beginning" (op. cit., p. 476).
3. This passage demonstrates the purpose of miracles. Miracles caught the attention of unbelievers. Once their attention was gained they could be preached to. Anyone that might be converted would then be converted by the spoken word (Rom. 1:16; 10:17). The miracle itself did not convert the sinner, but rather the Word of God.
4. **The Translators Handbook** is one scholarly source that presented this as a possible meaning of this verse: "Moreover, if one says 'pour out this gift,' then it would appear that Jesus is pouring out the gift of the Spirit, which has just been given to him by God" (p. 57).

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Redemption

by Wayne McKamie

The redemption of fallen man is a work of immense magnitude, extending from eternity to eternity, and yet, it is being wrought within the framework of human history. Redemption is, in fact, the mainstream of all history; all other events are but providential contingencies. Around the subject wraps the biblical narrative; all variations compose upon this theme. The things written aforetime were not a simple presentation of history. They are the divine revelation of the redemption of the human race as wrought by God Himself.

Historic redemption speaks of a historic fall. If Calvary was the redemptive act of God, at some point in time the destructive act of man occurred. Genesis records the fall. If the Genesis account is a myth, then redemption is not real. If the fall did not occur, from what would man need to be saved? If Genesis is not true, Jesus was not necessary.

Genesis 2:15-17 records the loss of the tree of life and the coming of sin. "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" (Rom. 5:12). Sin entered with catastrophic consequence. Pain was multiplied in childbirth, sorrow was multiplied in hardship and toil, and death came in double dose. The forfeiture of fellowship (Eph. 2:1), the flesh beginning to fail in death, both evidenced the ushering in of the law of sin and death. All of the events connected with the entrance of sin manifest man's inability to cover his sins.

The sounds of the curse hard hardly died away when the announcement of Genesis 3:15 was made: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." What a tremendous promise! A promise that God would, in the fullness of time, destroy the serpent's power of death and restore the original possession of life. He would redeem.

A seed promise required a seed line. The seed of the woman was to issue through Abraham's seed, which was Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And

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to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). The pronouncement was unmistakable. The promised seed was Christ; the promised blessing was redemption and remission of sins in Christ.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:8, 29).

Remission of sins can only be appreciated when one understands the great dilemma of sin and salvation. Man had not the power to be perfect. The law had not the power to perfect the imperfect, once sin had been committed. And yet, man was morally responsible for his actions. In Romans 1 and 2, Paul concludes both Jew and Gentile under sin. All had practiced law-breaking; the Gentiles the natural law, the Jews the written law. Every mouth had been stopped. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Therefore, none could look either to the moral law or the written Old Testament for justification.

The problem of sin relates to both God and man. Man had not the power to redeem himself, and how could a just and holy God forgive sin, and remain true to His holiness? How could God be both just and the justifier of sinful man?

To be free or cleared of sin would require a power greater than humanity, a power greater than Moses' law, and, indeed, would require One who could fulfill or keep the law perfectly.

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:9-10, 23).

What the law could not do, i.e., make a man right once he had sinned, God would have to do Himself. Little wonder then that Jesus Christ appears on the scene declaring that He is the Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn. 14:6).

What Jesus could do, He did! He not only frees us from past sins (Heb. 9:26), we are freed from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:1). In Christ, we are not answerable to the law of Moses. What was lost in Adam is found in Christ. He saves to the uttermost. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

In the fulness of time (Gal. 4:4), God sent forth His Son. To declare His coming, God sent holy men of God speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Their redemptive emphasis was great; through their prophetic work they gave men opportunity to discover, by experience, that redemption through human merit was impossible.

John the Baptist was a man "sent from God" (Jn. 1:16), to bear witness of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. John recognized the Lamb, announced the Lamb, a Lamb furnished by God Himself. "My son, God will provide *himself* a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Behold the Lamb! The Lamb of God! The Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world! Wherever that is left out, Christianity is left out. Calvary has no successor; everything and every place is downhill from Mt. Calvary. The Lamb has no substitute in ages past or eternity to come. "An eternal past that knew no other future, and an eternal future which will know no other past, save Christ crucified." D. B. Towner wrote,

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the love that bro't it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary!

At Calvary, Satan's plan and power were broken. Satan's head (power or authority) was bruised. Satan had the power of death because of sin. He could hold us in fear of death or bondage. This power of death is what the Lord wrested from him. Through death He destroyed him that had the power of death. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

At Calvary, we see the crowning act of all redemptive work. And what a master stroke it was! In 1 Corinthians 2:7-8, Paul speaks of the "hidden wisdom of God, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew, for

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had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." This was the coup of Heaven! In killing the Christ, they opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness.

At Calvary, Christ laid down His life for us. Actually, no one could have killed the Prince of Life. "No man taketh it from me," Christ said in John 10:17-18. Had he not voluntarily laid down His life, all the forces of earth and hell could not have taken it.

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:23-24).

He died because He chose to die. He was in command of the whole operation. He chose the very moment of death. He gave up His life—for us, a decision made in eternity and in Gethsemane as well.

At Calvary, Christ became our offering. He did for us what we could not do, paid a debt we could not pay; our Kinsman Redeemer could and did pay the price. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). The Righteous One was made to be sin so the sinner could be made righteous. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 2:14). Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!

At Calvary, our Lord became our propitiation (Isa. 53:11), and resolved the dilemma (Rom. 3:23-26). Christ is our propitiation, our mercy seat. The law of liberty does not, will not, preclude our need for a mercy seat. He is our High Priest, our altar, our offering before the throne; His blood on the mercy seat. What our Lord attained at Calvary, He now maintains before the throne. Indeed, "he became us . . ." (Heb. 2:17). "Mercy and truth are met . . . righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10).

At Calvary, Christ died our deserved death. An innocent victim; in and on behalf of. A substitute, a penal substitute. There fell upon

His soul the death of deaths, the curse of sin, dying the death of a sinner, separated from the Father.

But he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we* are healed. All *we* like sheep have gone astray; *we* have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of *us all* (Isa. 53:5-6).

The innocent blood (Mt. 27:4), the innocent victim, like the scapegoat of old (Lev. 16), bore sins that were not His own outside the gates and into the land of forgetfulness. The Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Christ went to the death house for us all. We deserved the blow (Ezek. 18:20). We did the crime; He did the time—at Calvary.

At Calvary, Christ died a triumphant death. Such a contradictory concept—a triumph death! What a paradox, what an offense, what a scandal! He "triumphed over them in it" (Col. 2:15). Christ was stronger than he; He beat Satan out. He ripped the sting out of death, flung open the door for the captives, and opened the door into the holiest of all.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

At Calvary, it was finished. Redemption required more than incarnation. Incarnation was necessary, for by man came death, by man must life come again. His becoming flesh was necessary, but that alone was not enough. His being here as a sacrifice was the propitiation; Calvary, not Bethlehem, was the focus. Who He was (the Son of God) was important, but what He was also was important. No other man was ever what He was—a lamb without spot or blemish. No other ever faced what He faced, stood where He stood, or died as He died.

At Calvary, death was necessary. A ransom had to be paid. He came to set at liberty the captives. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty

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wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). He came to free those who all their lifetimes were subject to bondage. Nothing but His very life's blood would pay the ransom. Christ paid the ransom, satisfied the plan, and once-for-all-forever satisfied the demands of justice. He gave Himself a ransom for many. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45). He "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:6).

The authenticity and value of the redemptive work accomplished at Calvary have been called in question, even denied, by Calvin's doctrine of limited atonement. The doctrine essentially states that the ransom was not paid for all. Reduced to its simplest form, the doctrine is this:

1. All will not be saved, therefore, Christ did not die for all. If some for whom redemption was wrought be lost, then redemption is not all it should be, i.e., limited efficacy.
2. Salvation or redemption was wrought only for the elect. Christ's blood was efficacious only for the elect. (Note that this false doctrine gave rise to another: the elect's number could neither be increased or diminished).

The above false doctrine forced a choice between limited efficacy and limited sufficiency. Truth does not need such choices. The truth is that redemption for all is sufficient; for those in Christ, efficient. The Lord came to make salvation of *all* possible, and to save His people from their sins. Two factors are evident: what is potential and what is realized. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:2). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*" (Heb. 2:9).

While our Lord died for every person, we should know that redemption provided is not equal to redemption received. God said, "I am come down to deliver them" (Ex. 3:8). But before He delivered them, the Passover lamb had to be slain and the blood *applied* (Ex. 12:22). "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13).

Disobedience took us away from God; obedience will take us back. While it is true that without shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22), it is also true that there is no remission of sins without repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

Sin is both a debt and a crime. The one requires a payment, the other a pardon. No one can stand before a holy God without a sacrifice; and yet, not one will be forced to accept the freedom He purchased—at Calvary. *Rt. 1, Box 114, McGregor, TX 76657*

Congregational Maturity

by Jerry Harris

I. Introduction:

- A. An honest beginning would be to acknowledge that growing a church is a very difficult task.
 - 1. Church growth is complex.
 - 2. No simple formulas or a canned program.
 - 3. Church growth involves a pattern of interrelated factors that are difficult to identify.
 - 4. No fast answers or easy cures.
 - 5. It requires hard work to fully understand the array of potential factors contributing to the growth or decline of a church.
 - 6. Church leaders need to become students of the complex issues of church growth.
 - 7. The focus of study: "Creating a Climate for Church Growth."
- B. An honest beginning also would be to acknowledge that we as a brotherhood have failed to mature a large percentage of our congregations.
 - 1. Fact is we have a large number of congregations in danger of extinction.
 - 2. Also a number of what I consider stronger congregations have slipped in their abilities to function.

II. Church growth must occur in three distinctive dimensions simultaneously: (1) Numerical, (2) Spiritual, (3) Organic (Ronald D. Laughery, Lecture Notes, OCU, January 28, 1991).

- A. Numerical growth (Mt. 28:19-20)
 - 1. The record of Acts (the church multiplied)
 - 2. Most of our efforts are directed towards numerical growth.
 - 3. The congregation (local church) should be evangelistic minded.
 - 4. Good methods of growth should be practiced.
 - 5. A key church growth principle: growing churches are evangelistic and view evangelism as more relational than confrontational.

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- a. We must be right. We must live right and make sure our attitude is right.
 - b. We must rely upon the right power. (Power does not reside in the soul-winner, for God gives the increase, 1 Cor. 3:6; the gospel is the power, Rom. 1:16.)
 - c. We must have faith.
 - d. We must be willing to fight sin in our own lives and help others to overcome sin in their lives.
- B. However, to grow spiritually is equally as important as to grow numerically.
- 1. Much of the New Testament focuses on quality growth (cf. fruit of the spirit, Gal. 5:22-23; Christian graces, 2 Pet. 1:5-8.)
 - 2. Is the climate such that real spiritual growth can take place in your congregation?
 - a. Growth through study of the Word;
 - b. Growth through prayer;
 - c. Growth through involvement in ministry;
 - d. Growth through fellowship.
- C. There is a third dimension of growth in the kingdom of God, and it is totally a different dimension — organic growth.
- 1. Sometimes a woman goes to the doctor because she has a swelling in her abdomen.
 - a. That may mean one of two things: She may be pregnant and have a child growing there, or she may have a tumor.
 - b. There is a big difference between a child and a tumor.
 - c. A tumor is just the multiplying of cells, more and more cells.
 - 2. It is frightening when we must have the multiplying of numbers in the Church and nothing else is happening.
 - 3. Members must be assimilated into the body.
 - 4. Attention must be given to the teaching of the Word of God (1 Cor 12; Rom. 12:3-8 and Eph. 4:7-16).
 - a. Each must be encouraged to discover this gift.
 - b. Each must be given the opportunity to exercise their gift.
 - c. Each must be given help in developing their gift.
- D. This growth (numerical, spiritual and organic) will not (cannot) occur without diligent oversight (Eph. 4:11-12).

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1. Why is it that the only growth sought by congregations is numerical?
 2. The duty of congregational overseers is to assist (insist on) the spiritual and organic growth to congregations.
 3. The fact is, we have neglected the latter two dimensions of growth.
 4. Most often, the brethren become dissatisfied with the preachers for trying to help the church grow spiritually or organically. Often, our sole interest is numerical growth.
- E. The goal of every congregation (regardless of how small) should be to develop in all three dimensions. I am convinced, by my experience, that when spiritual and organic growth are emphasized numerical growth will happen.
- F. Evangelizing involves spiritual and organic growth (Mt. 28:18-20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded.")

III. Five vital signs of a healthy (maturing) growing church

- A. The first vital sign of a healthy growing church is a pulpit with faith and vision. (Most writers attribute this to the pulpit minister.)
1. Each congregation must have at least one qualified teacher and should strive to have a core of qualified teachers (Eph. 4:11).
 - a. Evangelists, deacons, and elders can come from the core of teachers (Acts 6:5-7; 13:1).
 - b. "Apt to teach" is a qualification for evangelists and elders.
 - c. It would appear that evangelists first worked in local congregations as teachers, then were selected and sent by local congregation (Acts 13). Example: Timothy (1 Tim. 4:14).
 2. A word about the development of teachers: Logical order seems we must first have teachers before evangelists or elders.
 - a. Knowledge and teaching were spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:8).
 - b. To be a teacher (instructor) of God's Word, one must have an understanding of God's purpose for man and the church.
 - c. Is someone with speaking ability, capable of delivering a speech from an outline, a qualified teacher?

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3. Psychologists tell us that life is divided into four periods (four seasons of life).
 - a. Length of life to be 70 or 80 years (Psa. 90:10).
 - b. Four periods of time each with 17 to 20 years: Preparation 0-20 (education); Productivity 21-40 (career, family); Hospitality 41-60 (time of sharing with others); Statesman 60-80 (give time for good of all).
 - c. Applying this to the Christian life, at what point are we ready to share knowledge and experience with others? (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1) Example: Ahimaaz, "Turn aside and stand here" (2 Sam. 18:19-32).
 - d. We need to realize that it takes years of effort and time to become a qualified teacher.
4. What is the attitude of qualified workers (teachers, evangelists and elders)?
 - a. That of a servant (Mt. 20:26-28)
 - b. All workers must keep a picture of a basin and towel before them (Jn. 13).
- B. The second vital sign of a healthy growing church is an active membership that is involved in church work (cf. 1 Pet. 4:10). Every member should use their gift for the benefit of all.
 1. The learning and training of workers is a "hands on" method. We learn by doing.
 2. Training and learning should be under qualified supervision.
 3. Organic growth should be taking place (fitting the members to the body, Eph. 4:16).
- C. The third vital sign of a healthy growing church is active fellowship among the congregation.
 1. Worship: the way the assembly is conducted and the effect it has upon the participants determine if it is a characteristic of a healthy congregation.
 - a. "Family Feud", a TV game show surveys its audience and the contestants try to guess the top response. To the question "What is the most boring thing?", the number one response was "church".
 - b. A Southern Baptist preacher planted a new congregation in one of the most unchurched areas of southern California. Part of his preparation included a door-to-door survey to discover the community attitudes.

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He asked the community "Why do you think most people around here don't attend church?" Most frequently the response was "Sermons are boring and don't relate to life."

It is sobering to realize the full impact that the worship assembly has upon people: Christian and non-Christian.

2. Nothing in the lives of Christians is more central than worship. "What is our purpose for coming to the worship assembly?" Three-fold purpose:
 - a. Praise God
 - b. Edification of Christians (1 Cor. 14)
 - c. Mission: In 1 Corinthians 14:23-25, Paul states the worship should be conducted in such a way that the non-believer can also encounter God. Worship should be filled with joy, reverence and faith.
3. "Fellowship" is a member of the *koin-* family meaning "sharing, having things in common."
 - a. Acts 2:44, "And all that believed were together and had all things common."
 - b. "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).
 - c. "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15).
4. What has happened to the fellowship between brethren?
5. Congregations should have a plan for ministering and training those interested and capable (Mt. 25:42-45). Visit sick, etc.
- D. The fourth vital sign of a healthy, growing church is that they have their priorities straight.
 1. The number one priority in a local congregation must be evangelism.
 2. My observation: to be successful at evangelism, the congregation must be successfully achieving the work of ministry and training of qualified workers.
 3. When the leaders of the Church meet, how much time is spent on evangelism, shepherding the flock . . . building up the Church . . . over against budget . . . money . . . approval of finances . . . the building, etc.
- E. A fifth vital sign of a growing church is it will have an atmosphere for growth.
 1. A haven of love

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- a. Growing churches are loving fellowships.
 - b. What takes place before and after the assembly?
 - c. Christ's love for the church (Eph. 5:25): He "loved the church and gave himself for it."
 - d. No matter what you do, you can never stop God from loving you.
 - e. Are we communicating that kind of love at our congregations? No matter what you do, we will never stop loving you. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35)
2. A place of acceptance.
 - a. Do you accept your children?
 - b. Do you approve of all their actions?
 - c. We must learn to accept one another. Examples: Prodigal (Lk. 15:11-24); Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-16).
 - d. Problem. . . We want to accept people after they get to where we think they ought to be.
 3. A deep sense of belonging
 - a. You can be a believer without belonging.
 - b. "And all that believed were together and had all things common" (Acts 2:44).
 - c. Do folks really feel like they are a part . . . that they really belong . . . where you go to church?
 - d. Do we include everyone or try to involve everyone in the activities of the congregation.

IV. Conclusion: "church" to many is just a place to worship.

- A. Congregations must begin to give special attention to spiritual and organic growth.
 1. If they do not have men qualified to lead the congregation in development of these things, arrange for someone to come in and help.
 2. Congregations can either be complacent and ignore this need or can move ahead.
 3. The leaders (evangelist) can be complacent or can become involved in correcting this problem.

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Importance of Predictive Prophecy to Apologetics

by Jack Cutter

At the outset, I would like to establish the focus of this study in order that you might be able to anticipate the direction that it will take. I will begin by introducing the two great systems of the Bible. This will be followed by a definition of prophecy. After this, I will begin the study on the subject assigned to me for this occasion: "The Importance of Predictive Prophecy to Apologetics."

A Composite Outline of the Topics to be Studied

1. To identify and classify different kinds of prophecy.
2. To introduce the *Germ Prophecy* of Genesis 3:15. This prophecy to be studied in conjunction with the "Blessings" and "Curses."
3. To study a couple of *Type/Anti-type Prophecies* for the purpose of establishing a definitive rule for interpreting prophecy of this kind.
4. And, lastly, to study *Time Prophecy* only to the extent of establishing a provable method to use in interpreting this kind of prophecy.

Two Great Systems

There are two great systems of the Bible. One system is the *evidential*, and the other is the *preceptive*. One provides for us proof of the divine origin and authority of the Bible, while the other gives principles and duties to be observed by God's people. The chief demand of one system is faith. Therefore, the evidences are numerous. The other system demands obedience to God. Let it be observed that the Bible is indestructible. Time only serves to develop the truth of the Bible, especially in its evidences. This is notably true of its prophecies. The Bible, in a world of change, remains unchanged.

What is Prophecy?

Prophecy is history revealed before it happens. God declared to Isaiah the prophet, "I will make known the end from the beginning,

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from ancient times, what is to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" (46:10-11). (Note: All scriptural quotes or readings will be from the NIV, unless, otherwise indicated.)

Classification of Different Kinds of Prophecy

The purpose for classifying prophecy is to show that the method of interpreting one kind of prophecy may not apply to another; thus, the need for classification.

In Matthew 2, there are four different types of fulfilled prophecy revealed in support of the gospel. It has been said that Matthew devotes more attention than do all the other Bible writers to fulfilled prophecy. I will attempt to review each one briefly.

Prediction

Now, let us notice Matthew 2:6. "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel." This quotation is from Isaiah 7:14. It is concerning the birthplace of Jesus. It is strictly a prediction as it refers directly to that event. Therefore, this class of prophecy is sometimes referred to as a *Prediction*. It relates wholly to an event which was yet future. When it is fulfilled, the thing predicted is literally accomplished.

Type and Anti-type

Dropping down to verse 15, there is a different kind of prophecy fulfilled. It is probably the most commonly used prophecy by teachers and preachers of our time. It is the *Type and Anti-type* variety. This prophecy refers to the call of Jesus out of Egypt and illustrates an example of a prophecy which has a double reference, a primary and a secondary fulfillment. "These are sometimes called typical, because they are originally spoken concerning a type and find another fulfillment in the anti-type" (H. Leo Boles, **Commentary on Matthew**). The prophecy Matthew uses here is taken from Hosea 11:1. It is as follows: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." The actual situation in the context referred to was concerning the parents of Jesus being instructed by the angel of the Lord to take the child and escape to Egypt in order to avoid the wrath of Herod. I hope to consider *Type* prophecies more extensively later.

Verbal

The third classification is located in verse 18. It refers to the weeping at Bethlehem by the mothers of the babes who were slain. In this event, the fulfillment is of the meaning of the words used by the prophet. The prophecy refers to Jeremiah 31:15. In this instance, the original words had no reference at all to this event. It is a verbal fulfillment, and not a real fulfillment, as is found in the other two classes. McGarvey and Pendleton remark: "Matthew adopts the words of the prophet, and says that they were here fulfilled. It was the fulfillment, not of a prediction, properly speaking, but of certain words spoken by the prophet." Therefore, some refer to this as a *Verbal* class or kind. Actually, the only way to determine that a prophecy fitting this description is being fulfilled would be for an inspired writer to inform the reader.

General Scope

The fourth classification is found in verse 23. I have simply labeled this a *General Scope Prophecy* because that is precisely what it is. It reads, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets that he should be called a Nazarene." Boles explains it this way, "It is thought that Matthew here quotes the general sentiment of the prophets, that he is giving the equivalent of their language and not their exact language."

The four kinds of fulfilled prophecy studied here are used throughout Matthew's writings, and by other inspired men who use prophecy in the defense of the gospel.

The Germ Prophecy and the "Blessings and Curses"

The Germ Prophecy or the Foundation Prophecy, as it is sometimes called, is given in these words, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15). All other prophecies come from or evolve from this prediction given here by God to the devil. A.M. Morris says, "This is the germ prophecy. It includes all that follows. It is an epitome, a summary, of all the succeeding prophecies. The whole Bible is the outgrowth of this prediction" (A. M. Morris, *The Prophecies Unveiled*, p. 4).

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This prophecy actually contains a two-fold prediction. The other prediction is given in the first part of the verse. It predicts that there would be enmity or hatred between the devil's followers and those who choose to worship and serve God. Therefore, as a definite distinction began to formulate between the two, God would "bless" those who choose to follow Him, and He "cursed" the individuals who were unfaithful. Thus, any extended view of prophecy should include both the "blessings" and "curses" and the Germ Prophecy because the two predictions are so closely intertwined.

The enmity or hatred that God predicted would occur between the children of the woman and the children of the devil was of a very early origin. This will become obvious after we notice the circumstances involving the murder of Abel by Cain (Gen. 4). We learn from the New Testament that Cain was of the devil. "Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous" (1 Jn. 3:12).

In the time of Jesus, He accused the wicked Jews of being of their father the devil. He said to them, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out you father's desires" (Jn. 8:44). So, the hatred (enmity) which manifested itself early in the history of mankind was alive and well some four thousand years later. No doubt, it had fully developed.

Now, after the Cain and Abel event, the next significant development occurred in the days of Noah, approximately 1650 years after the original prediction in Genesis 3:15. In Genesis 9:24-27, Noah pronounces a curse on Canaan, his grandson, and a blessing upon Shem, his oldest son. It reads, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave." From this declaration, we see that the blessing was very extensive as given to Shem, and a curse rested upon Canaan (the son of Ham).

It should be of considerable interest here that Canaan had seven sons, who, through their offspring, eventually developed into seven nations residing in Canaan or Palestine. From this, a valuable lesson can be achieved. As they advanced in their history, they could look

back into any period in their origin and trace their history back to Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, the son of Noah. Hence, by the use of the Bible we can compare the history of the Canaanites with the particular prophecy given to or concerning them.

It has been illustrated in this way. The topmost twig of the tallest oak tree owes its life and origin to the little acorn hidden in the earth. Or, the mightiest river may be traced back to the little spring far away that is its source. Although this river had its beginning from the water flowing from a small spring, there were multitudes of creeks and streams which fed this majestic river in its course to its destiny in the sea. This will help illustrate more beautifully the fact that often other prophets arose and poured the wealth of their inspired minds into the prophetic current, increasing the volume of the original prophecy, and marking out the channel through which the predicted nation was to pass to its final destiny.

In addition to the curse pronounced on Canaan in Genesis 9, it was also prophesied that "The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." This prophecy was fulfilled several hundred years later after the children of Israel had captured Palestine from them. Joshua said to them, "You are under a curse: you will never cease to serve as woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God" (Josh. 9:23). Descended from Canaan were seven nations: the Hivites, Jebusites, Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites and Gadites. These nations inhabited the land of Canaan when the children of Israel possessed it as their own. While it was the intention of God to completely remove these nations from Palestine, they were not totally removed. Those who were permitted to remain became slaves to the children of Israel as prophesied in Genesis 9:24-27. This was verified by Joshua when he proclaimed that they were under a curse and were to serve as slaves to the Israelites.

I trust that you recall that there were extensive blessings given to Shem in Genesis 9. His offspring also develops into a great nation. A little over 400 years later, and 2000 years after the original promise of Genesis 3:15 was given, it is revived in these words spoken to Abraham, "And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed." Later it is given more exclusively, "And in your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice" (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18).

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It should be further observed that the promise of Genesis 12:1-3 contains a two-fold promise. First, God would make of him a great nation. Secondly, in his "seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed." It has been remarked that these promises form the basis of the entire Bible. Also, let us not forget that God said to Abraham, "I will bless them that bless you and I will curse them that curse you."

Now, let us travel down the majestic river of time to an occasion just before the children of Israel were to cross the Jordan over into the promised land. Moses orders them to gather together before two mountains—Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal—once they have entered Canaan. From the first mountain mentioned the "blessings" were to be read. From the second mountain the "cursings" are to be pronounced. Moses pronounces the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience—the greatest number ever spoke by man concerning the fortunes of man (Deut. 27-30). It would do anyone well to read these chapters and especially dwell on chapter 30.

Although the nation of Israel was the chosen nation to reveal His name to those in whom they came into contact, and in whom the promised "seed" was to come, this in no way diminished or relieved them of their responsibility to faithfully serve Him. Moses declared plainly unto them, "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses" (Deut. 30:19).

I again would like to freshen your memory concerning a part of the original promise given to Abraham, "I will curse them that curse you." Do you recall what happened to those nations who were unfriendly to the children of Israel as they were making their journey through the wilderness on the way to the promised land?

The children of Israel left Goshen and crossed the Red Sea over into the wilderness. In making their journey to the promised land, it required that they seek the permission of several countries to cross their land. This brought them into direct contact with the Amalekites, Midianites, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites. All these nations were under the "curse" for two reasons: first, they all were idolatrous, and second, they were unfriendly to Israel as they journeyed towards Canaan. After the Israelites settled into Palestine, retribution time began. The armies of Israel were dispatched by God to destroy these nations. The king of Midian was aware of what happened to several

of the aforementioned nations, especially the Amorites. Hence, Balak, the king, sought out the prophet Balaam and rewarded him to seek out the children of Israel and pronounce a "curse" upon them. If you do not know the rest of the story, read Numbers 22-23. Of a certainty, Balak understood who was blessed by God and who was cursed.

You see, without a direct mandate by a prophet to them, their doom or punishment was foreordained. To me one of the more interesting and fun things to do is to take these nations who were near neighbors to Israel, such as the Moabites and Ammonites, and trace them from an individual to their maturity as a nation. If they were either idolatrous or unfriendly to Israel, they were under the curse. Although in each case it was predictable, the punishment pronounced by God by an inspired prophet varied.

Morris, in *The Prophecies Unveiled*, remarked that "The destiny of more than thirty great cities and nations is foretold in the Bible. The nations were not grouped together and condemned wholesale; but rather, they were separated and condemned to a detailed overthrow. The Scriptures specify the nation, the crime, its punishment, and, in some instances, the time and manner of its infliction, and the nation or people that would inflict it" (p. 34).

Hopefully by this point in the study, you can see the two-fold nature of these related prophecies as they each contain a "blessing" and a "curse." Therefore, once the "blessings" for obedience and the "curses" for disobedience are understood, we can predict the destiny or future of individuals, cities and nations even today. Hopefully, at this point, enough study has been done to establish this fact. The Scriptures reveal to us that "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach unto any people" (Prov. 14:34).

The words of the Apostle Paul found in Galations 3, I think, are appropriate here, "The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith" (v. 8-9). In verse 13, he continues, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" and, a few verses further, "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say 'and to seeds' meaning many people, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one person, who is Christ." He concludes chapter four with an im-

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pacting and meaningful declaration for all faithful Christians, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," and one more Scripture, "If anyone does not love the Lord—a curse be on him" (1 Cor. 16:22). Therefore, any individual or nation without Christ is under the "curse."

Someone may inquire, "Is there not an abiding hope in Israel?" The answer is, "Only in Christ."

The Rule for Interpreting Type Prophecy

At this time, I would like to examine the *Type/Anti-type Prophecies*. It may appear to some that this kind of prophecy is so simple that it does not need any help in interpreting. However, the method used for interpreting *type prophecies* will determine whether or not you are a millennialist of some kind. Their futuristic method of interpretation allows for only a literal interpretation of this class of prophecy. In order to combat this theory, a clear, understandable rule of interpretation needs to be established. Morris remarks, "The method of literal interpretation given by the Millennialist to that portion of the Jewish prophecies that foretold a restoration of the Israelites to the favor of God, has placed a 'veil' as it were over this kind of prophecy which 'veil' must be removed." He further points out, "The predictions in the main, especially those that relate to the present and to the future fortunes of the Jews and the saints of God, are enveloped in impenetrable obscurity to very many" (p. 9). So, an attempt will be made in this study to establish a clear, understandable and workable rule of interpretation.

In order to establish this rule, I will examine a couple of *Test Prophecies*, and from these a rule should become obvious. In Zechariah 6:9-15, a marvelous *type prophecy* is revealed. This situation mentioned in this event took place following the Babylonian captivity. In the story leading up to the prophecy, some men came from Babylon with gold and silver for the temple being erected. Zechariah is instructed by the Lord to take the gold and silver and make two crowns. He then is instructed to place them both upon the head of Joshua the high priest. Zechariah is then told to say this to the high priest, "Here is the man whose name is the *branch*, and he will branch out from this place and build the temple of the Lord. It is he who will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will

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sit and rule on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two."

First, the man whose name was the "Branch" was a Royal-Priest. In other words, he should combine the two offices in one person. Under the law, this was not permitted. Therefore, before the law was given a *type* was given. It was Melchisedec. He was *both* a priest and a king, thus, an eminent type of Christ. David foresaw this that his descendant, Christ, would *revive that order and foretold it* (Psa. 110:4). *But remember, this could never apply to any king or priest ruling under the Law of Moses.* This was, in effect, to foretell that the law, with all its rites and ceremonies, should cease, for without the Aaronic priesthood the temple worship could not be conducted.

Therefore, when Zechariah predicted that the *Branch* shall sit and rule upon his throne, and He shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both, he was predicting an event beyond the continuance of the Law of Moses. The writer of Hebrews gives us some helpful information on this in chapters five through seven. Particularly note these passages:

For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests . . . If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises (7:12-14; 8:4-6).

Now, nothing could possibly be made plainer than the writer has made it here that Jesus Christ was the Priest foretold by David and typified by Melchisedec.

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The second *type prophecy* that we will examine is found in Malachi 4:5-6. "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." All of us know that John the Baptist was the Elijah that was to come (Mt. 17:10-13). "For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. He who has ears, let him hear" (Mt. 11:13-15). *This is the key to unlock the type prophecies.*

We have just seen that John the Baptist was the Elijah that was to come. However, he denied that he was Elijah (Jn. 1). Moreover, he was not, either in person or name. Yet Jesus said that he was. Jesus is using this prophecy to open up our understanding of the meaning of this kind of prophecy. You will never find one that is any plainer than this one, where Elijah's name was used, but it was not literal. This is a *type prophecy*. Therefore, it follows that others of the same kind must be interpreted the same way. These prophecies are representative of the whole. King, priest, temple, priesthood, sacrifices and feasts are predicted. Everything must be settled right here. Is David (the David who was dead when these prophets wrote), to arise from the dead and reign over Israel forever? Is literal Elijah to precede his coming? Is Levi to return to his station as national priest of Israel and minister forever? You must decide the questions! Everything gravitates to this common center. If you answer "yes," then you are a Literalist. If answer "no," you are a Figurativist. If you decided "yes," you will be good material to work into a Millennialist. If "no," you will not mix Judaism with Christianity, but will be able to separate the type from the anti-type, the shadow from the substance, and will have no use for the speculative theories and vague assumptions of men who seek to fuse the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ.

In summary, the rule is as follows. The prophecies concerning Israel before Christ all had a literal fulfillment. Whereas, the prophecies which have a fulfillment in Christ and the gospel should have a figurative fulfillment.

This rule will bring the Jews to Christ; it will exclude all use of types in the so-called Millennium; and, it will maintain the gospel to the end of time.

Before proceeding to the last major phase of this study, I would like to make some additional comments. Each type was, in an important sense, a prophecy. It was not an end, but a means to an end. Also, these types were local in nature and not universal. They were for the fleshly descendants of Israel for a limited period of time. And, lastly, this whole system of types ceased to be effective in that nation when the Gospel of Christ went into effect.

The Scriptural Method of Interpreting Time Prophecy

First, *Time Prophecy* was not given to reveal the date when our Lord is to return the second time. "No man knoweth the day nor the hour when the son of man cometh" (Mt. 25:13).

Second, they serve an important role in the evidential system of God. They were to serve as cumulative proofs of the inspiration of the Bible. They were given to measure off along the pathway of the ages, the great events concerning nations and Empires, as well as the destiny of God's people as related to those governments. This I attempted to establish in some degree while studying the "blessings" and "curses" with you.

In addition, they take the place of living prophets and miracle workers in the ages after they ceased. Morris observed, "Miracles could be seen by only a few at any time; but fulfilled prophecy is a miracle of mind that may be seen by all." Moreover, he continues by pointing out, "As age after age adds that measure of fulfillment then due, so all the miraculous evidences of the divine authorship of the Bible will not be given, until all its promises, types and prophecies are fulfilled" (Preface D, p. 7).

Therefore, if Time Prophecy is to serve its intended divine function in the evidential system, the method of interpreting them becomes critically important. As far as I am aware, there are basically three different methods of interpreting Time Prophecy. They are:

1. The Futuristic Method
2. The Preterist Method
3. The Continuous-Historical Method

Obviously, all three of these cannot be correct. Each method is so fundamentally different from the other that it would be impossible

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to entertain the idea of combining them. Since the subject coming up next will cover the Preterist theory, I will not comment on that one at this time.

I will comment on the Futuristic Method. This is a Millennial approach. As I understand it, they take the position that the prophetic clock was stopped at the Cross, and will not start "ticking" again until Jesus comes back and establishes His reign here upon the earth. And that is to continue for a thousand years. I have already shown proof that their literal interpretation of *type prophecies* is wrong.

There are some positions that are held by individuals that are incorrect. However, the nature of the position held, even if it is faulty, in of itself, would not in anyway jeopardize one's salvation, viz. "soul sleeping." However, those who believe in the so called Millennial advocate several wrong theories. First, they are hindering the evidential system of the Bible. They do this by a false method of interpreting *Type and Time Prophecies*. Second, they give sincere people a false hope. And, lastly, some theories of Millennialism promise sinners a second chance. It is certainly a false doctrine that we should be equipped sufficiently to defend ourselves against.

The Continuous-Historical Method

The only scriptural method for interpreting *time prophecy* that I have been able to determine is *The Continuous-Historical Method*. The Preterist theory to be studied next has some merit to it. However, I liked it better before I studied it to the degree that I have. It involves a tremendous amount of overkill of the Jews, with little or no regard to the effect that history would have upon spiritual Israel.

It is critical in considering any method of interpreting prophecy to know the relationship of the book of Daniel to the book of Revelation. Morris comments, "The symbols and other features are so similar that Revelation is a commentary of Daniel." When you consider this closely, there is a tremendous amount of merit to this position. He remarked on one occasion in his book:

Revelation is largely an inspired commentary on Daniel. The numbers, associated with the beasts, are used in the same figurative manner in this volume; are, indeed, the same numbers, in the long count that

Daniel gave us. Twelve hundred sixty days for a government are too short a time, as twelve hundred sixty years for a beast is too long a life; so the beast signifies a government; the days signify its lifetime. (The Prophecies Unveiled, p. 215).

Test Prophecy to Establish the Method

Daniel's metallic giant man reveals the system for interpreting this kind of prophecy (Dan. 2). The image Daniel sees is composed of five materials. It was in the form of a man, thus, the unity of a man. Therefore, the prophecy demands an unbroken history to redeem the prophecy. The gold, silver, brass, and iron mixed with clay are so compactly joined together as to leave no space between them. And, thus, it shows the events predicted by these symbols are consecutive in order. As one descends from the head to the feet, he is following the course of prophecy, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the ultimate fulfillment of the great prophecy. After the giant man appears, Daniel sees a Stone. This Stone smote the image on his feet. It did not hit the image on its head or breast. Consequently, this is indicative of the time when the things symbolized by the image would have their fulfillment. The four great evil heathen monarchies symbolized are all identified in the Bible, thus making identification easy.

This prophecy serves as a *test prophecy*. It proves or establishes the rule for interpreting *time prophecy*. And, also, shows us that prophecy is a system. This prophecy comprehends history as far into the future as God has revealed it to mankind. In addition, all other prophecies given, either, in Daniel or Revelation cover, all or portions of the same time span which the great prophecy of the metallic giant man covers in Daniel 2.

Note the diagram (p. 117). It illustrates the relationship of other prophecies in Daniel, which covers the same time period that the giant man does. This going back and covering the same time period with additional symbols and revelations is commonly referred to as "recapitulation."

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Recapitulation

There is another prophecy given in Daniel which covers the same period that the giant man does with an additional revelation. The little horn appears (Dan. 7), although the symbols within the prophecy are different.

In Daniel 8, another set of symbols is given which covers basically the same period of time, except it begins at the time of the second kingdom symbolized in the other two prophecies. This set of symbols has an additional symbol of a little horn. Once the symbols of this prophecy are understood to parallel the other two, other than it had its beginning a little later in time than the other two, we see that another prophecy is given covering the same time period with additional revelations as to what was to occur in the future.

Once the symbols are decoded, the three combined prophecies will read like a history book. And, what is prophecy? "It is history before it happens" (Isa. 46:10).

In summarizing the material covered in this study, I have attempted to set forth some easy to be understood rules of interpreting various prophecies. I showed that prophecy is composed of several kinds or classifications and that each one is different. Some kinds are more complex than others. Thus, great care is needed in using them in the defense of the truth. Of course, my favorite study of all studies of this type or kind is the "blessings" and "curses" as they apply to prophecy. 12321 E. 14th St., Tulsa, OK 74128

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Diagram 1.

76	B.C. 586	B.C. 330	B.C. 31AD	6" Seal 3/4	4" Trump
Babylon	Medo Persia	Greece	Rome	Constantine	German Emp
Gold	Silver	Brass	Iron	Constantine	Austrian Emp
Military - Politico-Religious Coups to 7 th Trumpet					
Babylon	Medo Persia	Greece	Rome	Constantine	German Emp
Lion	Bear	Leopard	later little horn	Constantine	Belgium
Ram	He Goat	persecutor 1260 yrs	persecutor 1260 yrs	Constantine	France
The Little Horn Dan 8:9 Began Conquests 612					
7 th Trumpet 606 Mahomet 1210 1272					
Fall of Fire					
Despotism					
Nabometanism-Catholicism-Judaism					
Paganism Victory of Stone & Man-child					

Realized Eschatology—The A.D. 70 Doctrine

by Ronny F. Wade

James Orr says, "By eschatology, or doctrine of last things, is meant the ideas entertained at any period on the future life, the end of the world (resurrection, judgment . . .) and the eternal destinies of mankind" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, p. 972). "Realized" signifies "accomplishment;" hence, Realized Eschatology is a doctrine of completed last things.

The major tenets of the doctrine are as follows:

1. The final coming of Christ and the promised resurrection (1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15)
2. The judgment day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:10)
3. Establishment of the new covenant
4. Completeness in Christ (adulthood, adoption, redemption)
5. Kingdom fully established, and
6. The reception of the eternal inheritance, all occurred in A.D. 70.

The following quotes from the pen of Max King, chief proponent of the doctrine, demonstrate the basic viewpoint of the doctrine:

"There is no scriptural basis for extending the second coming of Christ beyond the fall of Judaism" (p. 105)

". . . the end of the Jewish world was the second coming of Christ" (p. 81)

"Prophecy found its complete fulfillment in the second coming of Christ, and now may be regarded as closed and consummated" (p. 65) (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, by Max King).

From the above it can be seen that the second coming of Christ is considered equal to the fall of Judaism. Our first task, then, is to show that the personal, bodily return of Jesus is described in terms that cannot apply to the events of A.D. 70.

Did Jesus Come in the First Century?

It should be noted, first of all, that the phrase "coming of Christ" is used in various ways, and refers to different things. For example: Jesus came in His kingdom (Mt. 16:28); came with power (Mk. 9:1); came on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4, 33). When our Lord described the sending of the Holy Spirit he said "I come unto you" (Jn. 14:18). Surely no one would think this representative coming of Christ through the Holy Spirit referred in any way to a bodily, personal coming.

In Matthew 24:29-30, Jesus said that during that generation they would see "the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Since the context of Matthew 24 concerns the destruction of Jerusalem, we must go to it in order to learn how they would see Him. We know that he did not come bodily in A.D. 70, but rather would be present in Jerusalem's judgment by authorizing it and bringing it to pass. The people would see or discern his presence when the destructive judgment occurred.

Similar language is used to describe the coming of Christ in judgment against the powers persecuting the saints (Rev. 1:7; 19:11-21). None of these events referred to as a "coming," however, prevent a future coming of Christ in bodily form at the end of time. The A.D. 70 doctrine makes every mention of the "coming of the Lord" refer to the same event, regardless of its usage context.

Limiting the Coming of the Lord to A.D. 70

There are at least three passages that create real problems for the proponent of this theory.

1. **Acts 1:9-11.** Note that Jesus shall come "in like manner" as he ascended. In what manner did Jesus go into heaven? He ascended in to heaven actually and personally. Such phrases as "were looking," "out of their sight," "looking steadfastly into heaven," and "beheld him" all indicate actual sight was involved on this occasion. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 teaches that this is the manner in which He will return. Since Christ did not personally come in the events of His coming kingdom (Mt. 16:28), the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt. 24:30), or in the defeat of the powers (Rev. 1:7); we can only conclude that His personal bodily return is yet future.

2. 2 Peter 3:5-7, 10-11. The A.D. 70 advocate, like the Jehovah's Witness, "spiritualizes" this entire passage. They contend that the heavens and earth that will meet a fiery end are the Jewish economy. It will not work. Notice: the world which was overflowed with water is now stored up for fire. This fiery judgment shall occur on "the day of the Lord," at His "coming." Since the world of Noah's time was actually flooded, and a comparison between the two is intended, then the world which now exists must actually be destroyed with fire. If this verse had been fulfilled in A.D. 70, none of us would be here now.

3. 1 Corinthians 15. Without doubt, 1 Corinthians 15 teaches a future bodily resurrection from the dead. The proponent of the A.D. 70 theory contends that the resurrection is already past, having occurred at that time. The proponent of Realized Eschatology contends that the primary meaning of this passage is the resurrection of Christianity out of Judaism. Hear Max King on this point:

Next Paul answers questions concerning how the dead are raised and with what body they come forth. The primary application deals with the development and rise of the Christian system itself, with a secondary application belonging to believers and their state within the system. The natural body that was sown (v. 44) answers to the fleshly or carnal system of Judaism in which existed prophecies, types, and patterns from which came the spiritual body designed of God . . . The natural body, receiving its death blow at the cross and beginning then to wax old and decay (Heb. 8:13), became a nursery or seed-body for the germination, growth, and development of the spiritual body by means of the gospel.

Thus out of the decay of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity that became fully developed or resurrected by the end-time (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, pp. 199-200).

The true teaching of Paul in this passage may be summarized as follows:

1. Paul answers the teaching of those who taught that there was no resurrection of the dead (v. 12);

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2. This is done by establishing the fact that Jesus was bodily resurrected from the dead (vv. 1-11);
3. He next lists the consequences of denying the resurrection of the dead (vv. 2-34);
4. He then deals with the objections raised by those denying the resurrection (vv. 35-50);
5. And finally highlights the victory over death God gives us in Christ through the resurrection (vv. 51-58).

The very thing affirmed by Paul is the thing denied by the A.D. 70 doctrine, i.e. a future, bodily resurrection. Note the calculated reasoning of Paul to prove this point:

1. The bodily resurrection of man is said to be based on the fact of Christ's bodily resurrection.
2. This is demonstrated by a comparison between the offering of firstfruits under the law, which was the choicest and earliest ripe crop (Num. 18:12; Ex.23:16, 19), indicating that all the crop which followed belonged to God.
3. It should be noted that the crop to follow was of the same kind or type as its first fruits.
4. In like manner, Paul argues that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is an assurance and guarantee that all who die shall be raised. We are assured that our resurrection will be the same kind as his. His was bodily, so shall ours be.

Nowhere is there even the slightest hint of a Judaism-Christianity contrast in this passage. It is nothing more than the figment of some man's imagination.

Why A.D. 70?

One of the main reasons for the doctrinal error which makes A.D. 70 the focal point for the fulfillment of so many prophecies, is the false interpretation of the allegory of Galatians 4:21-31.

The Overlapping of the Covenants

Hear Max King:

Christianity is a fulfillment of prophecies, types and shadows of the law and not merely a "fill-in" between Judaism and another age to come. Abraham had two sons, and there was no gap between them. They overlapped a little, but Isaac "came on" when Ishmael "went out." The son born of the spirit was given the place and inheritance of the son born of the flesh. Hence, this simple allegory (Gal. 4:21-31) establishes the "Spirit of Prophecy," confirming prophecy's fulfillment in the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ (Gal. 3:16, 26-29), and beyond the fall of Jerusalem these prophecies cannot be extended (*Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 239).

We have already learned that King teaches that "out of the decay of Judaism arose the spiritual body of Christianity" (*Ibid.*, p. 200). This supposedly happened from 30-70 A.D. Because of this there is an overlapping of the old and new covenants (this point is crucial to the doctrine's defense), and Christians are given the inheritance of the Jews. Let us now examine these two claims in the light of the Scripture.

Did the Covenants Overlap?

1. If so, we would have a case of spiritual adultery. Paul addresses this in Romans 7:1-6, by pointing out that it is adultery for one to be married to another while her husband is living. If the husband dies, then the wife is "discharged from the law of the husband," and is free to marry another. Then he concludes, "Ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead . . . But now we have been discharged from the law" (vv. 4-6).

If the old and new covenants overlapped, from A.D. 30 to A.D. 70, as these people teach, Paul's illustration means nothing. Furthermore, a Jewish Christian would be married to two husbands (covenants) at the same time, hence spiritual adultery.

2. If so, Colossians 2:13-15 is wrong. Here, Paul taught that the removal of the old covenant was at the cross, not A.D. 70. This passage makes three very important points, i.e. (a) the law was blotted

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out or removed, (b) it was taken away, removed, and (c) it was nailed to the cross. No A.D. 70 here.

3. If so, 2 Corinthians 3:14 is denied. The old covenant was done away in Christ. The old covenant was already "done away" when Paul penned these words. No A.D. 70 here.

4. If so, there would be two priesthoods in force at the same time (cf. Heb. 7:11-14). Note: (a) Under the old covenant, the Levitical priesthood was in force (v. 11); (b) Christ is not a priest like Aaron (v. 11). Because Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and not Levi, he could not serve as a priest while the old law was in force (vv. 13-14); (c) the law had to change in order for Christ to serve as a priest over the house of God, (d) Jesus did not wait until 70 A.D. to become priest. He began serving when he sat down at God's right hand (Heb. 8:1-2). Therefore, since Jesus served as High Priest before 70 A.D., the law was changed before 70 A.D. (Heb. 7:12).

Were Christians Given the Place and Inheritance of the Jews?

Realized Eschatology teaches that Christians were given the place and inheritance of the Jews. Remember what Max King said: "They overlap a little, but Isaac came on when Ishmael went out. The son born of the spirit was given the place and inheritance of the son born of the flesh" (*Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 239).

In order to accomplish their goal, these people redefine the allegory of Paul in Galatians 4:21-31. Notice what King says:

The purpose of Paul in this allegory was threefold: First, to show that Abraham had two sons which existed side by side for a time in the same household. This is a truth that is vital to the teachings of the New Testament, and will be a key factor in the study and application of prophecy. Much misapplication of Scripture can be attributed to a failure to recognize this simple but vital truth. These two sons are typical of the two Israels of God, one born after the flesh (old covenant) and the other born after the Spirit (new covenant) . . . Ishmael was the first born and as such, had the right of primogeniture, a right he maintained at the birth of Isaac, and even thereafter until he was cast out or disinherited (*Ibid.*, pp. 29-30).

The substance of King's reasoning is as follows:

1. Ishmael was the rightful heir of Abraham until he was cast out.
2. Thus, the Jews under the old covenant were the rightful heirs of the inheritance, but were cast out in A.D. 70.
3. At this time the Christians took their place and received the inheritance of the Jews.

The problems with these conclusions are:

1. Ishmael was never heir of the Abrahamic promises (Gen. 12:1-3).
2. Before Isaac was born, God made this clear, when He said that His covenant would be established with Isaac, not Ishmael (Gen. 17:15-21).
3. Since Ishmael was never heir to the blessings, he could not be disinherited of them.
4. Hence, Isaac did not take Ishmael's place as heir, neither did Christians take the Jews' place as heirs of God's inheritance.

It should be further pointed out that:

1. The old covenant did not contain the inheritance of God's Abrahamic promises.
2. Righteousness did not come through the law, but through faith (Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:7-14).
3. The law gave a knowledge of sin, but no forgiveness of it (Gal. 3:10-12).
4. The law contained no inheritance, only a curse (Gal. 3:10-19).
5. We therefore conclude that Christians did not receive their inheritance from the Jews of the old covenant.

Rather than establishing the A.D. 70 theory, the allegory of Galatians 4 actually destroys it.

In this illustration used by Paul, Sarah and Hagar represent the two covenants, and their sons are the products of the covenants. Hagar signifies the Mosaic law, which produced "children of

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bondage" (v. 24). Sarah represents the new covenant with Isaac, representing Christians, who are the children of promise (vv. 26-28). In verse 29 the children of bondage or Jews are said to be persecutors of the children of promise or Christians, just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Should Christians desire to go back under the law, where they would be placed in bondage (bondage of sin)? Of course not. The admonition then, "cast out the handmaid (old covenant) and her son (Jews with their persecutions)," and live in the freedom of the new covenant.

To take this allegory and give it a meaning which violates it and other plain teaching in the scriptures, is to wrest the scriptures to our own destruction. This, the A.D. 70 advocates do.

Problems Created by the A.D. 70 Doctrine

1. Problems Regarding the Resurrection. There are a number of problems that arise as a result of the interpretation placed on New Testament Scriptures dealing with the resurrection. King defines the "last days" as the closing period of the Jewish age, 30-70 A.D., with the "eternal days" continuing from that point. He says "We are now in that world, which is to come . . . instead of being in the last days we are in the eternal days, world without end" (Eph. 3:21). From this reasoning, it would follow that those in the New Testament who lived between 30-70 A.D. lived in the last days, while we live in the "eternal days." In Luke 20:34-36 Luke contrasts "this world" with "that world" following the resurrection of the dead. He concludes that while marriage occurs in the former, it does not in the latter. He further states that those who "are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection of the dead . . . die no more." Do people still marry today? Are people still dying? Of course. These are not the eternal days, for if they were, there would be no marrying or dying.

It should be remembered that the A.D. 70 theorist holds that such passages as 1 Corinthians 15 refer to the rise of Christianity out of Judaism rather than a bodily resurrection. If this is true, some in Paul's day held some very strange ideas. Paul himself declared that the people were looking for "a resurrection both of the just and unjust," when he appeared before Felix. Surely they were not expecting Christianity to rise from the ruins of Judaism.

2. Problems Regarding Human Redemption. Forgiveness of sins was not fully accomplished until 70 A.D. "When would ungodliness be turned away from Jacob, or their sins be taken away? When Christ, the deliverer, came out of Zion. When did Christ come out of Zion? Not at his first coming, but his second coming" (*Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 63). According to this theory, the cross ceases to be the focal point and means of accomplishing forgiveness, and is replaced by A.D. 70. If so, why Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, etc.?

3. Problems Regarding Worship. First, should the Lord's supper be observed after A.D. 70? 1 Corinthians 11:26 teaches that when we partake we "show the Lord's death till he come." Since He came in A.D. 70, according to this theory, why would we need to observe the Lord's supper? They have two choices, (a) they can contend that after A.D. 70 the supper no longer proclaims the death of Christ, or (b) that the supper is no longer applicable to Christians. Neither is acceptable.

Second, if this doctrine were true, we would have to eliminate from our worship every hymn that refers to the return of Jesus and its events. Why sing about something that you believe has already occurred? Grave decisions and consequences indeed.

Conclusion

In closing, let me sound the warning to all about the devastating results of this false doctrine. We are reminded of Paul's warning to Timothy about the error of Hymenaeus and Philetus (who said the resurrection is past already; 2 Tim. 2:16-18). You would think that wise men would learn from the mistakes of the past, rather than repeat them again. *P.O. Box 10811, Springfield, MO 65808*

Note: There are a number of good books and articles that have been published on this doctrinal error. One series of articles which this writer found particularly helpful were written by Joe Price and were published in the October 5, October 19 and November 2, 1989 issues of the **Guardian of Truth**. Much of the information in this article was gleaned from this series.

Church Discipline

by Allen Bailey

In this outline, I am going to explain a few of the basic verses concerning discipline. The first of this article will be spent explaining cases where a person should be withdrawn from. The latter part will deal with questions that are frequently asked regarding this important subject. I have been assigned this topic primarily to deal with a few specific questions and to explain on what occasions withdrawal of fellowship would be appropriate.

It is my strong and firm conviction that the congregations of the church of Christ should indeed enforce discipline according to the Bible. It may mean withdrawing from someone for immorality, heresy, refusing to work, etc. I will address several subjects that some will differ with. Please carefully consider as these scriptural references are explained.

This article is divided into the following divisions:

1. Noting objections to church discipline
2. Old Testament examples of discipline
3. New Testament examples of discipline
4. Frequently asked questions about church discipline
5. Conclusion.

Objections to Church Discipline

1. We cannot judge (Mt. 7:1-5).
2. The parable of wheat and tares prohibits discipline (Mt. 13:28ff).
3. We cannot discipline a family member because "blood is thicker than water."
4. It is not "Christian" to discipline anyone by not keeping company with them, not eating with them, marking and avoiding, etc.
5. People will leave the church and other people will not come to this congregation if we enforce discipline.

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These objections are discussed in this presentation. Please remember that none of these objections remove our God-given responsibility to enforce church discipline.

Old Testament Examples of Discipline

Leviticus 20:10-14

¹⁰And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. ¹¹And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. ¹²And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them. ¹³If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. ¹⁴And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.

Deuteronomy 13:1-15

¹If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, ²And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; ³Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. ⁵And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. ⁶If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; ⁷Namely, of the gods of

the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; ⁸Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: ⁹But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. ¹⁰And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹¹And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you. ¹²If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, ¹³Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; ¹⁴Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; ¹⁵Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

Deuteronomy 21:18-24

¹⁸If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: ¹⁹Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; ²⁰And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. ²¹And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

Deuteronomy 22:20-25

²⁰But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: ²¹Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. ²²If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the

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woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. ²³If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; ²⁴Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. ²⁵But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die.

It is clearly established in these few Old Testament cases of discipline that anyone guilty of immorality, heretics who teach false doctrine, etc. were put to death regardless of who they were. If they were your family member, son or daughter-in-law, etc., this relationship did not alter the plan of God to keep Israel pure.

We are to press forward keeping the church pure today by continuing to implement discipline within the church. In the New Testament, there is no death penalty to be administered by the congregation; however, major disciplinary principles are to be enforced without respect of persons. God will administer the final penalty for unrepented sins by the final separation of the righteous from the wicked known as the second death (Rev. 20:14).

New Testament Examples of Discipline

Matthew 18:15-17

¹⁵Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

Trespass (hamartano): This Greek word is translated "trespass, sin, offend, buffeted for your faults" (Thayer, p. 30, Strong's #264). In the New Testament, "to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin." Vine's simply says this word "trespass" means "to sin" (Vine's, vol. 4, p. 154).

the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; ⁸Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: ⁹But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. ¹⁰And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. ¹¹And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you. ¹²If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, ¹³Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; ¹⁴Then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; ¹⁵Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword.

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Tell him his fault (elenko): This Greek word is translated "fault, being reproved" (Lk. 3:19), "being convicted" (Jn. 8:9), "to convince" (Tit. 1:9) in the King James Version. It means "to call to account, show one his fault," demand an explanation from some one (Thayer, p. 203, Strong's #1651).

Alone (monos): This word is translated in the King James Version, "alone" (Mt. 18:15), "only" (Mt. 4:10), "by themselves" (Mk. 9:2). "Without a companion" (Thayer, p. 418, Strong's #3441). Vine's says it "denotes single, alone, solitary."

May be established is defined by Thayer as "to ratify and confirm" (p. 308, Strong's #2476).

Shall neglect to hear (parakouo): This verse is the only occasion that this Greek word is used; it is used twice in this passage. Thayer says this word means "to refuse to hear, pay no regard to, disobey" (p. 484, Strong's #3878).

Heathen (ethnikos) is used twice (Mt. 6:7, 18:17) and is translated both times as "heathen." Thayer (p. 168, Strong's #1482) defines "heathen" as "in the New Testament, savoring of the nature of pagans, alien to the worship of the true God, heathenish; the pagan, the Gentile."

Publican is defined as "a tax-gatherer, collector of taxes, or tolls" (Thayer, p. 620, Strong's #5057). Thayer says "The tax collectors were, as a class, detested not only by the Jews but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed, and deception, with which they prosecuted it."

Romans 16:17-18

¹⁷Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Mark (skopeo) is defined "to look at, observe, contemplate" (Thayer, p. 579, Strong's #4648). This Greek word is also translated: "take heed" (Lk. 11:35); "while . . . look . . . at" (2 Cor. 4:18); "considering" (Gal. 6:11); "Look . . . on" (Phil. 2:4).

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Division (dikostasia) means "dissension, division" (Thayer, p. 153, Strong's #1370). This word is only used three times in the New Testament: Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 3:3, "division"; Gal. 5:20, "sedition."

Offenses (scandalon) means "to put a stumbling block in one's way . . . to cast a stumbling-block before one" (Thayer, p. 577, Strong's #4625). Thayer comments: "to cause persons to be drawn away from the true doctrine into error and sin."

This word **scandalon** is also translated: "stumblingblock" (Rom. 11:9, 1 Cor. 1:23); "occasion to fall" (Rom. 14:13); "offence" (Gal. 5:11, 1 Pet. 2:7-8); "occasion of stumbling" (1 Jn. 2:10).

Contrary to the doctrine: "Doctrine" is from **didakee** and simply means "teaching, that which is taught" (Thayer, p. 144, Strong's #1322). **Didakee** is also translated "hath been taught" in Titus 1:9:

Holding fast the faithful word as he *hath been taught*,
that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort
and to convince the gainsayers.

The second use of the word *doctrine* in Titus 1:9 simply means "teaching, instruction" (Thayer, p. 144, Strong's #1319).

The reason disciplinary actions are to be imposed upon one who causes division and offenses contrary to the doctrine, is because he deceives the heart of the simple. "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (v. 18).

Simple (akakos) means "fearing no evil from others, distrusting no one" (Thayer, p. 20, Strong's #172).

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

¹It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ²And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruc-

tion of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ⁷Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: ⁸Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹²For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ¹³But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Not to keep company (sunanamignumi) is used three times in the New Testament and all three times has reference to discipline. This phrase means "to mix up together," "to keep company with, be intimate with" (Thayer, p. 601, Strong's #4874). It is used in verses nine and eleven, as well as in 2 Thessalonians 3:14.

No, not to eat means "to eat with, take food together with" (Thayer, p. 604, Strong's #4906). *Eat (sunesthio)* is used five times in the New Testament. In each of these verses it refers to a common meal.

And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them (l.k. 15:2).

Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead (Acts 10:41).

Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them (Acts 11:3).

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a

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drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat (1 Cor. 5:11).

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision (Gal. 2:12).

Put away (exaireo) means "to lift up or take away out of a place; to remove" This Greek word is the same word as used in verse 2 of this chapter—"might be taken away from among you."

Paul is directing the Corinthian congregation that this wicked person should be lifted up, removed, and taken away out of their place within the congregation. Have no company with him and do not eat with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

¹²And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Warn (noutheteo) means "to admonish, warn, exhort" (Thayer, p. 429, Strong's #3560).

Unruly (ataktos) means "disorderly, out of the ranks, irregular, inordinate, deviating from the prescribed order or rule" (Thayer p. 833, Strong's #813). Unruly "signifies not keep order . . . it was especially a military term, denoting not keeping rank, insubordinate; it is used in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, describing certain church members who manifested an insubordinate spirit, whether by excitability or officiousness or idleness" (Vine's, p. 320).

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

⁶Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. ⁷For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; ⁸Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought

with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: ⁹Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. ¹²Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. ¹³But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. ¹⁴And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Withdraw yourselves (stellomai) means "to abstain from familiar intercourse with" (Thayer, p. 587, Strong's #4724).

Walketh (peripateo) means "to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self."

Disorderly (ataktos) is an adverb signifying, "disorderly, with slackness (like soldiers not keeping rank), 2 Thessalonians 3:6; in verse 11 it is said of those in the church who refused to work, and become busybodies" (Vine's, p. 320). Vine recommends a comparison to 1 Timothy 5:13: "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

Tradition (paradosis) "in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 is used of instructions concerning everyday conduct" (Vine's).

Note means "to mark, note, distinguish by marking, to mark or not for one's self" (2 Thess. 3:14) (Thayer, p. 574, Strong's #4593).

Have no company with (sunanamignumi) means "to mix up together . . . to keep company with, be intimate with" (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9, 11; 2 Thess. 3:14) (Thayer, p. 601, Strong's #4874).

May be ashamed (entrepo): "to put to shame, in the passive voice, to be ashamed, literally means to turn in (en, 'in,' *trepo*, 'to turn'), that is, to turn one upon himself and so produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome shame which involves a change of conduct, 1 Cor. 4:14, 2 Thess. 3:14, Titus 2:8, the only places where it has this meaning" (Vine's, p. 77).

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Enemy (ekthros) means "hostile, hating and opposing" (Thayer, p. 265, Strong's #2190).

Admonish (noutheteo) means "to admonish, warn, exhort."

1 Timothy 5:17-25

¹⁷Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. ¹⁹Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. ²⁰Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. ²¹I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. ²²Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. ²³Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. ²⁴Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. ²⁵Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

³If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

Withdraw (aphisteemi): "to keep one's self away from, absent one's self from."

Titus 3:10

⁹But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. ¹⁰A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; ¹¹Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Heretic (hairetikos) means "schismatic, factious" (Thayer, p. 16, Strong's #141). The word "primarily denotes capable of choosing

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(**haireomai**); hence, causing division by a party spirit, factious, Titus 3:10" (Vine's, p. 217).

Admonition (nouthesia) means "admonition, exhortation" (Thayer, p. 429, Strong's #3559).

Reject (paraiteomai) means "to shun, avoid" (Thayer, p. 482, Strong's #3868). This Greek word is also translated as "to make excuse" (Lk. 14:18); "refuse" (Acts 25:11, 1 Tim.4:7); "avoid" (2 Tim. 2:23).

2 John 9-11

⁹Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

There is a possibility that this person coming to you bringing not this doctrine is a fallen Christian. This is indicated by the word "transgresseth."

Frequently Asked Questions About Church Discipline

1. Why is it that many congregations do not practice withdrawal of fellowship?

I sincerely believe there are several answers to this one question. Some congregations do not practice church discipline because:

- a.They are not well versed on the need to enforce church discipline. Many congregations have had occasion where members should have been disciplined but failed to apply this principle, therefore doing an injustice to the erring child of God.
- b.Church discipline goes against the grain of many. People frequently try to rationalize why they don't think discipline should be enforced; for example "I want to love them back." If love did not keep them from committing these serious offenses, then I fail to see how love alone can bring them back. We must stay with the Bible.

2. What sins are we to discipline another for?

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I believe the Scriptures makes it very clear what sins are sins that are to be disciplined: those that are specifically named in the Bible. The following list of Scriptures have been discussed as case in point for consideration: Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7; 14-15; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10.

One important point to make is that all sins are not grounds for a withdrawal of fellowship. The specific sins addressed in the Bible are the grounds upon which discipline is to be enforced.

3. In 1 Corinthians 5:11, what does "with such a one no not to eat" mean?

"With such a one no not to eat" refers to a common meal. It does not seem to refer to communion because the Word of God teaches us in 1 Corinthians 11 to "examine ourselves." We should inform all erring Christians who have been disciplined that we cannot keep company with them or eat a common meal with the. And we should always support these conversations with book, chapter and verse from the Bible.

4. When we discipline erring children of God, are we not violating Jesus' command not to judge (Mt. 7:1-5)?

No, we are not violating Jesus' command not to judge when we enforce scriptural discipline. This objection is brought up repeatedly; however, it is not a sound objection. Paul, in 1 Corinthians, clearly stated, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:12-13).

Paul is a great example of passing judgment on an erring child of God. He stated "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed" (1 Cor. 5:3). Also, Jesus said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24).

5. Should we withdraw from an erring child of God if he commits sins that are grounds for withdrawal of fellowship but quits the church soon afterwards?

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Yes, if a person commits an offense that requires the congregation to enforce discipline, then the congregation should go ahead and enforce it regardless of whether the member quits or not. I would recommend withdrawal of fellowship from a member of the congregation if he has committed sins specifically named as grounds for discipline, even if he quits the church to keep you from enforcing discipline. This tactic is an escape to some, and we should not hold back in the least. If someone commits one of these offenses, and the church is in the process of enforcing discipline, and the person quits the church in the heat of the conflict, I would recommend following through with the withdrawal.

6. Is one congregation duty bound to honor the withdrawal of a member from another congregation?

It is my recommendation that when one congregation disciplines someone, that the congregations in the area should honor that withdrawal of fellowship, unless they have just reason to question it.

If a question exists whether to honor it or not, then contacting the home congregation that enforced the discipline would be in order.

It would be very unwise to accept someone who had been disciplined, without making sure he has properly corrected the problem. It would undermine the effectiveness of discipline as ordained by the writers of the New Testament.

Metroplex congregations are frequently faced with "church hoppers" who get upset at one place and go to another, and then to another, etc. I would like to encourage congregations to contact the previous home congregation of the individual to make sure he is in good standing. If he is not, then refuse to accept him until the member in question returns to correct the existing problems.

7. Can one congregation withdraw fellowship from a member of another congregation?

The answer to the question is "No." I will go on record saying, however, I feel a need to qualify my answer to keep anyone from drawing the wrong conclusion. Questions along this line become very difficult at times, but I will gladly offer you my thoughts.

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A ploy is utilized by some errant Christians who are in the process of being withdrawn from. They simply change congregations! When this occasion occurs, I recommend full speed ahead, and follow through with the withdrawal of fellowship, and notify the existing home congregation that the offense had taken place.

A case in point: One brother was being withdrawn from by congregation A. He quickly claimed to be a member of congregation B, and said, "You at congregation A cannot withdraw from me because I am not a member of that congregation." Congregation A contacted the brethren from congregation B, and said, "Is this man a member of that congregation?" Congregation B said "No!" The brother then said, "I am a member of congregation C, and you cannot withdraw fellowship from me because I am not a member of congregation A." Congregation C said, "If he is a member here, we will withdraw from him." After much conversation, it was decided that since the offense occurred at congregation A, and he left in the heat of problems, that congregation A should withdraw and congregation C said they would honor it.

We should never allow such things to hinder or stop the congregation from applying proper measures.

Under normal circumstances, it is not scriptural for a congregation to withdraw from a member of another congregation. Congregational autonomy fits here. For congregation A to withdraw from someone in congregation B, who may never have been a member of congregation A, would be wrong.

8. Does the parable of the tares teach that we should not enforce discipline but should let them stay until the judgment?

No, it does not! This parable has been taken totally out of its setting when people contend for this. Please note that in Matthew 13:24-30, 37-40, the field is the *world*, not the *church*. The wheat represents the children of God. The tares were the children of the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. There is no doubt about this situation, for Jesus interpreted this parable for us.

Brethren, it concerns me when people attempt to use the parable of the tares to offset their responsibility. I do not want to question anyone's heart; however, it is a total misapplication of this parable, and it is inexcusable.

9. What should be done if one congregation withdraws from a brother and then another congregation takes him in without question, or without insisting that the brother resolve the conflict with the previous congregation?

There would be a serious undermining of God's initial intentions. If a person is disciplined by a congregation, he should not have free course to go where he wants, and have people accept him as if he is white as snow.

There is a situation of church autonomy here. The congregation that withdrew fellowship can alert the other congregation as to their actions and why; however, they cannot force the second congregation to honor their actions. Everyone will answer to God for their conduct in this situation.

10. Is it possible that someone could be withdrawn from wrongfully?

Yes, this is possible. It may have happened, but I have never known of a case. If a congregation oversteps their bounds and withdraws from a person without just cause, then a serious sitting down and talking needs to be done. It would be advisable to employ the teaching of 1 Corinthians 6:5, referring to finding a "wise man among you" who can judge between his brethren.

A congregation should be very careful not to jump the gun regarding withdrawal of fellowship. One important fact that has to be present is: "It is reported commonly" (1 Cor. 5:1), that is, it is common knowledge. Withdrawal of fellowship should never be done unless there are clear established facts without any partiality or preferences being shown.

11. If a congregation withdraws fellowship from a person and he is out of the church for years, then shows up and attends another congregation, what should be done?

The simple approach would be to notify the congregation that the person had been withdrawn from and corrections are in order. One important factor that should never be overlooked is that time does not erase sin. Distance does not cover sin. Sin remains sins regardless of whether you live in the USA or abroad. Until sins are properly dealt with, disciplinary actions should be honored.

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12. Do we withdraw from a family member who is guilty of these specific sins?

Yes. Anyone who commits sins worthy of disciplinary action should be withdrawn from. This includes a family member. If we did not discipline one because of who they were related to, but disciplined another for committing the same offense, this would be showing partiality. This is a sin (Jas. 2:9).

I have carefully considered this point. I fully realize that many may differ with this conclusion; however, we need Scriptures to establish a firm conclusion. The Scriptures are clear in demonstrating that God dealt firmly with his children in both the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. In the Old Testament, even a family member was dealt with firmly and decisively.

In an effort to be objective, the following quote from "Withdraw Yourselves," by Dick Blackford (a **Truth Tract**) is offered for your consideration; however, it differs from my conclusion.

Question 10: What if the withdrawer is a member of one's own household?

Answer: "This is probably the only exception. One command does not cancel out another and withdrawal was not designed to destroy the family. However, the realm of the home is not merely a social thing. It is a divine and permanent relationship. We are not to stop fulfilling our roles and responsibilities to other family members (Ephesians 5:22,23 6:1-3). Even then, one should not act so as to condone or encourage the sinning child of God in any way." (pp. 7-8)

I have known of different gospel preachers who are esteemed men of God who differ on this point. However, my conclusion remains because of overwhelming evidence from the word of God. The answer from the Old Testament examples are clear (Lev. 20:11-12; Deut. 13:6-10; Deut. 21:18-24).

For example, if parents had a child who was stubborn and rebellious, they had to bring him to the elders of the city and he would be stoned to death. This case is a *parent* and a *child* (Deut.21:18).

Conclusion

Is the subject of "Church Discipline" a positive one or a negative one? If you are a negative person, you may think it is one hundred percent negative. If you are a positive person, you may think there are some positive results of church discipline. I maintain that church discipline is a positive subject, with a positive effect on advancing the cause of Jesus Christ.

Anytime an individual or congregation can:

- Cause an erring brother to correct his wrong,
- Protect the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:18),
- Provide actions where perhaps the spirit can be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5),
- And warn the unruly (1 Thess. 5:14), this is positive.

Just imagine with me the following scenario. A congregation refuses to enforce church discipline, and over the years experiences division, immorality, and heresy within the congregation. The environment would be poor, to say the least, and strong rebuke would be necessary; rebuke just as strong as that which Jesus gave to five of the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3). They were told to repent or else—so let us do likewise!

Who would want to be a member of a congregation with no discipline at all? "Preach what you want to preach." "Live like you want to live." "Do what you want to do, because this congregation does not enforce discipline."

The purpose of discipline is to help the one in error to correct his wrongs. Paul said "so the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). Again, Paul said "they he may be ashamed" (2 Thess. 3:14). The attitude in which discipline must be administered is described by Paul as "with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:8).

Let it always be remembered that the one in error, who has been disciplined by the congregation can easily correct his spiritual life by "confessing his sins" (1 Jn. 1:9). The infamous case of incest within the congregation at Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 5, was resolved with

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happy results, as we see in 2 Corinthians 1:5-11, where the one disciplined responded favorably and was restored.

I see constructive things happening when discipline is enforced according to the New Testament. Let us never shirk our responsibility, but always press forward to defend the cause for which our Lord died, never showing respect of persons, nor partiality to anyone at anytime. The Lord be with you all! 905 W. Grauwylar Rd., Irving, TX 75061

Romans and the NIV

by Jerry Cutter

History of the NIV

It is necessary first to give a brief history of the NIV. By doing so we can better understand why certain passages were translated as they were, and especially in Romans. Thus, to begin with, we will try to go behind the translation and into the minds of the translators. The preface of the NIV says:

It had its beginning in 1965 when, after several years of exploratory study by committees from the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals, a group of scholars met at Palos Heights, Illinois, and concurred in the need for a new translation of the Bible in contemporary English . . . From the beginning of the project the Committee on Bible Translation held to certain goals for the New International Version, that it would be an accurate translation and one that would have clarity and literary quality and so prove suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use.

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest editions of **Biblia Hebraica**, was used throughout.

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament was an eclectic one.

The best current printed texts of the Greek New Testament were used.

In 1973 the New Testament in the New International Version was published.

Also for the sake of clarity or style, nouns, including some proper nouns, are sometimes substituted for pronouns, and vice versa.

Footnotes introduced by 'Or' do not have uniform significance. In some cases two possible translations were considered to have about equal validity. In other cases, though the translators were convinced that the translation in the text was correct, they

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judged that another interpretation was possible and of sufficient importance to be represented in a footnote.

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart in their book **How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth**, inform us accordingly: "the best translational theory is dynamic equivalence. A literal translation is often helpful as a second source; it will give you confidence as to what the Greek and Hebrew actually looked like . . . But the basic translation for reading and studying should be something like the NIV" (p. 36). They list the KJV and NASB as literal.

Kenneth L. Barker produced a book called **The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation**. The book was in memory of Dr. Edwin H. Palmer who died in 1980. The book states: "The Christian community at large, and the Christian Reformed Church in particular, have lost both a competent scholar and a dedicated servant of Christ."

Edward Palmer was a pastor of the Christian Reformed Church, and spent all his preaching and teaching career in Michigan. He wrote two books: **The Five Points of Calvinism** and **The Holy Spirit**. Palmer supervised "the translation of the Bible into the recently published New International Version (NIV)." "Ed served as Executive Secretary for the Committee on Bible Translation for the NIV from 1968 until his death."

One chapter of Barker's book was written by Palmer. Palmer's chapter is entitled, "Isn't the King James Version Good Enough? (The KJV and the NIV Compared)." He makes a vicious attack on the KJV and the charges are: "(1) it adds to the Word of God and (2) it has now obscure and misleading renderings of God's Word." He wrote: "The KJV translators did not intend to add to the Word of God. They did their best, but all they had to work with was a handful of copies of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament books." Palmer said they followed "bad Greek copies of the original text . . ." Palmer, for whatever reason, was determined to destroy the KJV. And let me add, if I were to make the same silly and rude attacks upon the NIV, I would be laughed out of town.

It may be asked, just how bad were these older Greek copies? Neil R. Lightfoot, in his book **How We Got the Bible**, reports the following on page 67:

Our conclusion is that the text of the New Testament text has never been questioned. Westcott and Hort, in the beginning of their work, take extreme care in giving assurance concerning the reliability of our text. They say: 'The proportion of words virtually accepted on all hands as raised above doubt is very great, not less, on a rough computation, than seven eighths of the whole. The remaining eighth therefore, formed in great part by changes of order and other comparative trivialities, constitutes the whole area of criticism.' They conclude by saying that a small fraction of the whole residuary variation, can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text. Since there is reason to suspect that an exaggerated impression prevails as to the extent of possible textual corruption in the New Testament . . . we desire to make it clearly understood how much of the New Testament stands in no need of a textual critic's labors' . . . Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director of the British Museum for twenty-one years, often expressed his confidence on the wholesome condition of the New Testament text. He once wrote: 'The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.'

This should silence Palmer's comment about the bad Greek the KJV was based upon.

What I now will show that is the NIV is a product of the Christian Reformed Church, which is a strict Calvinist denomination headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with a membership of about 200,000 and some 600 congregations. Palmer, Executive Secretary for the NIV, was a man without credentials outside the Christian Reformed Church. He was no Erasmus, Tyndale, Thayer, Westcott or Hort. His only books were written to defend the five points of Calvinism and his faulty view concerning the Holy Spirit.

The NIV did indeed use translators from various denominations, but all their work had to be approved by Ed Palmer and the Christian Reformed Church. Also, the "international flavor" was attained by

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acquiring translators from Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. However, the NIV is primarily an American translation, from the state of Michigan, the city of Grand Rapids, and the Christian Reformed Church.

The Christian Reformed Church represents a secession from the Reformed (Dutch) Church in 1822, 1857, and 1882. The doctrinal standards are the same as those of other Reformed churches of Dutch origin. The **World Book Encyclopedia** states the following:

The Christian Reformed Church was founded in 1857 in the United States by a group of Dutch people. They broke away from the Dutch Reformed Church [now the Reformed Church in America] but continued to follow the teachings of John Calvin.

The Doctrine of Calvin

Among other things, Calvin believed in hereditary total depravity, or the inherited original sin doctrine. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith says,

By this sin [eating the forbidden fruit] they [our first parents] fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They, being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

Calvinist N. L. Rice in the **Campbell-Rice Debate** boldly stated, "by the natural birth all are depraved, entirely depraved; for the flesh, as we have seen, produces nothing but evil" (p. 632). Moreover, Rice affirms:

Since, then, all that is good in man is ascribed to a great change wrought in his heart by the Holy Spirit, and all that is evil is ascribed to his nature; it follows

inevitably, that he is entirely corrupt . . . But are the truths of revelation sufficient to effect this change? They are not . . . conversion and sanctification never can be secured, in the case of any one of our race, without an agency of the Holy Spirit in addition to the truth, and distinct from it (p. 634).

In C. E. B. Cranfield's widely acclaimed commentary on Romans, **Romans a Shorter Commentary** (1985), he writes: "By this he most probably intends to indicate that the circumcision of the heart . . . is a miracle, the work of God's Spirit." This is standard Calvinist doctrine. Man is totally depraved and thus incapable of doing anything to assist in his own salvation. His salvation is accomplished by a miracle, called the miracle of salvation. As Baptist Warren W. Wiersbe wrote in **The Bible Exposition Commentary**, vol. 1, p. 538, "Therefore, the secret of doing good is to yield to the Holy Spirit."

The NIV and Romans

I have read and studied from the NIV. In many places, it has much to commend it; however, and unfortunately, this can not be said of Romans.

First, I desire to notice several serious problems in the first eight chapters of Romans. Then I will conclude with the NIV's translating of flesh (*sarx*) as sinful nature. Also, in fairness to the study, I have submitted the KJV to the same test that I gave the NIV.

Romans 1:3

Concerning his Son Jesus christ our Lord, which was made [Thayer, p. 115, *ginomai*: "to be born"] of the seed of David according to the flesh (KJV).

Regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David (NIV).

The NIV combines the key words "made of" or "born of," and "seed" into "descendent." There are many descendants, but one seed (Gal. 3:16). Thus, Jesus was "made" (created) of the seed of David. Galatians 4:4, states: "God sent forth his Son, made (created) of a woman, made under the law." Then, the NIV changes "according to the flesh" to "as to his human nature." We will return to this later.

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Romans 1:9

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit
... (KJV)

God, whom I serve with my whole heart . . . (NIV)

In verse three, the NIV combined "made" and "seed" into "descendant." Two words into one. Here it changes one word into two words, neither of which is found in the Greek, and contradicts the text in the process. To serve God with the spirit is to serve Him with the inner man.

Romans 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from
faith to faith (KJV).

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is
revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to
last (NIV).

In Greek, it is "from" (ek) faith "to" (eis) faith, or "in order to faith." Paul was not ashamed to preach to the Jews that justification is from faith (the system of faith, the gospel) to faith—that is, in order to induce faith in his hearers. The NIV changed the text and added "from first to last," which is to say, by faith only. We are not simply dealing with an arrangement of the text that makes it more readable, but with a changing of the text entirely.

Romans 3:27

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what Law?
of works? Nay: but by the law of faith (KJV).

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what
principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on
that of faith (NIV).

The NIV has changed the word "law" (*nomos*) to "principle," and has the Bible saying we are saved on the "principle of faith," or faith only, rather than by the "law of faith." In other places the NIV translates law (*nomos*) as law. In Romans 7:23 it has it "the law of my mind," and "the law of sin." Romans 8:3 has it "the law of the

Spirit." And the simple truth is, the "obedience that comes from faith" (1:5) is based upon "the law of faith" (3:27).

The NIV's Translation of "Flesh" (*sarx*)

I was interested in how the NIV translated certain words from the original Greek. Sometimes it was very consistent. Other times not. For instance, the noun "body" (*soma*) is found 146 times in the New Testament, and 13 times in Romans. In every case, both the KJV and the NIV translate *soma* as body or bodies.

However, when we come to the Greek word *sarx* ("flesh"), we have something very different. The KJV consistently translates this noun as "flesh." As an adjective, it is sometimes translated "carnal," which is the Latin word for "flesh." The word as a noun is used 27 times in Romans. All 27 times the KJV translates it "flesh." Not once does the NIV translate *sarx* as "flesh." In the NIV, the first seven times the word is used it is translated differently. In 1:3 it is translated "human nature"; in 2:28 as "physical"; in 3:20 as "no one"; in 4:1 it is not translated at all; in 6:19 "natural selves"; and in 7:5 and into chapter 8 it is translated, "sinful nature." The NIV also translates *sarx* as "man," "sinful man," "sinful mind," "it," "race," "human ancestry," and "natural children," as in Romans.

We looked at Romans 1:3 earlier. We noticed the NIV changed "made" (created) and "seed" into one word, "descendent." The NIV says: "Regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendent of David." The NIV takes the simple noun *sarx* ("flesh") and changed it into two words, one an adjective, "human," and the other a noun, "nature;" neither of which is found in the Greek. To take on David's human nature is one thing, and to be "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," is something else.

Bauer (Arndt-Gingrich) says under *sarx*, "Christ is descended from the patriarchs and from David *kata sarka* according to the human side of his nature, as far as his physical descent is concerned, Romans 1:3, 9:5." In other words, his physical descent is what is being stressed.

There is a word for "nature" in Greek, *phusis*. Under #2 Bauer defines *phusis*: "natural characteristics" or "disposition, human nature." Is this what inspiration intended to teach us? That our Lord

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had the natural characteristics or disposition of David? We will come back to the Greek word *phusis* momentarily.

Continuing with *sarx* ("flesh"), the NIV translates it "physical" in 2:28. In 3:20 it is translated "no one." "No one" and "no flesh" are not the same.

In Romans 4:1, the KJV records the Greek accurately, as does the ASV and many others, but it is somewhat ambiguous. The RSV says: "What shall we say then about Abraham our forefather according to the flesh?" The NIV says: "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather discovered in this matter?" *Kata sarka* ("according to the flesh") is clear in the Greek, and the strength of the verse is built around it. The Holy Spirit did not ask what Abraham had "discovered," whatever that means; but rather, what can be said about Abraham "according to the flesh."

Romans 6:16 is translated as "natural selves" in the NIV, instead of "flesh." In Chapters 7-8, we come to the NIV's translating "flesh" as "sinful nature."

The NIV and "Sinful Nature"

As with 1:3, the NIV has taken the simple noun *sarx* ("flesh"), and translated it into two words, one an adjective and the other a noun, neither of which is found in the Greek. Why did the translators do this? Was there a motive involved?

Barker, of the Christian Reformed Church, in his book mentioned above which was written in defense of the NIV, gives us the answer. The chapter under consideration was written by Herbert M. Wolf, and is entitled "When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate." On page 130, he writes:

The conflict between living by the Spirit or by the flesh is emphasized in Galatians 5 and Romans 7-8. In order to show the 'flesh' refers, not to the body, but to the sinfulness of man, the NIV has often rendered 'flesh' (*sarx*) as 'sinful nature' (cf. Rom. 8:3-5, 8-9). While many readers would properly understand 'flesh' in the sense of 'human weakness,' the translation 'sinful nature' avoids any misinterpretation of this key theological term.

This forever answers the questions as to why Palmer, Barker, and the Christian Reformed Church translated *sarx* as "sinful nature." They tell us that the "translation 'sinful nature' avoids any misinterpretation of this key theological term." So they did not translate *sarx* at all, but interpreted it for the whole religious world. Brethren, this is completely unacceptable to me. These men have brazenly tampered with the text, and that to the detriment of the truth.

A Look at "Flesh" As Found in Romans 7-8

The first account of "flesh" being translated as "sinful nature" is found in Romans 7:5. Paul said, "when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins [or sinful passions], which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (KJV). The NIV translates it: "For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies so that we bore fruit for death."

First, the phrase "in the flesh" is common in Paul's writings. In 2 Corinthians 10:3, where he wrote, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh," he meant that he was a human being. The same is true of Philippians 1:22 where he spoke of "living in the flesh." He wrote of the life he now lived "in the flesh" (Gal. 2:20).

In Romans 7:5, "flesh" is past tense. Paul had in mind Jewish brethren (v. 4, "my brethren"), and was reminding them of how they were delivered from the Law of Moses (vv. 1-4), so that they might be joined to Christ. There is nothing in the verse that teaches man has a "sinful nature." Moreover, the NIV changed the simple Greek word *en* ("in") to "controlled by," and thus has the Bible saying that they were "controlled by the sinful nature."

Then the NIV has "the sinful passions aroused by the law." The "law" is the Law of Moses. Calvinists do not want it to be the Law of Moses, but the "law principle." See again Romans 3:27 where they changed the word "law" to "principle." In other words, they contend, law arouses sin, so we are not under law. As Calvinist Wiersbe, mentioned above, says, "The Law does not have the power to produce holiness." "What really is 'legalism'? It is the belief that I can become holy and please God by obeying laws." What does the Bible say?

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What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law . . . For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:5, 11-12).

The NIV is wrong in saying the sinful passion were "aroused by the law." Sinful passions are aroused by sin. Even the Law of Moses was geared to make one "holy, and just, and good."

In Romans 7:14, the NIV says: "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave." The KJV follows the Greek, and says: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal [*sarkinos*—fleshy, not fleshly] sold under sin." Where the Greek has *sarkinos* ("fleshy, carnal"), the NIV has "unspiritual."

Sarkinos, or sometimes, *sarkikos*, is used several times by Paul. In Chapter 15:27, Gentiles were to minister "carnal [*sarkikos*—material] things." In 1 Corinthians 9:11, Paul partook of their "carnal [*sarkikos*—material] things." In Hebrews 7:16, we read of "the law of a carnal [*sarkinos*] commandment." The law of the Spirit is recorded "in fleshy [note the spelling, *sarkinos*] tables of the heart."

As we have seen, "in the flesh" is often a description of one being in the world. Jesus explained how to be "not of the world" (Jn. 17:14), yet be "in the world" (vv. 15-19). Literally, "flesh" is man's natural God-given sphere. On another level, being in the flesh is to "walk according to the flesh." "So then, they that are in the flesh [that is, walk or live according to the flesh] cannot please God" (Rom. 8:8). Thus, "according to the flesh" is a purely neutral phrase. Jesus was of the seed of David "according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3; 1 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 4:29).

Flesh is not always to be identified with matter, as it includes things of the mind, and many sins of the flesh are far from sensual (Gal. 5:19-21).

To "walk according to the flesh" is death, because it accepts the end of the flesh as the end of everything, and the end of the flesh is corruption (Rom. 8:13). To "live according to the flesh" is to not be subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:7). To "walk" and "live" according to the flesh is sin. Remember that Jesus Himself was of the seed of

David "according to the flesh" (1:3); however, He did not live and walk according to it.

Thus, our natural sphere of life is not in the flesh, so that our horizon should be determined by it. The body (*soma*) is for the Lord (1 Cor. 6:13). If one becomes subject to the ends of the flesh (*sarx*), one then becomes a "body of sin" (Rom. 6:6).

What one sets one's mind on determines whether one is walking according to the flesh, or according to the Spirit. Sin dwells in one who has the mind of the flesh, and the Spirit dwells in one who has the mind of the Spirit. To be "carnally (fleshly) minded" is to walk according to the flesh as a standard (Rom. 8:6; 2 Cor. 10:3-4). Paul makes it plain that though we live "in the flesh," we should not walk "according to the flesh." And this is only possible when one "minds the things of the flesh."

The *will of man* is always involved when one walks *according to the flesh*. Thus, one cannot be sinful by nature, as the NIV would have it. In Romans 1-5 we learn that all are sinners, and that the works of the Law of Moses cannot save one. Sin entered the world by one, Adam, and its influence is destroyed by one, Jesus. In Chapter 6, *we know* (vv. 1-10), *we thus reckon* (v. 11), and *we may refuse to yield* (vv. 12-23). Chapter 7 pictures the dismal condition of the sinner under the Law of Moses. Chapter 8 brings us to the bright light of salvation found only in Jesus, and through the law of the Spirit.

Conclusion

Remember that in the Greek, the word *sarx* is found 27 times in Romans, and is consistently translated "flesh" in the KJV, except where it is found as an adjective or as an adverb. However, not once did the NIV translate the word "flesh." We are not dealing with a term that could not have been easily translated, or that the translators occasionally mistranslated. The NIV consistently translates "flesh" as "sinful man," "sinful mind" or "sinful nature." In fact, in over half the occurrences they add the word "sinful." Barker said the NIV translated it "sinful nature" to "avoid any misinterpretations," even though neither "sinful" nor "nature" is found, nor inferred by any of the verses. Not one time is it correct to translate "flesh" as "sinful nature." The NIV is a highly flawed translation when it comes to the book of Romans. Rt. 1, Box 139, Crescent, OK 73028

Preparation for the Mission Field

by Greg DeGough

Introduction:

The gospel is powerless to save man until it is told (Rom. 10:13-15). We can tell our families, immediate neighbors and work mates about the good news without the inconvenience of going very far from our homes. But, once we have exhausted this audience, the commission of Jesus stares us squarely in the face and demands that we make a decision. Will we go? Will we make the effort demanded by the Lord of the universe to spread His glory to all of creation by the gospel? We are God's chosen people and we were chosen so that we could declare His praises (1 Pet. 2:9).

Mission work is the church spreading the glory of God to an unbelieving world. Mission work does not start in the far-flung reaches of the foreign world. It starts at home. The local congregation is the heart of mission work. From it will come the desire to spread the gospel to the lost. From it will come recruits for the work. From it will come the material and spiritual support for those it is sending to work in the field. From it will come replacements for the workers who leave the field.

Congregations must learn to inspire a missionary spirit in their members through education and involvement. If we lose congregational interest in mission work, we lose the work itself, for "how can they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:15).

I. Congregational Preparation

A. We must examine our motives for doing mission work.

1. Fad.

a) Success in the work by other congregations sometimes makes us want to share in the supposed distinction which accompanies mission work.

But when problems come, or the work bogs down, the "stink" in distinction becomes all too evident, and this motive does not help maintain commitment.

b) World circumstances sometimes determine attitudes toward foreign mission work.

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In the 19th century colonial expansion and a general sense of manifest destiny created a favorable environment for mission growth.

After World War II there was a renewed interest in mission work. This was somewhat influenced by the general posture of major nations toward world development and assistance. Our work in African countries began in this time period.

Our zeal was stirred in '89-'90 by the opening of Eastern Europe. Those same circumstances can also quench zeal. War, struggle for independence and changing economic conditions all contributed to a general forgetfulness about mission work in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

As the new has worn off the Eastern European situation and economic and other practical realities have set in, has our zeal for the Lord's mission there burned down also?

2. Principle.

- a) The Lord asks us to do mission work on the basis of principle. Principle does not change like political, social or economic climates. It is a more stable motivating factor.
- b) God "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

From the fall of man, God has desired man's reconciliation (Eph. 2:14-16; Rev. 13:8).

God made a promise of universal impact to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-2). God's plan was to restore fallen man through His chosen people, the children of Abraham. God promised a time would come when all nations would worship Him (Ps. 86:9; Jer. 16:19-20; Zec. 8:20-23; Isa. 2:1-4). But there was no real evangelistic effort by the children of Abraham. They were to be a living testimony, showing God to mankind through their conformity to His law and their praise (Dt. 4:5-8; Ps. 96:1-13).

When Jesus came, he preached the dawning of a new age (Mt. 4:17). However, his apostles were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel during His lifetime (Mt. 10:5-7)

After His resurrection, Jesus announced that the new age which He had preached had come (Mt. 28). Jesus was now Lord of all (28:18). Jesus' apostles were to go into all nations making disciples who would enter His kingdom (28:19). The apostles were to teach the disciples to obey the commands of the Lord (28:20). This pronouncement marked the beginning of the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the nations. All nations were now

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to be approached with the message of the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus.

When would this new age end? When would the good news of God's kingdom cease to be preached? This new age lies between two important events: the ascension of Jesus and the return of Jesus (Acts 1:11). Between these two events lies the work of evangelism by the church. We will only cease to preach the gospel at Jesus' appearing in the clouds (1 Tim. 6:12-14; 2 Tim. 4:1-2).

The church is to be composed of "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). The church is the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). There is no other organization which can reach the lost with the message of salvation. Therefore, mission work is not an alternative. It is the church carrying out its God-given purpose. The principle of reaching the lost of every nation should be the focal point in every discussion of mission work.

c) Motives for missionary work

God. Desire to glorify God and save souls. We must have a desire to show the whole world the glory of the only true God (2 Cor. 4:8-15). God initiated salvation so that we might praise His glory (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). God's gracious redemptive plan revealed in the gospel will cause men to stand in awe because of His love. Men cannot see God's glory with idolatry in their hearts. The gospel is the divinely powerful tool we use to destroy idolatry (2 Cor. 10:3-5). We are at war for the glory of our God. The battle is being fought in villages and metro areas; in mud huts and condominiums; where faithful men and women are struggling to capture minds by filling them with "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Men. Love for men because they are lost. We who know the joy of salvation must tell the gospel to others so they can know the joy of salvation. We need the feeling of indebtedness to the lost that motivated Paul (Rom. 1:14-15). It is difficult for us to have an evangelistic heart like Paul until we have the same feeling of sorrow for the lost condition of men that he had (Rom. 9:1-4a).

Time. Urgency based upon the return of Jesus. In the Mosaic period, the people of Israel looked forward to a new era which would usher in God's kingdom bringing new blessings and opportunities. There was no urgency, for the next era would usher in the promised blessings of God. The present age will end with the appearance and

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judgment of Jesus Christ. There will be no other opportunity. This makes the teaching of the gospel to the world particularly urgent. Men must obey before it is too late (2 Cor. 5:6-11a).

B. Educating the congregation.

1. Interest in mission work comes from education about mission work.

a) We are not seeing a waning interest in mission work among our brethren because of problems in the field of labor. Problems have always been and will always be in the work of the Lord (Prov. 24:10).

b) We have not been preaching and teaching about the Lord's desire that all men know about the gospel. We have not emphasized strongly enough that "the field is the world" (Mt. 13:38). It is the responsibility of preachers, elders and leaders to create a medium in the local congregation in which missionary desire can breed and grow.

When was the last time you heard a sermon encouraging you or your children to consider mission work as a life goal?

c) Repetition is at the heart of learning (2 Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1-2). If we constantly preach and talk about the Lord's work all over the world, people might get tired of hearing it, but they won't forget.

2. Education should be emphasized in the following areas:

a) The role the church is to play in God's plan for history. God created the church to be active and to effect the world in which it exists (Eph. 3:7-11). It does this by revealing the wisdom of God through the gospel. The activity of the church has eternal significance (Eph. 3:20-21).

b) The specific work(s) in which the congregation is involved: the field(s) of labor; the workers in the field; the successes or failures of the work; the opportunities for greater involvement in the work.

3. Education will help produce unanimity of commitment. If people do not know anything about the work it is difficult for them to be committed to it.

4. We should emphasize devotion to work at home first. If we can't do the work of evangelism in our own community, we will certainly fail when faced with the monumental task of establishing the Lord's body in a remote land. Home is the training ground for our mission efforts.

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C. Selecting an appropriate field of labor.

1. We have varied examples in Scripture of mission fields opening.

a) Through presented opportunities (Acts 16:6-10; 1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 2:12-13). In this case we go or stay, to answer or ignore the call.

b) Through determined efforts (Acts 8:4; 11:19-21; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1-2, 17; etc.). In this case we sometimes need guidelines for deciding where we should concentrate our efforts. The following are merely examples:

Is there perceived interest in the gospel message?

Will laborers be received by the community?

Are there strategic centers of population and influence where we might begin the work?

Are there work opportunities for those who are not in full-time evangelistic work?

Is the host government stable enough to allow work to continue uninterrupted for a lengthy period?

These guidelines require in-depth research, on-site investigation and prayerful consideration.

D. Choosing qualified men.

1. We will discuss specific qualifications when we come to individual preparation.

2. Ideally, congregations should initiate the selection process for field of labor and workers. If you have a mind to work, don't wait for mission-minded individuals to come and ask you to send them to the field.

a) When a congregation initiates mission work based upon missionary zeal and commitment, that work is not done under coercion.

b) Congregations which have not freely decided to work on the basis of the principles we have already laid out above, should not attempt to enter mission work.

If a congregation finds itself involved in work for which it has no heart, it should please surrender the work into the hands of another congregation which is willing to commit itself wholly to the commission of Jesus. It is better to suffer the temporary embarrassment of the builder who did not count the cost, than to destroy the work of the Lord through ineptitude or apathy.

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3. A congregation can recruit workers from outside its immediate members, but it is better if the workers come from their own number (Acts 13:1-3). Workers sent into the field from among the congregation are better known and supported by them.
4. Prepare to send a team.
 - a) Two are better than one (Ecc. 4:9-12).

They have a good return for their work (v. 9).
They can encourage and strengthen one another (v. 10; Prov. 27:17). Accountability is a major issue under the idea of encouragement and strengthening.
They can comfort one another (v. 11).
They can handle opposition with greater confidence (v. 12).
One man's judgment may be questioned as personal interpretation or prejudice. This happens less often when two men agree about the solution to a problem.
 - b) Paul is an example of the success of teamwork in mission efforts. Even though there were sometimes problems between workers (Acts 15:36-41; 2 Tim. 4:9-18), Paul never willingly opted for working alone.
 - c) Duration of stay in the field will usually be longer with a team effort. In a foreign work, this has a positive effect on the nationals. They know we mean business when we make plans to work among them for an extended period.
 - d) Decisions can be made with greater confidence. One man may doubt his judgment in a given situation and the advice of his partner will clarify the options (Prov. 15:22).
 - e) Try to choose men who are compatible. There is only one thing worse than doing mission work alone, that's doing mission work with someone you do not like. If a man is already in place on the mission field, consult him as to the compatibility of the prospective work mate.
- E. Developing a practical system of support.
 1. Spending time with workers before they enter the field (Acts 13:1-3).
 2. Prayer for the workers in the field (1 Thess. 5:25; Col. 4:2-4; 2 Thess. 3:1-2; Eph. 6:19-20).
 3. Communication with workers in the field (Phil. 4:10-19).
 - a) There must be a strong communication of brotherly love between the congregation and the missionary.

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- b) Phone communication or written correspondence can lift a lonely spirit. There are few things nicer than finding the post office box stuffed with mail from home when you are lonely for friends, relatives and brethren.
 - 4. Visiting the work. This is an oversight option which is ignored often for financial reasons. However, I know of few serious enterprises in which those who are directly involved in investment do not visit the labor site.
 - 5. Send-off (Acts 13:1-3; 15:40; 20:36-38; 21:5-6). The send-off of missionaries can be memorable and inspiring or lonely and deflating. Remembering the bent knees of true co-workers left behind can strengthen lonely hearts (Phil. 1:3-6).
- F. Setting up realistic oversight.
- 1. Goals, expectations and policies should be established, discussed and agreed upon by all involved parties before they are needed. The mission field with its attendant stresses is not the place to try to work out misunderstandings between congregations and missionaries. These matters should be addressed before the missionary ever departs for the field.
 - 2. Discipline.
 - a) Prepare for mistakes. The missionary will make mistakes in methods or decisions. Mistakes may affect the progress of the work, but they are to be expected from humans in difficult circumstances.
 - b) However, where there is sin involved, if it is left unchecked, a large portion of the brotherhood of the Lord's church will be affected because of the sphere of influence involved in missionary work. We should not allow the Lord's church to be destroyed by hesitating to discipline an unrepentant sinner.

The church in Jerusalem was willing to try to rectify the problems caused by men who were not even authorized by them to go out and preach (Acts 15:24).

The congregation that sends a man out to work in the mission field must be willing to accept responsibility for that man's conduct and if necessary, discipline him in order to protect the Lord's church.

II. Selection and Preparation of Men to Do the Work

- A. Adaptable and versatile (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 4:11-13).
- 1. The missionary and his family doing foreign work will sometimes face high prices, high crime rate, highly visible military

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presence, alien status, minority status, communication difficulties, interesting odors, less privacy, more time with family and many other strange and notable experiences. Without the ability to adapt, life will become a sequence of unbearable experiences and the work may lose a wonderful asset.

2. The missionary must also wear many hats. Preacher, administrator, accountant, customs clearing agent, importer, shipping agent, secretary, auto mechanic, bicycle mechanic, appliance repairman, loan officer, bill collector, detective, marriage counselor, building contractor, carpenter, brick mason, taxi driver, purchasing agent. The list could continue, but this is sufficient to illustrate that the missionary must be versatile.

Ability to mix people, mix concrete, wade rivers, write articles, love one's neighbor, deliver babies, sit cross-legged, conduct meetings, drain swamps, digest questionable dishes, patch human weaknesses, suffer as fools gladly, and burn the midnight oil. Persons allergic to ants, babies, beggars, chop suey, cockroaches, curried crabs, duplicators, guitars, humidity, indifference, itches, jungles, mildew, minority groups, mud, poverty, sweat, and unmarried mothers, had better think twice before applying (Ad for missionaries by Anglican Mission in Polynesia. *Standard*, September 28, 1964, p. 13.)

3. Cultural adaptation.

- a) Cultural adaptation is acquired through participation in a cultural environment. It is habitual, learned behavior not inherent in man. This means we can learn to adapt to a culture in which we have never participated.
- b) "The spiritually impelled foreign missionary will excel in his ministry to the extent that he understands culture and can free himself from cultural prejudices so that he can function unhindered in a foreign culture." (George P. Gurganus, "Culture and Communication," *Guidelines for World Evangelism*, Ed. George P. Gurganus, [Abilene, TX: Biblical Research Press, 1976], p. 35.)
- c) God's attitude toward culture is expressed by Peter (Acts 10:34-35).

We cannot be ethnocentric and reach the lost men of the world. Pride is the root of ethnocentrism. Pride produces enmity. It is this pride that attributes cultural differences to stupidity and inferiority. "As the missionary goes out to help others understand the gospel, he must free himself

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from the kind of pride in self or in country that makes him look down upon or be disdainful of others." (Ibid., p. 54). Paul saw this very problem as a threat to the course of the gospel (Gal. 2:11-21).

God does not approve any one culture, rather He works through each culture to save men (Col. 3:11). He is at war with certain traditions in each culture as they conflict with His will (Mt. 15:1-9).

We must remember our status before the Father and how it was obtained (Ex. 22:21; Tit. 3:1-8). It was obtained through the grace of God which has appeared to all men (Tit. 2:11).

Forget about life back in the USA. Discipline yourself to make your home where you are.

d) There are four ways of responding to culture.

Return to one's native culture. Some find it easier to go home than to allow adaptation to take place.

Renounce one's native culture and become like a native of the host culture. This is sometimes rooted in severe feelings of non-acceptance in one's native culture.

Create an environment in the host culture which is identical to one's native culture. This approach isolates the missionary from the people he is trying to reach and serve.

Identify. The following are suggested steps to identifying: (1) Humble yourself. Be prepared to experience very humbling circumstances and events by practicing true humility. Be willing to learn. You are a foreigner and your behavior will at first be culturally immature. Remember that you are like a child and you need to learn from those who are culturally mature. (2) Get to know the people and let the people know you. Establish friendships with individuals. Place traits and events in their cultural context before passing judgment. (3) Be a fellow-laborer, not a master. Eat with people in their homes. Eating is one of the most basic forms of fellowship, and something all men, rich or poor share alike. Invite people into your home for visiting and friendship. Maintain a standard of living that is relative to the local circumstances. We must not flaunt our great riches, or appear to be at poverty level. We need to maintain a life of simplicity which is conducive to working in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. (4) Truly love the people you serve (Rom. 12:9-16). Adjust your list of priorities so that people are near the top, at least higher

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than time schedules. (5) The power of Jesus' love was His identification with those He came to save (Heb. 2:10-18; 4:15; Phil. 2:5-8). (6) Identifying helps the missionary give God's answers to the needs of the people with whom he is working.

e) Language

Part of knowing people is mastering their language. Try hard, you will be rewarded.

Studying the science of linguistics before departure will lay a foundation on which you can master any language. Linguistics is not particular language study, but the study of language structure and function.

Plan on at least three years before fluency.

Aids to language mastery include: (1) Self discipline. (2) Opportunities for study. Most mission organizations require that missionaries devote the first year of residence in their country to the study of the native language. (3) Good grammars and qualified teachers. These are not always available. (4) Immersion in culture through social contacts. Constant use of language in every day situations.

Advantages of language mastery include: (1) Closer bond with citizens of host country. (2) Greater understanding of local culture. (3) The gospel can be communicated with greater effectiveness and freedom. (4) Gives greater confidence.

B. Good reputation at home (Acts 16:2).

1. The mission field is not a proving ground for a man who has not proved himself in his own home environment.
2. There are pressures and struggles which will magnify character flaws in the worker on the mission field.
3. Do not be afraid to investigate the background of any prospective missionary for character flaws. This precaution is as much for the prospect's protection as for the protection of the church. It is a terrible feeling to be ten thousand miles from home and realize that you couldn't handle the pressures of the mission field after all.

C. Sound in spirit and doctrine.

1. Spirit.

- a) Many of us depend on the fellowship of the saints and the general Christian atmosphere of our country to keep us spiritually strong. On the mission field these are not present. The missionary must be prepared to keep his own

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spiritual health by devotion and attention to fellowship with God.

Spend time away from others each day in prayer. Jesus did (Mt. 6: 6; Mk. 1:35; Lk. 5:16).

Maintain spiritual strength by good study and reading habits. Books are hard to obtain in foreign countries. Take as many as you can with you when you go. If brethren ask what they can send to help you in the work, have them send good books, or subscribe to good religious periodicals for you.

2. Doctrine.

a) Handle the word of truth correctly (2 Tim. 2:15).

The message must be preached so that decision for or against Christ can be made without any obstacles to understanding. These obstacles can be in the form of failure to communicate the message or mishandling the message (2Co. 4:1-6).

This principle implies becoming all things to all men (1Co. 9:19-23).

b) Make the message universal.

Cultural leftovers (slang phrases, localized illustrations, arguments based on certain translations, etc.) can destroy effectiveness in preaching. The presentation of the truth of the gospel must be adapted to the audience in their own cultural environment.

Traditions and doctrine are not always the same. We must be careful not to Americanize the church in other lands. We are there to help them become Christians, not Americans. The gospel is not an American tale, nor a Western idea, but a message of universal salvation. The gospel must go to all the world (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47; Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:7), so what we preach must apply to all the world.

c) Try to achieve perseverance in the respondents.

3 We must work for the perseverance of those who obey the gospel (Rev. 2:10). We cannot be satisfied to merely baptize. We must strive to strengthen, also (Acts 14:21-22).

Converts must become members of working bodies to receive strength for the task of living the Christian life (Eph. 4:16). We do this in many ways: (1) "encourage one another" (Heb. 3:13); (2) "admonish one another" (Col. 3:16); (3) "teach one another" (Col. 3:16); (4) "build each other up" (1 Thess. 5:11); (5) "spur one another on to love

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and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24-25, our worship assemblies are to be places where we work internally for growth); (6) "pray for each other" (Jas. 5:16); (7) "serve one another in love" (Gal. 5:13); (8) "carry each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2); (8) "be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Rom. 12:10).

D. Commitment to the work (2 Tim. 2:3-5).

1. Wanting to see the world is not a good motive for wanting to be a missionary.
 - a) Emotional high will last about as long as it takes to re-fuel the 747 that took you away from home, because your luggage is probably lost and the taxi driver does not speak English.
 - b) Commitment to principle will last even after emotion has died.
2. We must be careful against sending men who want to get rich (1 Tim. 6:9-10). There are many temptations for the covetous man in the highly artificial and inflated economic systems of Third World countries.

E. Patience

1. In one and a half days the missionary and his family go from the jet age to the ox-cart age.
2. Time and scheduling are far down the list of importance in the lives of most people in Third World countries (where most of our foreign mission work is done). People are much more important and take precedence over schedules.
 - a) Learn to slow down. The only other alternative is going home.
 - b) Anger and belligerence will often increase your delays instead of eliminating them.

F. Strong family

1. Family problems are a liability.
 - a) In the strain of adaptation, family weaknesses will be magnified.
 - b) No family problems have ever been solved by attempting to bury them in the mission field.
2. The wife's struggles are more difficult than the husband's.
 - a) The husband has the work to keep his mind occupied and off the shocks related to culture adaptation.

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- b) "She must make a home in a new style dwelling, cook strange foods, watch her children adapt to customs that are alien to her and, at the same time, adjust to the new role of 'missionary' which she may discover demands much more than she had ever considered." (Joyce Hardin, "Women In Missions," **Guidelines for World Evangelism**, Ed. George P. Gurganus, (Abilene, TX: Biblical Research Press, 1976), p. 211.)

G. Administrative abilities.

1. Because of the many roles a missionary must play he should have some ability in the following areas:
 - a) Able to handle finances
 - b) Able to make quick decisions even though they may be unpopular.
 - c) Able to train and encourage (2 Tim. 2:2).

H. Willing to go.

1. This is one of our greatest drawbacks in mission work right now; it's difficult to find men willing to go.
2. We must guard against reacting by sending any warm body that says "Yes." Instead we need to cultivate a missionary spirit in men who have ability. There is no fast, easy, three-step solution to this problem.

One thing which helps encourage aspiring missionaries is to send them to visit countries where we are already working so that they can get a taste of what life is like outside the USA. We must be careful to send truly committed men who have a genuine desire for mission work so that we do not begin a travel agency.

I. Good physical health.

Conclusion

Why should we desire the sacrifices, hardships and adjustments of missionary life? There may be many reasons, but I would like to mention two which the missionary to the Gentiles noted: (1) Jesus did it for us (Phil. 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 8:9); (2) we fellowship with Him in His glory if we share in His sufferings (Phil. 3:10-11; Rom. 8:17). *Currently laboring in Zambia, Africa*

The Received Text

by Johnny Elmore

The reason I began a short study of the text of the New Testament originally had to do with an assignment by the editor of the *Old Paths Advocate* to write a series of articles about translations. I discovered a wealth of material on translations in various periodicals written by members of the church of Christ (digressive). However, I was struck by an article in particular in which the writer condemns "the heresy found within the NASV, NIV, TEV, NEB, MLKV and the like," and later stated: "We are not against the comparative study method as long as the two reliable versions (KJV and ASV) are used and one is aware of the dangers of the others."¹ This article was in a paper which was in the process of printing a series of articles by A. G. Hobbs on the *New International Version*. In Hobbs' review of the NIV, he listed what he called "unwarranted omissions."² Exactly six years later in the same paper, another writer took the first one to task for referring to the ASV as a "reliable" version, saying, "ironically, of the 29 omissions accurately recorded there (in Hobbs' article on the NIV), ALL BUT FOUR of them *also* appear in the ASV!"³ The writer goes on to say, "The Authorized Version is the *only* reliable English translation."

Up to this point, I had always considered the ASV to be a reliable translation, but it occurred to me that it is unfair and inconsistent to criticize the NIV, RSV, NEB, and the NASB if they simply leave out phrases or words that the ASV also leaves out. The problem would be with the *text*. Then I discovered an ongoing, lively debate over the text. The *King James Version*, or the AV, based its translation upon what is called "the received text," whereas, most of the later, modern speech translations have used the Westcott-Hort text. There is a good deal of finger-pointing on both sides of the debate, with each side referring to the other's text as "corrupted."

In an attempt to come to some satisfactory conclusion in the matter, I have read both sides and have tried to be as objective as possible. One characteristic of all those who oppose any translation but the KJV seems to be absolute, unrelenting, no-quarter-given, hostility and dogmatism. I may not be able to give a definitive answer about the

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text. I think it is an issue that will bear more study, but what I would like to do is to study what is meant by "the received text," and why it was thought necessary to have a revised text.

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Up until the fifteenth century, books were produced by hand, but the invention of printing by Gutenberg was a development of epic consequences for mankind. Books could now be made much faster and more accurately and reasonably. It was fitting that the first book to be printed was the Bible. Sometime between 1450 and 1456, Jerome's Latin Vulgate was the first major product to come from Gutenberg's press. The first Greek New Testament to be printed was part of a polyglot Bible. This was in 1514. The term, "polyglot," comes from *poly*, "many," *glotta*, "languages," and it contained Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Metzger says that of the 600 original sets printed, the locations of 97 are known today. This book, known as the **Complutensian Polyglot**, was not put on the open market, thus the honor of being the first book published in Greek goes to Desiderius Erasmus' Greek New Testament.

Apparently Erasmus had discussed the possibility of such a volume before, but in April of 1515, a publisher by the name of Johann Froben importuned him to undertake an edition of the New Testament. He promised to pay as much as anyone else might offer and apparently that appealed to Erasmus, for he went to Basle for this purpose in July, 1515. He hoped to find Greek manuscripts which he could copy to use with his Latin translation, but the only manuscripts he found required correction. Not finding a manuscript which contained the entire Greek New Testament, he used several. According to accounts, he used one from the fifteenth century for the gospels, one of the thirteenth or fourteenth century for the Acts and Epistles, and with these he collated, more or less carefully, one more of the Gospels, two in the Acts and Catholic Epistles, and three in the Pauline Epistles, the oldest from the tenth century. For the Revelation, he used only a single manuscript from the twelfth century and it lacked the final page, which contained the last six verses of the book. For those verses, as well as other places in the manuscript where the adjoining Greek commentary was so mixed up with the text as to make it indistinguishable, Erasmus depended upon the Latin Vulgate, translating this into Greek. The printing began on Oc-

tober 2, 1515 and was finished on March 1, 1516. The haste involved caused Erasmus to remark that the volume was "precipitated rather than edited." **The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia** declared that the first edition "swarms with errors." Scrivener, who later defended the Received Text, declared it to be, with respect to typographical errors, "the most faulty book I know." The charge is made that because of Erasmus' self-made Greek text, there are readings which have never been found in any known Greek manuscript and which are still perpetuated today.

Erasmus produced a second, more correct edition in 1519. Mill observed about 400 changes in this one. For this and later editions, an additional manuscript was used. His Latin translation is described as "elegant," due to the fact that he had been working on it for years. The second edition became the basis for Luther's German translation.

In the third edition, fewer changes were noticed, but it was in this edition that the unfortunate passage in 1 John 5:7, 8 is found. Erasmus was attacked for his omission of the trinitarian formula "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth." Erasmus argued that he left that phrase out because he had not found the words in any Greek manuscript, but then he promised, very foolishly, that if the passage could be found in a single Greek manuscript, he would include it in future editions. Such a copy was found, or perhaps made. Metzger suggests that it had been written about 1520 by a Franciscan friar, who took the disputed words from the Latin Vulgate. Erasmus kept his word and inserted it in the third edition. Erasmus published a fourth and fifth edition. The fourth edition was improved in many places from the **Complutensian Polyglot**, and the fifth hardly differs from the fourth. The reason I mention these editions is because Erasmus' Greek New Testament stands in line behind the Received Text and the King James Version.

Another who played a significant role in the development of the Received Text was a Parisian printer and publisher whose Latinized name is Stephanus. He issued four editions of the Greek Testament. The third edition, described as "sumptuously printed" and "handsome," was very close to the fourth and fifth editions of Erasmus. It was this third edition which became for many persons, especially in England, the received or standard text of the Greek Testament.

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Stephanus' fourth edition is noteworthy because the text was divided into numbered verses for the first time. Stephanus' son stated that his father did the work while on a journey from Paris to Lyons, and because of the unhappy divisions of the verses, some have inferred that he did his work on horseback and that the horse sometimes bumped his pen into the wrong places.

Another scholar who published several editions of the Greek Testament was Beza. Although he was an eminent scholar and had access to several Greek manuscripts, he used them very little because they deviated too far from the generally received text of the time. His editions helped to popularize and stereotype the *Textus Receptus*. The King James translators of 1611 made large use of Beza's editions of 1588-89 and 1598.

In 1624, the Elzevir brothers published a small, convenient edition of the Greek Testament, the text of which was taken from Beza's 1565 edition. The preface to the second edition of 1633 makes the boast to the effect that now the reader has "the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted." This little bit of advertising in Latin was responsible for the designation, *Textus Receptus*, or commonly received, standard text. In summarizing this account, Metzger essentially gives the criticism of the Received Text: "It lies at the basis of the King James version and of all the principal Protestant translations in the languages of Europe prior to 1881. So superstitious has been the reverence accorded the *Textus Receptus* that in some cases attempts to criticize or emend it have been regarded as akin to sacrilege. Yet its textual basis is essentially a handful of late and haphazardly collected miniscule manuscripts, and in a dozen passages its reading is supported by no known Greek witness."⁴

The Rise of Textual Criticism

In 1611, the science of textual criticism was in its infancy. I think it important to explain what is meant by criticism. As one man has explained, if we were to go to Washington, D.C. to the Archives, we could see the original Declaration of Independence. Although it is a national treasure, it is of no great value to anyone because we have plenty of accurate copies of the same document. But what about the writings of the Apostle Paul or John? We don't have any originals,

but we do have copies. The question is: How good are the copies we have? How close are they to the originals? That question has to do with Textual Criticism. This science is also called Lower Criticism. It is to be distinguished from Higher Criticism. Higher Criticism has argued, usually on very subjective grounds, that certain books were written by a different author than what was claimed, or that some passages were inserted by another author at a later date, etc. This kind of criticism has been destructive and has brought about a wave of unbelief. Brother J. W. McGarvey used to be continually in a crusade against the higher critics. But textual (lower) criticism is very different. It has to do with the copying of ancient manuscripts.

From 1657 to 1830, the editions were important mainly for their accumulation of critical materials. However, during this period, Griesbach traveled about collating manuscripts and paying special attention to the Greek Fathers and to several versions of the New Testament. Griesbach developed Bengel's and Semler's grouping of manuscripts, and finally limited the manuscripts into three groups, the Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine. For the first time in Germany, a scholar ventured to abandon the *Textus Receptus* and print the text of the New Testament in the form to which his investigations had brought him.

The first recognized scholar to break totally with the *Textus Receptus* was Karl Lachmann. He published an edition of the Greek Testament which rests wholly upon the application of textual criticism in the evaluation of variant readings. But modern textual critics owe the most to Tischendorf, who sought out and published more manuscripts and produced more critical editions than any other single scholar. He is, perhaps, best remembered for his discovery of the *Codex Sinaiticus*. Tregelles would rank next to Tischendorf in importance of critical labors. Although he did not add as much to the storehouse of critical materials, he established the principles of criticism. Finally, in 1881, after 28 years of labor, B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort issued two volumes entitled, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. Volume I contained the Greek text and Volume II consisted of an Introduction and Appendix, in which the critical principles followed by the two editors were set forth. Westcott and Hort did not collate manuscripts but utilized previous collections and refined methods developed by Griesbach, Lachmann and others.

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When Westcott and Hort brought forth their masterpiece, some people thought that New Testament scholarship had nearly produced a critical *Textus Receptus*. But the principles which Hort so carefully worked out brought out so many new facts and so many serious problems that there is far less certitude than there was. In the same year as the Westcott and Hort text, the English Revised Version was brought forth. Although it was not based on the Westcott-Hort text strictly speaking, they were the best informed textual scholars, and their influence was a dominant factor in determining the text.

Kinds of Errors

Before mentioning the classification of variants, the kinds of errors leading to those variants should be noticed. Being human, copyists of the New Testament text at times made errors. Carson suggests that the relevance of this will be well understood if each person would sit down and copy the Gospel of John. When it is finished, read it and correct it. Give it to two or three friends and have each of them correct your correction, and no more evidence will be needed. Having had some experience with publishing, I can vouch for the truth of that. I have corrected my own copy to the best of my ability, and called upon wife and children to read and correct, and even then mistakes and errors are found.

What kinds of errors have been found in the text of the Greek Testament? Textual critics have generally lumped them into two categories: Unintentional errors and Intentional errors.

Unintentional errors arising from faulty eyesight, such as astigmatism, may have made it difficult to distinguish one letter from another. In other cases, the copyist's eye may have jumped to a word with a similar ending, causing him to omit words. If scribes made copies from dictation, there may have been confusion over such words as our English "affect" and "effect." There were errors of the mind, involving the substitution of synonyms, word order and transposition of letters. Lastly, there were errors of judgment, such as copying into the text words or notes in the margin of the older copy. Some of the mistakes suggest that the scribe possessed no judgment at all. A manuscript now in the British Museum was evidently transcribed from a copy which had Luke's genealogy of Jesus in two columns, but instead of following the columns in succession, the

scribe simply followed the two columns across, with the result of making everyone the son of the wrong father and God the son of Aram.

Intentional changes constitute the other class of errors. These were made in good faith by scribes who thought they were improving a text. Perhaps one that he thought the preceding scribe had corrupted. Perhaps he thought he was improving grammar, vocabulary or spelling. Sometimes there was a desire to harmonize a passage with a parallel account. At some point, if confronted with a manuscript that had one reading and another that had a different reading, the scribe often put the two together to make a "conflated" reading. By classifying these errors and identification marks of other kinds into families, the textual critic sought to identify the text type. This was the science that led to the edited text of Westcott and Hort. Obviously, no two texts are identical, regardless of the family or text-type, but textual scholars claim that they have isolated the extremes of the various textual traditions, and have come up with four very general, broad text-types. They are:

1. **The Byzantine.** This is the textual tradition from which the KJV came. This text-type was used in the Byzantine Empire, which continued to use Greek, while the Roman Empire went to Latin. The great majority of the manuscripts are this text-type (more than in the other three combined). The criticism is that most of them are relatively late copies.
2. **The Western.** There is scholarly dispute about this text-type. Some argue that one scribe is behind this tradition while others hold that it was the work of a group of confused scribes who toiled without care or knowledge. Some argue that the texts in this type do not agree enough to be considered a true recension.
3. **The Caesarean.** It is argued that this text-type originated in Egypt and may have been brought to Caesarea by Origen. It is said to contain a mixture of Western and Alexandrian readings, causing some scholars to question whether it is a text-type.
4. **The Alexandrian.** It is thought to be prepared by trained scribes, most likely in Alexandria. F. J. A. Hort referred to its prime exemplars as a "neutral" text and gave them a

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preeminence considered undue by others and which has been mitigated by later research. The two main exemplars of this text-type are Alef and B, or the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. It was because of the absence of some passages in these two manuscripts that certain passages were left out of some of the current versions.

My disillusionment with the modern versions is based on this point. When there is so much disagreement about the text in those few places, why leave such passages out, or why cast reflections upon the Bible by putting them in the margin? This is troubling to those who are not informed about the text. It causes disillusionment and distrust to be reading passages in the assembly and find that part of the text has been left out.

Not everyone agrees with the findings of the modern textual critics about the causes of corruption of the text nor about the evidence of different text-types. One scholar whose scholarship no one calls in question is John W. Burgon (1813-1888), Dean of Chichester. He has been described as a "High-churchman of the old school" by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and also as "a leading champion of lost causes and impossible beliefs." It was Burgon's contention that the Byzantine text is the original text. His view was that if, indeed, the Scriptures had been dictated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God would have providentially prevented their being seriously corrupted during the course of their transmission. He did not believe that the Textus Receptus, which had been used by the church for centuries, could be in need of the drastic revision which Westcott and Hort administered. Burgon believed that the most corrupt texts to be found are Aleph, B, and D (Bezae). He maintained that the reason these oldest manuscripts had survived was because of their corruption. His contention was that if they had been authentic, they would have been "read to pieces" many centuries ago.

Our acceptance of Burgon's view, in my opinion, would require us to acknowledge the role of the Greek church as "custodians of the Bible," and to believe that God providentially used them to preserve the true text of the Bible. Some have claimed that 95% of the extant manuscripts support the readings of the Byzantine text—the text that stands behind the Textus Receptus.

While I would be happy if I could prove that the KJV is the only reliable Bible, I do not know that I can make such an argument as that. The circumstances under which Erasmus developed the Textus Receptus were not conducive to wholehearted confidence in the text.

On the other hand, there are some quotes and other considerations which do not exactly breathe confidence into the belief that Westcott and Hort were right in their findings and justified in the drastic changes they made. D. A. Carson defends the textual critics and the Westcott-Hort text in the book, **The King James Version Debate**, but he admits that Westcott and Hort "were not as conservative as modern conservative evangelicals. Both made some statements I regret." What are those statements?

Was there a prejudice that drove them to so drastically change the text responsible for the King James Version and bring forth the one upon which the modern speech versions are based? It is pointed out in a book by Barry Burton, **Let's Weigh the Evidence**, that at the age of 23, Westcott referred to it as "the vile Textus Receptus." Some quotes from Mr. Hort's autobiography: "Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue." "But the book that has most engaged me is Darwin . . . My feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable." "I have been persuaded for many years that Mary-worship and Jesus-worship have very much in common." "But you know that I am a staunch sacerdotalist." (Believer in the sacraments.) "I am inclined to think that such a state as Eden (I mean the popular notion) never existed." "The popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit."

Some quotes from Mr. Westcott's autobiography: "I wish I could see to what forgotten truth Mariolatry bears witness." "No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, gives a literal history."

That all scholars do not share in the view that the Westcott-Hort theories are correct, or that the Textus Receptus is a corrupted text, is seen in the fact that 130 scholars worked seven years in bringing out the New King James Version. In the preface, the publisher says:

The manuscript preferences cited in many contemporary translations of the New Testament are due to recent reliance on a relatively few manuscripts dis-

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covered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dependence on these manuscripts, especially two, the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, is due to the greater age of these documents. However, in spite of their age, some scholars have reasons to doubt their faithfulness to the autographs, since they often disagree with one another and show other signs of unreliability. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and related papyri is known as the Alexandrian text.

On the other hand, the great majority of existing manuscripts are in substantial agreement. Even though many are late, and none are earlier than the fifth century, most of their readings are verified by ancient papyri, ancient versions, and quotations in the writings of the early church fathers. This large body of manuscripts is the source of the Greek text underlying the King James Bible. It is the Greek text used by Greek-speaking churches for many centuries, presently known as the *Textus Receptus*, or Received Text, of the New Testament.

Since the latter part of the nineteenth century the theory has been held by some scholars that this traditional text of the New Testament had been officially edited by the fourth-century church. Recent studies have caused significant changes in this view, and a growing number of scholars now regard the Received Text as far more reliable than previously thought.

Basis for Confidence

I want to say a word about this talk of a "corrupt" text and "errors" in the Bible. When someone says that there are 200,000 mistakes in the New Testament, what will our response be? Is there a basis for confidence in a book with that many mistakes? I think we have to remember that although the autographs of the New Testament were inspired, the men who copied and translated the Scriptures were not, hence they were susceptible to human errors. Surely we do not believe the scribes were aided miraculously every time they picked up pen and ink!

Neil Lightfoot, in his book, **How We Got the Bible**, argues that it is misleading to say that there are 200,000 errors in the text of the New Testament, because the large number (200,000) is gained by counting all the variations in all of the manuscripts. If one word is misspelled in 4,000 different manuscripts, it amounts to 4,000 errors, but actually it is only one error which has been copied four thousand times. Anyone who would try to undermine faith in the Word of God with such an argument is either ignorant or an infidel.

Metzger tells an amusing story from Swift about an old roué who heard of a passage brought in proof of the Trinity, from which another manuscript differed, and said: "Why, if it is as you say, I may safely whore and drink on, and defy the parson." No, the fact that there are variations of text does not relieve us of our responsibility one whit.

Today there are some 2,100 lectionary manuscripts, more than 2,700 miniscules, over 260 uncials, and about 80 papyri—over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament, although not all of them are complete. There are also 8,000 manuscripts of versions. By contrast, Homer's *Iliad* is preserved in 457 papyri, 2 uncials, and 188 miniscules. The first six books of the *Annals*, written by the famous Roman governor and historian Tacitus, are found in a single manuscript dating from the ninth century. The history of Thucydides (c. 460-400 B.C.), has come down from only eight manuscripts, and a few papyrus scraps written around the beginning of the Christian era. The earliest manuscript is dated about 900 A.D. This means there were 1300 years between the time that Thucydides wrote and the earliest copy of what he wrote. Historians and classical scholars regard Thucydides as a first-class historian. No such gap exists between the manuscripts of the New Testament and the originals. One fragment of John comes from approximately A. D. 125. That means that particular copy was circulating within 35 years of the time the Gospel of John was written.

I want to close with a quote or two from Sir Frederic Kenyon, noted textual critic: "It is reassuring at the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God." Again, (from F. F. Bruce, in **The Books and the Parchments**):

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"The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has not been removed. Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established." P.O. Box 1657, Lebanon, MO 65536

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Is Mark 16:9-20 an Interpolation?

by Glen Osburn

The textual questions regarding the credibility of the last twelve verses of Mark's gospel are almost as old as the New Testament. From the fourth century on, questions have arisen as to whether or not this passage is an interpolation. An "interpolation" results when someone alters or corrupts a text "... by inserting new or foreign matter."¹ Our task is to examine and weigh the evidence for and against the inclusion of Mark 16:9-20 in the original Greek text, and come to some conclusion.

An Examination of the Textual Witnesses

If we had within our possession the "autographs" of the New Testament there would, of course, be no textual problem. An "autograph" is an original text or manuscript written or signed by the hand of the author. An omission or discrepancy in our Greek copy would immediately be apparent if we had the original manuscript to check against. Unfortunately, there are no known "autographs" of the New Testament text in existence.

Therefore, we basically have three categories of witnesses that are available for ascertaining and recovering the original text of the New Testament. They are ancient Greek manuscripts, ancient translations into other languages, and quotations from the New Testament made by early writers or fathers called "patristic quotations." Dr. Phillip Schaff says: "In the absence of the autographs, we must depend upon copies or secondary sources. But these are, fortunately, far more numerous and trustworthy for the Greek New Testament than for any ancient classic."² Then he quotes Westcott and Hort as follows: "In the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone among ancient prose writings."³

The Ancient Greek Manuscripts

The number of extant manuscripts of all or part of the Greek New Testament runs to about 5000 . . . Our most important

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manuscripts, however, come from the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, and there are others still older.⁴

Greek manuscripts are usually divided into *Uncial* and *Cursive*; the former are written in *capital*, and the latter, in *small* letters. The oldest manuscripts are written in large round or square capitals; and without any accents or division of words. But in the eight and ninth centuries, the letters were made longer and narrower, and generally inclined a little either to the right or to the left. About the close of the ninth century, the small or cursive letters came into general use.⁵

Scholars consider the age of a manuscript important, for as a stream of water is purer near its source, so the older the manuscript, the closer the source, the purer it should be.

The problem with the text under consideration (Mk. 16:9-20) is that it is not found in two of the most ancient manuscripts, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The date of the Vaticanus is taken to be the first half to middle of the fourth century, and the Sinaiticus the middle to last half of the fourth century.⁶ "The complete absence of ornamentation from codex Vaticanus has generally been taken as an indication that it is slightly older than codex Sinaiticus."⁷

Antiquity alone, however, is not the single deciding factor in determining questions regarding variant textual readings. The quality of the text is also of great importance when assigning it a value. In this case, John W. Burgon, in his book **The Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark**, questions the character of both of these ancient manuscripts.⁸ One should note, however, that the copyist of the Sinaiticus left a conspicuous gap in the Codex after Mark 16:8, of sufficient capacity to include the passage in question. (See facsimile on page ??)

All other known ancient Greek manuscripts evidently have the disputed passage, as Burgon points out: "The Twelve Verses under discussion are found in every copy of the Gospels in existence with the exception of Codices B (Vaticanus) and \aleph (*aleph*, or Sinaiticus)."⁹ Mark's passage is, of course, found in the well-known Codex Alexandrinus (A) and the Codex Ephraemi (C) which are dated in the fifth century, and the Codex Bezae (D) in the fifth or sixth century.¹⁰

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There is one more Greek text that needs to be mentioned, the codex Washingtonianus (W) which dates from the late fourth or early fifth century. It has an addition to the Mark 16:9-20 text, after verse 14, which reads,

And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal thy righteousness now" -thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years for Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more; that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven."¹¹

This is the only known example of this insertion, but Jerome says it was present in certain copies and Greek codices of his time.

The Ancient Translations

The early versions of the New Testament were prepared by missionaries to assist them in preaching to those whose native tongue was Syriac, Latin, and Coptic (i.e. Egyptian). Some of these translators had an imperfect command of Greek. Bruce Metzger, in commenting on this, said, "In some cases, therefore, the testimony of these versions is ambiguous. As for other questions, however, *such as whether or not a given phrase or sentence was present in the Greek exemplar from which the translation was made*, the evidence of the versions is clear and valuable" (emphasis mine—g.o.).¹²

The Syriac Versions

Syriac was the chief language spoken in the regions of Syria and Mesopotamia and is almost identical to Aramaic. It was undoubtedly one of the earliest translations to be made; for it could be used not only by the Jews who did not know Greek but also by the natives of Mesopotamia, where it is known as a matter of historical record that the gospel had entered before the close of the first century.¹³

The Syriac version known as the *Peshitta* (or *Peshito*) was used by the Eastern Church long before its division with the West, and was accepted as the standard version by both.¹⁴ "The Peshitta is

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referred by common consent to the 2nd century of our era; and is found to contain the verses in question."¹⁵

"The Curetonian Syriac is a fifth-century copy of the Gospels, consisting of eighty leaves. It is so called because of the labors of Dr. Cureton of the British Museum."¹⁶ Burgon points out that we do not know how much older the original Greek copy may have been which this translator used, but we know that it was more ancient "... than any Greek copy of the Gospels in existence. We shall not be thought rash if we claim it for the 3rd century."¹⁷ It contains the passage in question.

There is one negative witness, the Sinaitic Syriac (Syr^s) of the fourth century.¹⁸ However, this manuscript is noted for having large portions of its text missing.

The Latin Versions

As the Syriac versions enlightened those of the East, so the Latin versions edified the West.

Jerome, at the bidding of Pope Damasus (A.D. 382), compiled the Vulgate. He had access to the best Greek manuscripts of the fourth century. Needless to say, the Vulgate contains the disputed verses.

The Vulgate, however, was but the revision of a much older translation, generally known as the *Vetus Itala*. This Old Latin, which is of African origin and of almost Apostolic antiquity, (supposed of the 2nd century,) conspires with the Vulgate in the testimony which it bears to the genuineness of the end of S. Mark's Gospel.¹⁹

As in the Syriac, so in the Latin we have one strange witness, the Old Latin (k). Written in A.D. 400, it contains what is called the "intermediate" ending, an ending which is doubted as authentic by all. After Mark 16:8 it reads,

But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.²⁰

It seems that all the witnesses that contain this "intermediate" ending (except *it^k*) continue with verses 9-20.²¹

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The Coptic (Egyptian) Versions

The Coptic versions of the fourth and fifth century, contain Mark 16:9-20. "Fragments of the Thebaic, or dialect of Upper Egypt, (a distinct version and of considerably earlier date . . .) . . . happily contains the last verse of The Gospel according to S. Mark. The Thebaic version is referred to the 3rd century."²²

The versions cited bear testimony that predates the testimony of most of the Greek manuscripts, showing that the source Greek copies that were available to the translators included the passage in question.

However, there are a few later versions that do not contain the passage in question, including many (but not all) of the Old Armenian (arm^{mss}), dated A.D. 887?, the Old Georgian (Geo¹), A.D. 897, and (Geo² A), A.D. 913.²³

The Patristic Quotations of the New Testament

Besides textual evidence derived from Greek manuscripts and early versions, we have numerous scriptural quotations included in the commentaries, sermons, etc. of early church writers.

Indeed, so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament²⁴ . . . Occasionally it happens that a patristic writer specifically cites one or more variant readings present in manuscripts existing in his day. Such information is of the utmost importance in providing proof of the currency of such variant readings at a given time and place.²⁵

One of the earliest works that we wish to refer to is Tatian's **Diatessaron** (derived from the Greek phrase *dia tessaron*, meaning "through [the] four [Gospels]").²⁶ His **Diatessaron** was a harmony of the Gospels not unlike **The Fourfold Gospel** by J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton. Tatian, who lived from A.D. 110-180, was a disciple of Justin Martyr (A.D. 100?-165).

It is evident that Tatian went about composing his **Diatessaron** with great diligence. Probably he worked from four separate manuscripts, one of each of the Gospels, and, as he wove

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together phrases, now from this Gospel and now that, he would no doubt cross out those phrases in the manuscripts from which he was copying. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how he was able to put together so successfully a cento of very short phrases from four separate documents.²⁷

"It is probable that Justin Martyr at the middle of the second century knew this ending (Mk. 16:9-20); in any case Tatian, his disciple included it in his *Diatessaron*."²⁸ Tatian's work became very popular, so much so that in the fifth century there were approximately 200 copies found and destroyed by Theodoret, Bishop of Cyprus. Thankfully, many others quoted from him. In any case, here we have a witness to the passage in question, from the middle of the second century, that quotes from manuscripts unquestionably more ancient than itself.

Justin Martyr evidently was familiar with Mark's Gospel, for in his first "Apology" (A.D. 151) he says that, after the Lord's ascension, the Apostles "... going forth everywhere they proclaimed."²⁹ This account is only found in Mark 19:20.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 180), in his third *Book Against Heresies*, deliberately quotes and remarks upon the 19th verse of the last chapter of Mark's Gospel.³⁰ "But Mark, in the end of his gospel says: And the Lord Jesus, after that he had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God."³¹ This quote shows that Mark was regarded as the author of the passage.

Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus near Rome (A.D. 190-227), a contemporary of Irenaeus, quotes the 17th and 18th verses in his fragment.³²

We could go on (Dyonisius of Alexandria, Celsus, etc.), but those cited are the most important, due to their age and credibility. "We have comparatively few copies of the N.T. from the period A.D. 300-600, but about 200 writers of that period quote from manuscripts then in existence but which have not survived."³³

The Lectionaries

There is a fourth area of "witness" that may be considered either by itself or as a part of the Patristic witness, that being ancient lectionaries.

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In very early times it was the practice to mark the portions of the Gospels appointed to be read in public worship. It is evident that before the Council of Nicea copies of the Gospels thus marked and including the disputed verses were in use throughout the Christian world and that these twelve verses were appointed to be read on "Easter day" and "Ascension day." Many copies were written specially for public reading and other ordinary copies had a note added in the margin before and after each reading.

e.g. In some ancient copies of Luke there is a note in the margin instructing the public reader to omit verses 43-44 of Ch.22 when reading the lesson for the Tuesday after "Sexagesima" [the second Sunday before Lent—g.o.] because these verses were read after Matthew 26:39 as part of the lesson for the Thursday before "Easter." As a result these verses of Luke 22 are omitted from some copies. In many ancient copies marked for public reading the Greek word for "beginning" (*arche*) appears in shortened form in the margin or in the text in red ink where the lesson starts, and *telos* (end) in red ink at the end of the lesson. e.g. in Mark 14:41 we read "... it is enough, the hour is come ..." Codex D of the 4th century and several others read, "it is enough, *the end* and the hour is come ..." The marginal note *telos*, "the end," indicated that the lesson to be read should end after verse 42, but the copyist put the note into the text of verse 41 and set an example which others followed.

It is probable that an early copy of Mark included the whole of chapter 16 with a marginal note after verse 8 to indicate that the lesson for the second Sunday after Easter should end there. A copyist later misinterpreted the marginal note as meaning that the whole Gospel ended at verse 8 and that the remaining words were not part of the Gospel. This mistake was repeated in a number [or family—g.o.] of copies of which the defective manuscripts already referred to are specimens.

In Codex 24 [Reg. 178, 11th century g.o.] there are very few such notes, but clearly written after verse (Mark 16) 8 we find *telos* and again after verse 20 *telos*.³⁴

Burgon says in this regard that "... what was originally intended only as a *liturgical note*, became mistaken, through the inadvertence or the stupidity of copyists, for a *critical suggestion*."³⁵ This seems like a reasonable theory for the problem extant, one worthy of consideration.

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Negative Patristic Testimony

We have reserved the negative Patristic testimony for last, for it is here that it seems the greatest negative effect on the passage is felt.

After noting the manuscripts that lack the passage in question, Metzger summarizes the negative Patristic witness saying,

Clement of Alexandria and Origen show no knowledge of the existence of these verses; furthermore Eusebius and Jerome attest that the passage was absent from almost all Greek copies of Mark known to them. The original form of the Eusebian sections (drawn up by Ammonius) makes no provision for numbering sections of the text after 16:8. Not a few manuscripts which contain the passage have scribal notes stating that older Greek copies lack it, and in other witnesses the passage is marked with asterisks or obeli, the conventional signs used by copyists to indicate a spurious addition to a document.³⁶

In reviewing these supposed negative witnesses, I could not find the testimony of Clement of Alexandria, or Origen. Burgon, regarding those who allude to Clement of Alexandria for support, says, "... as if it were a surprising circumstance that Clement of Alexandria, who appears to have no reference to the last chapter of S. Matthew's Gospel, should be also without reference to the last chapter of St. Mark's."³⁷

However, as to Eusebius (A.D. 325), we have a response to one "Marinus," who is represented as asking,

"How is it, that according to Matthew 28:1, the Savior appears to have risen in the end of the Sabbath; but, according to Mark 16:9, early the first day of the week?" [Eusebius answers] "This difficulty admits of a twofold solution. He who is for getting rid of the entire passage, will say that it is not met with in all the copies of Mark's Gospel: the accurate copies, at all events, making the end of Mark's narrative come after the words of the young man who appeared to the women and said, 'Fear not ye! Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth,' &c.: to which the Evangelist adds, —'And when they heard it, they fled, and said nothing to any man, for they were afraid.' For at those words, in almost all copies of the Gospel according to Mark, comes the end. What follows, (which is met with seldom, [and only] in some copies, certainly not in all,) might be dispensed with; especially if it should prove to contradict the record of the other Evan-

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gelists. This, then, is what a person will say who is for evading and entirely getting rid of a gratuitous problem."

But another, on no account daring to reject anything whatever which is, under whatever circumstances, met with in the text of the Gospels, will say that here are two readings, (as is so often the case elsewhere;) and that *both* are to be received—inasmuch as by the faithful and pious, *this* reading is not held to be genuine rather than *that*; nor *that* than *this*.³⁸

From this point on in his discourse, Eusebius addresses Marinus' question of harmony between Matthew and Mark.

Where is the statement of Eusebius that is relevant to our discussion? Eusebius separates himself from the supposed argument against the text in question by saying, "He who is for getting rid of the entire passage will say . . ." and, "This, then, is what a person will say who is for evading and entirely getting rid of a gratuitous problem." Understanding the context, how can one attribute this hypothetical textual position to Eusebius. If this passage is going to be cited for Eusebius' view of Mark 16:9-20, we will have to go to the statement: "Here are two readings, (as is so often the case elsewhere:) *both* of which are to be received." Burgon brings home the point when he says,

. . . to print only the first half of the passage, (as Tischendorf and Tregelles have done,) and then to give the reader to understand that he is reading the adverse testimony of Eusebius as to the genuineness of the end of S. Mark's Gospel, is nothing else but to misrepresent the facts of the case; and, however unintentionally, to deceive those who are unable to verify the quotation for themselves.³⁹

Well then, what about Jerome (A.D. 331/347-420)? Burgon once again went back to the source of the quote from Jerome and sets forth in his book the proof that Jerome was translating Eusebius' statement cited above.⁴⁰ Burgon confidently states, "It is certain that Jerome was convinced of the genuineness of St. Mark 16:9-20: for in two different places of his writings he not only quotes the 9th and 14th verses, but he exhibits all the twelve in the Vulgate."⁴¹

What then of the Eusebean (i.e. Ammonius) sections (A.D. 220)⁴² that "make no provisions" for numbering sections after Mark 16:8?

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We are aware that the textural variation was extant at the time of Eusebius. That is the scope of this witness.

What of the "scholia" (scribble notes) and the asterisks? Burgon deals with some of the specific examples that are often cited in Chapter 8 of his book.⁴³ Evidently, some of them are lectionary notes, some of them note that the passage in question is not found in some texts (copying the notes of their copy), and others maintain that the passage is found in ancient copies.

Summary

Let us see if we can summarize the evidence, to this point. There are four possible ways for the Gospel of Mark to have ended:⁴⁴

1. **The "short" ending.** According to this theory, the Gospel record ended after Mark 16:8.

2. **The "intermediate" ending** (as Metzger calls it). According to this theory, the text after Mark 16:8 reads;

But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

Remember, the evidence seems to be that all the witnesses that contain this "intermediate" ending, except the Old Latin (it^k), continue with verses 9-20.⁴⁵

3. **The "long" ending.** That is the way the King James and other translations record it, marking it as Mark 16:9-20.

4. **And the "expanded" ending.** According to this theory, in addition to verses 9-20, after verse 14, the text should read,

And they excused themselves, saying, "This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal thy righteousness now"—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, "The term of years for Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more; that

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they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven."⁴⁶

Of these, the "intermediate" and "expanded" endings have little evidence or support. The real question then is between the, so-called, "long" and "short" endings.

All the extant ancient Greek manuscripts, except the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, have the "long" ending. But the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus are the oldest Greek codices, and they have the "short" ending. Most ancient Versions have the "long" ending, except the Sinaitic Syriac and some others of the fourth century. Many versions have notes or marks between verses 8 and 9. When it comes to the early church writers, there seems to be a great deal of controversy surrounding their testimony, except that the passage in question existed. The fact that it existed in A.D. 100-165 is proven by Tatian's *Diatessaron*.

Accepting the historicity of Mark 16:9-20, the question then becomes one of authorship. Those who doubt Mark's authorship believe that possibly Mark was killed before he finished his writing, or that Peter died, from whom some scholars say Mark got his information.⁴⁷ Almost all concur that verse 8 ends too abruptly ("... for they were afraid"), causing some to speculate that a sudden persecution caused Mark to drop everything and run for his life. Those who hold these positions then speculate that, "more than one person in the early Church sensed that the Gospel is a torso and tried in various ways to provide a more or less appropriate conclusion."⁴⁸

The question of non-Markan authorship is then supposedly settled by examining the internal evidence of the passage. Higher critics have concluded that because there are many words used in the passage in question, that Mark does not normally use—it must not be Mark's writing.⁴⁹ Dean Alford writes, "Internal evidence is, I think, very weighty against Mark's being the author. No less than twenty-one words and expressions occur in it (and some of them several times) which are never elsewhere used by Mark—whose adherence to his own peculiar phrases is remarkable."⁵⁰ Since the argumentation from style is complex, let me direct you to J. W. McGarvey's *Commentary on Matthew and Mark* (pp. 379-382). This is an outstanding refutation of the non-Markan authorship position. Within McGarvey's refutation, he examined the last twelve verses of Luke's Gospel and

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found nine words are not used elsewhere in Luke; four of these were not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and yet no one questions Luke's authorship of the last twelve verses of his Gospel. He then goes on to call this kind of argument against Mark's authorship "a shallow sophism."

Conclusion

Well then, if one does not question the authorship of the last twelve verses of Mark, or its antiquity, why does the controversy still exist?

There seem to be only two possible answers to this question. Either (1) the lectionary practice (which is shown to have existed in the days of Eusebus, Origen, and Clement of Alexandra)⁵¹ caused this section, by its scribal notes, to be excluded; this faulty copy then becoming a prolific mother of an immense brood of manuscripts lacking the portion (as McGarvey would say), or (2) the last page was torn away (Mark being the last of the Gospels in the western order of arrangement, i.e. Matthew, John, Luke, Mark⁵²), as advocated by Alford, Hort, Metzger, etc., thereby becoming "the prolific mother of an immense brood of manuscripts lacking the portion."⁵³ We cannot know for certain. But whatever happened, it happened early.

We will conclude with a quote from J. W. McGarvey;

Our final conclusion is, that the passage in question is authentic in all its details, and that there is no reason to doubt that it was written by the same hand which indited the proceeding parts of this narrative. The objections which have been raised against it are better calculated to shake our confidence in Biblical Criticism than in the genuineness of this inestimable portion of the word of God.⁵⁴

Is Mark 16:9-20 an interpolation? Our answer, after examining the evidence is "NO, it is not." Mark 16:9-20 should, therefore, be included in our text. *P.O. Box 2497, Placerville, CA 95667*

End Notes

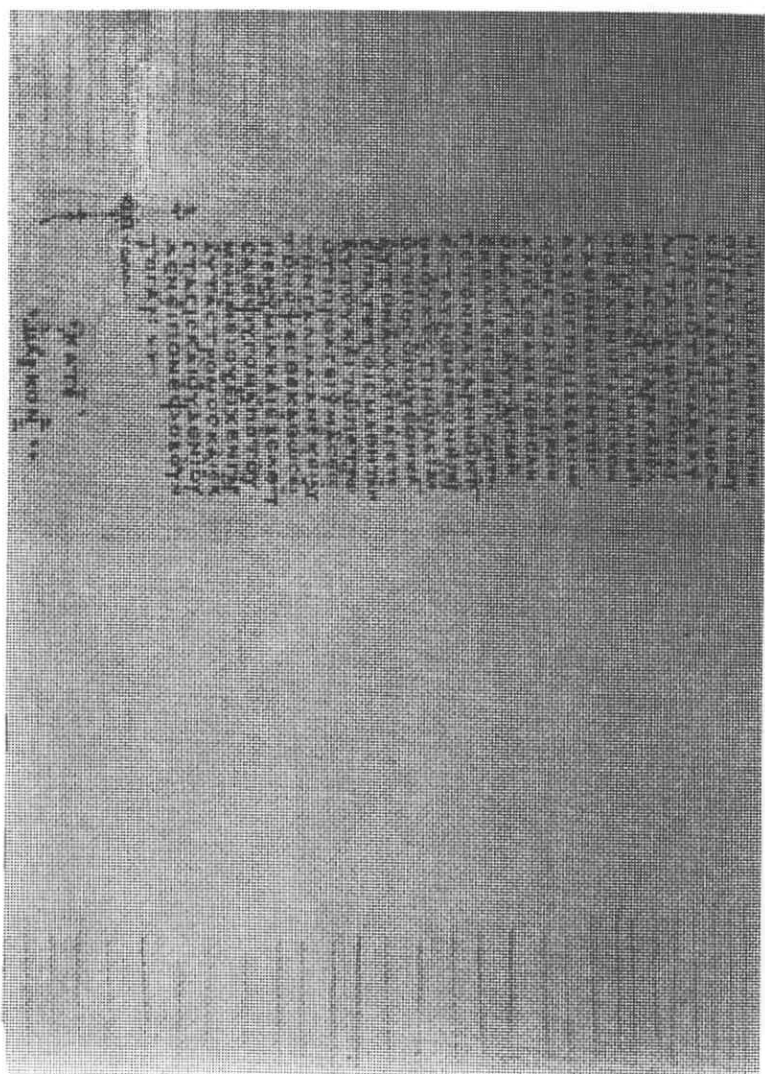
1. A. Merriam-Webster, *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*, (G. & C. Merriam Co., 1965), p.443
2. Johnny Elmore, "Unpublished Notes on Mark 16:9-20," 1973, p. 2.
3. Ibid.

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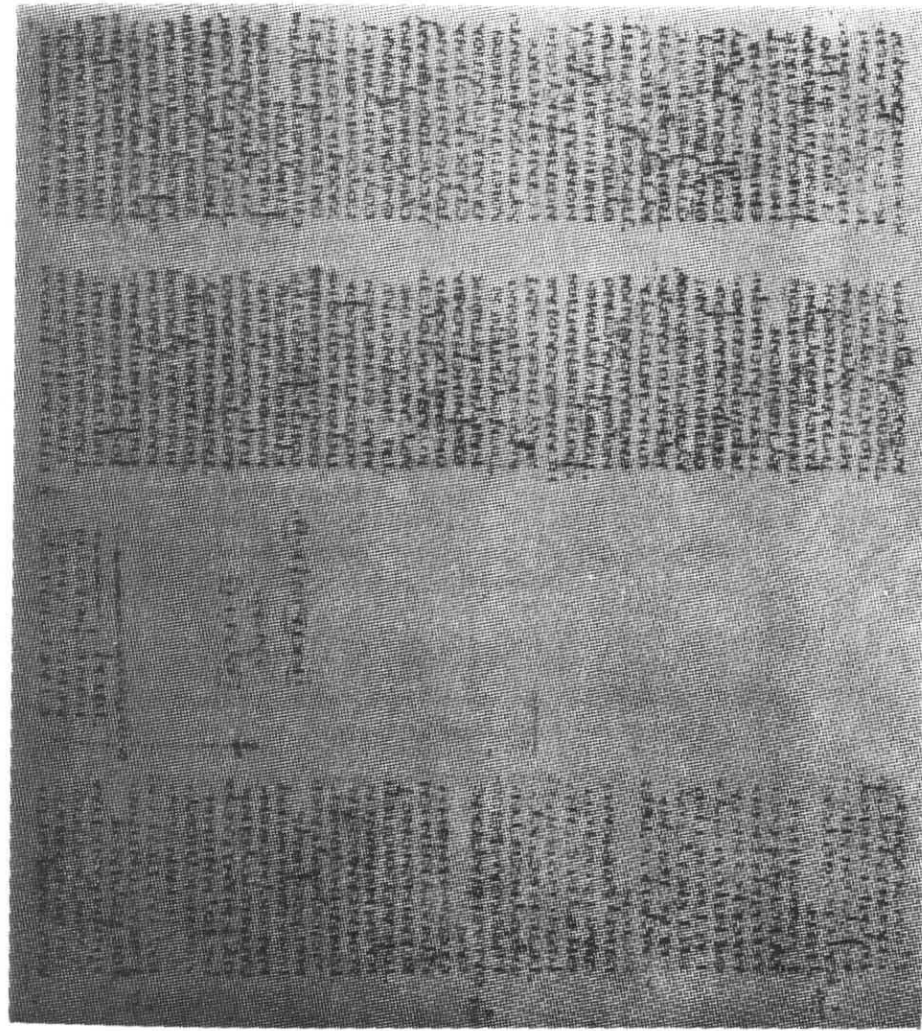
4. F. F. Bruce, **The Books and the Parchments**, (Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963), p. 181.
5. Robert Milligan, **Reason and Revelation**, (R.W. Carroll & Co., 1868), p. 221.
6. John W. Burgon B.D., **The Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark**, (Faith and Facts Press, 3910 Rankin Dr., Erlanger, KY 41018, no date), p. 98.
7. Bruce Manning Metzger, **The Text of the New Testament**, (Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 47.
8. Burgon, **The Last Twelve . . .**, pp. 148-168 (Chapter 6). Note also: John W. Burgon, "The Revision Revised" contained in David Otis Fuller, D.D., **True or False**, (Grand Rapids Int. Pub., 1973), pp. 123-215.
9. Burgon, **The Last Twelve . . .**, p. 194. Let the reader be aware that in **The Greek New Testament**, (United Bible Societies, 1975), p.196, that a 12th century minuscule #304 may not contain the Mark 16:9-20 passage. This evidence ". . . has been taken from printed editions of the Greek New Testament and has not been checked", the authors' note. (p. xx).
10. For a complete list of antiquity known to contain the Mark passage, please consult the footnote of Mark 16:9-20 in **The Greek New Testament**, (United Bible Societies, 1975), p. 196.
11. Metzger, **The Text of the New Testament**, p. 57.
12. Ibid., p. 68.
13. Neil R. Lightfoot, **How We Got the Bible**, (Baker Book House, 1963), p. 41.
14. Metzger, **The Text of the New Testament**, p. 70.
15. Burgon, **The Last Twelve . . .**, p. 111.
16. Lightfoot, **How We Got the Bible**, pp. 42-43.
17. Burgon, **The Last Twelve . . .**, p. 111.
18. Metzger, **The Text of the New Testament**, p. 69.
19. Burgon, **The Last Twelve . . .**, p. 113.
20. Metzger, **The Text of the New Testament**, p. 226.
21. Metzger, **A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament**, (United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 123-124.
22. Burgon, **The Last Twelve . . .**, p. 113-114.
23. Metzger, **The Text of the New Testament**, p. 83.
24. Ibid., p. 86.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., pp. 89-92, 227.

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27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 101.
30. Ibid.
31. J. W. McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew-Mark*, (Gospel Light Pub. Co., 1875), p. 378.
32. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 102.
33. (Author unknown), *The Authenticity of the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark*, T.B.S. No. 16, (Trinitarian Bible Society, undated), 217 Kingston Rd., London SW19 3NN, England, p. 2. Note also: Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 103-109.
34. *The Authenticity of the Last . . .*, Trinitarian Bible Society, pp. 8-9.
35. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 296.
36. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary . . .*, p. 123.
37. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 116-117.
38. Ibid., pp. 122-123.
39. Ibid., p. 128.
40. Ibid., pp. 129-135.
41. Ibid., p. 145.
42. Ibid., p. 206.
43. Ibid., pp. 194-203.
44. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 226-227.
45. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary . . .*, p. 124.
46. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 57.
47. For notes on this hypotheses, see: McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew-Mark*, p. 379; and Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 325; and Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 228.
48. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 228.
49. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 216; note Chapter 9.
50. Henry Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament*, Vol. 1, p. 438.
51. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 276.
52. Burgon, *The Last Twelve . . .*, p. 319; and Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 56.
53. McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew-Mark*, p. 379. Note: An example of this is given in the footnotes of Metzger, *A Textual Commentary . . .*, p. 123.
54. Ibid., p. 382.



This is a facsimile of the CODEX BEZAE (B), showing space left for Mark 16:9-20.



This is a facsimile of the CODEX SINAITICUS showing Mark 16:2 — Luke 1:18.

The Natural and Spiritual Man

The Natural and Spiritual Man

by Taylor Joyce

What is man? This question has been raised by men, women and children in every age of the human family. In the Patriarchal Age, Job asked, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" (Job 7:17).

Years later, during the Mosaic Dispensation, the sweet singer of Israel raised the same question in Psalms 8:4: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Even in the Christian Dispensation, the same question has been raised by the Apostle Paul. Quoting David, he asks: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Heb. 2:6).

The question is persistent and perennial; and it is just as perplexing, just as confusing, as it is recurring. Why? Because the answer to this question varies from person to person. Often, the answer depends on the perspective from which man is viewed. A doctor looking at a man will define him in one way. An economist will define him in a different way. A psychiatrist looking at the same man will have an entirely different definition. Indeed, there are numerous answers to the question, "What is man?" And all of them may be correct.

Rudyard Kipling, speaking about the female of the species, referred to her as "a rag, a bone, and a hank of hair." Not a very flattering definition, to be sure. On the other hand, Shakespeare, in *Hamlet*, said, "What a piece of work is man, the paragon of animals." I suspect a good many people in today's world would agree with Shakespeare's definition that man is an animal, nothing more—the "paragon of animals"; the greatest of all the animals upon the face of the earth—but an animal, nonetheless.

Man: A Triune Being

However, we are much more interested in knowing what the Bible has to say about the subject. We are a people of the Book. And regardless of what others may have to say about important questions,

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we are always interested in going back to the Bible to ascertain what the inspired writers have said. I think the biblical answer to the question, "What is man?" is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Apostle Paul probably was not thinking in terms of the question, "What is man?" when he made this statement. But the statement does nonetheless give us an answer. Paul, in this passage, describes man as a triune being. And it seems to me that it is no accident that Paul selected the arrangement of the words here. He speaks, first of all, about "spirit," because in the Bible sense, that is the most important part of a man. He speaks secondly about the "soul," because in Bible usage, that is the second most important part of a man. And he speaks lastly about the "body." That, though not unimportant, is still the least important of the three entities mentioned in this passage.

I think it would be appropriate to picture man as being somewhat like a three-story house. The top floor is the realm of the spirit. The second floor is the domain of the soul. And the bottom floor is the sphere of the body. Now, I'm afraid that a good many of us are still living on the ground floor in this three-story structure. Some of us may have ascended to the second floor, but there are relatively few who ever determine to live on the third story of this house, and fewer yet who consistently do so: living in the realm of the spirit.

Man as a Body

The Bible tells us a great deal about the body of a human being. In the Old Testament, in Psalm 139, David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." He was very likely thinking about his physical body when he made that statement. That is the visible part of a man. And it is with this part of man that we are most familiar. If David could say, at that ancient date, that man is "fearfully and wonderfully made," then you and I today can say so with even greater conviction, because we know a great deal more about the physical nature of man than David knew.

For example, if you look at the body of a human being, there are certain things that can be determined immediately. The human body has a brain that weighs about three pounds. It is big enough to as-

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simulate all of the knowledge and all the information you need to acquire in order to be functional, but it is not so big that any of us can have a "big head."

As far as the outside of the body is concerned, there are some twenty square feet of skin. And every fifteen to thirty days, the outer layer of that skin dies and peels off. In fact, with the exception of the enamel in the teeth and some of the cells in the larger bones of the body, every cell in the human body is replaced every seven years.

There are about 50,000 miles of blood vessels in the body. That sounds fantastic and incredible, but I have checked it in two different reputable sources, and both attest to this fact. As amazing as it may seem, every twenty seconds, blood goes from your heart to every cell in your body. It makes three round trips to your brain during that brief time span. There are some 206 bones in the body of an adult (almost twice that many in a baby, but as the baby grows and develops, the bones fuse, and by the time the child reaches adulthood, there are about 206 bones). And there are some 600 muscles. No wonder the sweet singer of Israel said that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. You have to stand in awe as you think about the physical body of a human being.

In 1936 a scientist, recalling that Genesis 2:7 tells us that man was formed from the dust of the earth, decided to analyze the constituent elements in the physical body. And he ascertained, after some study, that there is enough fat in the average human being to make seven bars of soap. There is enough sugar to sweeten ten cups of coffee. There is enough potassium to explode a cannon. There is enough iron to make a three-inch long nail. There is enough sulfur to rid one dog of its fleas. There is enough water in the body to fill a bathtub. There is enough lime to cover a chicken coop. There are only sixteen elements within the human body, the same elements that you would find out in the dust of the earth. And when that computation was first made, it was determined that if you took all of those elements and sold them on the market, a man would be worth 98 cents. Of course, inflation has caused the price to rise a little bit today.

And so, we have a body. But, you know, you can say the same thing about a wheat stalk. You can say the same thing about a fish. You can say the same thing about the animals that creep upon the

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face of the earth. Paul discusses this very fact in 1 Corinthians 15:37-40.

And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

It is Paul's affirmation in this passage that the human being is a body, and if that is all there is to man, then there is no essential difference between him and other "bodies"—a stalk of wheat, or a cow grazing in the meadow. We all have bodies in common. But, as we shall see, there is more to man than a body.

Man as a Soul

But now, when you think about the body of a tree, for example, it is static. The tree is not able to move around; it has to remain in one place. It is alive, but the oak tree out there in the meadow does not get frightened by the bull. The oak tree does not get aggravated when the birds come and build nests among its branches and leaves. Neither does the oak tree fall in love with that sleek little pine tree that is growing across the fence. You see, while the oak tree has a body, there are limitations that are placed upon that body.

So, that brings us to the second floor of this three-story structure: the soul of man. I am willing to affirm that plants have no soul; that this is a unique possession of mankind and the animals. I base that upon Scripture. There are many we could note, but let me call your attention to the creation account. In Genesis 2:7, Moses affirmed that God formed man from the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. In Genesis 1:20, God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." And Genesis 1:30 reads, "And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon

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the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." In the latter two passages, God affirms that the animals of the earth have "life." The fact is, this is the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 2:7 concerning man, where it is translated "soul." The conclusion is that mankind and animals alike possess a soul.

In consulting lexicons and dictionaries in an effort to ascertain what the soul is, I have come to the conclusion that the soul is a behavior mechanism, and is essentially what we would refer to as the mind, emotion, and will. In a sense, animals and human beings alike have rational capacity. We can exercise the mind for thought processes. We have an emotional capacity. We have the ability to love or to hate, to cry or to rejoice. We also have a volitional capacity—the capacity of the will. We have the ability to decide and to choose, and to act upon our choices and decisions. And, to a limited extent, animals also have that capacity. So when I talk about the soul today, I am speaking essentially about a behavior mechanism that involves the mind and the emotion and the will. And, as I say, I am convinced that the animals, in common with human beings, have that capacity.

Scientific experiments have demonstrated the existence of such capabilities in the higher animal life forms. And, although it is beyond the reach of scientific investigation, one has to believe that a soul is operating even within the lower life forms at least in some rudimentary fashion just as the Genesis account affirms. So a mango, a monkey and a man all have a body. The monkey and the man have bodies equipped with mobility, and, to a greater or lesser degree, adaptability which enables them to adjust their locale to maximize the availability of material needs. Both the monkey and the man differ from the mango in another important way—each has a soul. But man differs from both plant and beast in that he alone has a spirit. This sets man apart as unique among all of God's creation.

Man as a Spirit

This brings us to the third floor of our building—the realm of the spirit. We sometimes get in an argument about whether man is a trichotomy or a dichotomy. Those are big dictionary words that essentially mean that man is either a two-part being (a dichotomy), or a three-part being (a trichotomy). There are essentially two posi-

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tions held on this. There are those who believe, as I have expressed my conviction here, that man is a trichotomy, that there are, in fact, three different entities within the nature of man. There are other individuals who believe that the soul and the spirit go together. And since they go together, they are, perhaps, like two sides of the same coin. There can be no question but what the soul and the spirit, both of them, are invisible and immaterial. They are not a part of this physical make-up. But I think that there is a distinction that can be made between the two. And one of my reasons for believing that is Hebrews 4:12, in which the Apostle Paul says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

1 Thessalonians 5:23 tells us that man is body, soul and spirit. And Hebrews 4:12 tells us that soul and spirit can be divided asunder or pierced asunder. I puzzled over that passage for many, many years. And I could not quite understand why the apostle joined together what appeared to me to be incongruous terms. He speaks, in this passage, about the soul and the spirit, and tells us that the Word of God can divide asunder the soul and the spirit. Then he talks about the joints and the marrow, and tells us, likewise, that the Word of God can pierce asunder the joints and marrow. As I say, I puzzled over that for a long time. I wondered why the apostle talked about joints and marrow, physical things, and in the same passage talked about soul and spirit, which are intangible and invisible.

I heard a man, about ten years ago, give an illustration that commended itself to me as being true. I will toss it out for your consideration here today. What is it about this old human body that enables us to move around? We are not stiff, like a tree. We have mobility. And part of that mobility springs from the fact that we have joints. Joints are remarkable behavior mechanisms. And when you think about the relationship between joints and marrow, the fact is that marrow is very deep within the joints, within the bones. The marrow is what creates the blood in the human body. The blood is manufactured within the marrow. Now, Leviticus 17:11 informs us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. So what this tells us is that the blood is manufactured within the marrow, which is buried deep within the joints and the bones of the human anatomy. And that

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blood then flows out to every cell within the body. It gives life, and it activates, and it makes operational the joints of the body. If there were no marrow, there would be no blood. If there were no blood, the joints would be useless. You would simply be a stiff corpse.

Now, carry this illustration over to the other two terms that are employed here. As I have already indicated, it is my conviction that the soul's essential difference to any other part of man is that the soul is a behavior mechanism. Therefore, if man has a spirit that sustains the same relationship to the soul that the marrow sustains to the joints, the statement made by Paul in this passage would certainly be appropriate. It seems to me that is precisely what Paul is suggesting here—just as the marrow activates the joints, even so the spirit activates the soul, and makes it possible for the individual to behave.

Now, I'm frank to admit that there are many passages in the Bible where the terms soul and spirit are used interchangeably. The terms are undoubtedly used in a synonymous fashion in many verses in the Bible, but the fact also remains that those terms are used oftentimes in passages where it is clear that they cannot be referring to precisely the same thing. If you look at the lexicons—if you look at the Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words or in Thayer's Lexicon—and you combine all of the definitions and all of the meanings assigned by the lexicographers to these two words, you will find that the word "spirit" is assigned some eighteen different shades of meaning, whereas the word soul is assigned only ten different shades of meaning. That in itself indicates to us that there must be at least eight different functions of the spirit that are not attributable to the soul.

I call your attention to something else, too. You know, Jesus in John 4 tells us that God is spirit. However, nowhere in the Bible is God ever referred to as soul. On the other hand, the Lord Jesus Christ is said to have had both spirit and soul. That He had a spirit is clearly stated in Luke 23:46. In His humanity, when He was here upon this earth, unquestionably also he had a soul. In Isaiah 53, to which reference has already been made, the Bible tells us that Jesus felt emotion within his soul and that he poured out his soul unto death. And in Acts 2, the Apostle Peter quotes from the Psalmist David to the effect that "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." So God is described as spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ had both soul and spirit. Nowhere in

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the Bible are we ever told that God is soul. And that would suggest to us that there must be, at least in some instances, a difference between soul and spirit.

Well, what does the spirit accomplish in a human being? For one thing, the spirit is the part of a man that is addressed in preaching. In 1 Peter 3:19, the Apostle Peter tells us about the activity of Noah, a preacher of righteousness: "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." I think most commentators among churches of Christ have contended that Christ was speaking through Noah, a preacher of righteousness under the Old Testament; and that the spirits in prison were just simply those living, breathing human beings who, during the 120 years that the ark was being prepared, listened to the preaching that was done. Christ was the actual preacher. Noah was the human instrument through whom the preaching was done. The preaching was addressed to the spirits of those who were then engaged in sinful behavior.

I see no reason for believing that it is otherwise today. Even now, when preaching is done, if the preaching is going to make an impact upon us, it is going to make an impact upon the spiritual nature of an individual. The Bible also tells us that if the preaching is effective, that ultimately, it will cause us to be changed. In Ephesians 4:23, the Apostle Paul says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." I know that the word mind is found there, but the word spirit is found there also. And Paul affirms, in this passage, that if renewing is going to take place, if transformation is going to take place, that it will take place within the spirit.

The worship that we render to God comes from the spirit. Jesus Himself said in John 4:23, "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And I submit to you, brethren, that there is a great deal more involved here than just simply an attitude. So often, when we run across the word "spirit," with a little letter in the front of it, we just automatically assume that it is speaking about the attitude. And while attitudes are important, I think we are overlooking a vital bit of information here if we fail to recognize that it is the spiritual part of a man that legitimately expresses its praise and its worship to God. Paul repeated the same notion in 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit [little letter]." He is not talking about the Holy Spirit here, al-

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though I suppose that might be debatable. Certainly the translators of the King James Version believed that this is a reference to the human spirit. "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

The service that we render to God is service that arises within the spirit. Paul in Romans 1:9 says, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." This was not something that was peculiar to Paul. It is clear that all of us, if we are going to render acceptable service to God, will do it from the spirit. In Romans 7:6 Paul says, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Note also Romans 12:11 which affirms that we are to be fervent in spirit, boiling in spirit, enthusiastic in spirit, serving the Lord. So if we are going to serve God acceptably, that service must arise from the spiritual nature.

And then, of course, when we get to the end of the way, when our labors and trials on earth have come to a close, it is the spirit that goes back to God. In Luke 23:46, the Lord Jesus Christ said, in his last petition on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend [commit] my spirit." In Acts 7:59, Stephen, dying from the pummeling of stones, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And the classic passage, of course, is Ecclesiastes 12, in which the wise man of old affirmed that the body would go back to the dust out of which it was taken; and the spirit, unto God, who gave it. As one of our poets has said, "Life is real, life is earnest, but the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art, to dust returneth was not spoken of the soul." In his use of the term soul, of course, he was thinking as our songwriter did when he wrote about where the soul of man never dies. But it is clear that whether we confuse our terminology or not, the inference is that there is a part of man that will survive the dissolution of this fleshly body. When that happens, the body goes back to the dust, but the spirit goes unto God who gave it.

The Spiritual Man and the Natural Man

So long as man lives only within the body/soul sphere, he will always be less than acceptable to God. Four times in the New Testament the inspired writers speak of the "soulish" man. In the King

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James Version this word is translated "natural" twice (1 Cor. 2:14; 15:44-46) and "sensual" twice (James 3:15; Jude 19). According to Paul, it is the natural (soulish) body which we received from Adam which is to be buried in the grave. We received a soulish body at birth. We shall receive a spiritual body in the resurrection.

In one of the passages already cited Paul said: "The natural (soulish) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14) This is thought by some to refer only to the process of revelation which is clearly under consideration in the preceding verses. According to that interpretation the spiritual man is one who is divinely inspired. The natural man is the uninspired man. The spiritual man receives direct revelations from God. The natural man relies on his inherent abilities for guidance. He is dependent on what he can see with his eyes, hear with his ears, and feel with the sentient portion of the flesh. His knowledge comes from some natural, visible source in his environment.

I frankly confess that I formerly held that view, influenced in my understanding by the writings of Foy E. Wallace, Jr. And I still think that this interpretation has much to commend it.

However, as I have continued to study this issue, I am more and more of the opinion that the apostle's reference to the natural and the spiritual man involves much more than the distinction between an inspired and an uninspired man. The use made of these terms in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 3 seems to require a broader meaning. When Paul talks about a natural man, he seems to be talking about an individual whose impetus is derived exclusively from influences found on the first floor of his three-story house. The natural man not only takes into consideration what he learns through his physical, fleshly body; but he also relies upon what he can learn from the use of his own mental faculties, what he can feel with his emotional faculties, and what he can accomplish through his volitional faculty by the exercise of his will. And it seems to me that the natural man—and in fact, some of the lexicographers put it this way—is the man who is constitutionally the sum of only those things he has received from Adam merely because he is a part of the human

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race. He is functioning on the same level that all creatures upon the face of this earth function.

On the other hand, it seems to me that the spiritual man, even in 1 Corinthians 2, might very well be that individual who, while he did not receive the information directly from God in an inspired fashion, yet he is operating on a spiritual level, because he is willing to accept instruction from God whether conveyed to him by an inspired man or an inspired book. He accepts that instruction even when it contradicts things that he may hold precious, true and dear; even though it is in conflict with information which has come to him from natural sources. The spiritual man is the one who will embrace the spiritual ideas which have been communicated to us in spiritual words, as 1 Corinthians 2:13 affirms. The natural man is the one who constantly rejects the message. In New Testament times, it might have been someone who rejected it in the face of miraculous demonstration. In today's world it could be anyone who is just simply not willing to hear what the Bible has to say.

I am convinced that, in order for us to live an effective Christian life today, we must operate on the plane of the spirit. I'm convinced that the Holy Spirit of God gains access into our lives by means of the spirit and operating through our spirit activates the soul and brings about the behavior of human beings. I am convinced that sin gains access to our soul through the body. Note Paul's warning in Galatians 5:13: "only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh . . ." The word "occasion" means "properly a starting point, was used to denote a base of operations in war" (Vines). Paul seems to affirm that sin establishes a bridgehead to our soul through the body, and through the body, activates that behavior mechanism which causes men to live in a sinful, ungodly fashion, and producing, as a consequence, the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). Why do I say this?

Think for a moment with me about what happens in the natural realm. We are all familiar with the word "instinct." And you will often hear people today talking about what animals or creatures do as instinctive behavior. And there are people who can stand up in a science room with a straight face and talk about the instinct that has been interlocked into the very nature of the creatures of this earth, and can just simply say to you that instinctive animal behavior hap-

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pens by accident: that it happened by evolution with God having nothing to do with it.

Instinct is defined by Webster as "a largely inheritable and unalterable tendency by an organism to make a complex and specific response to environmental stimuli without involving reason and for the purpose of removing somatic tension." Put quite simply that means that there is an inflexible union between the instinct and the animal behavior mechanism which causes the animal's behavior to be persistent and predictable. The same stimuli will always evoke the same response. The animal behaves as it does because it must. God made it that way.

The human soul, on the other hand, behaves by choice, and its behavior may be irregular and unpredictable. Man behaves as he does as a matter of choice. God made him that way.

Those who live in the northwestern part of this country are familiar with the salmon that are hatched in the Columbia River and then are allowed to go downstream and out into the Pacific ocean. Scientists who have marked these fish have determined that they often roam up and down the west coast, going up pretty close to Alaska and way back down toward Mexico. They are gone for two, three, four, five years. But in the process of time, they come back. And they come back to precisely the place where they were spawned. Not approximately there; they come back to exactly the place where they were spawned. And some loud-mouthed atheistic evolutionist has the audacity to stand in a classroom before impressionable young minds and say to those people, "The way to explain this is instinct. And God has nothing to do with it." The guy who is doing the talking may not even be able to find his way across town. And yet, he tells you that little fish can swim thousands of miles out in the ocean and eventually find his way back to the point of origin, and God is not involved.

It is not just salmon. It is bees, too. You know, in a beehive, there may be as many as 80,000 bees. All of them have been produced by a single queen. She laid all of those eggs. She fertilizes some; she leaves some infertile. The infertile ones become drones. The drones serve only one purpose, and that is to mate with the queen bee. That occurs only one time in the life of the queen bee. And then the drones die. There are some ten different activities that take place in a beehive.

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And how do you suppose those bees know what they are supposed to do? How do you suppose they figure out which ones of them are to be the worker bees there within the hive. How do you suppose they figure out who is to be a drone and who is going to be the queen? How do you suppose they figure out who is going to go out and look for food sources and food supply? How do they figure out who's going to go out and collect the food supply—once it has been identified?

Do you know that when those eggs are in incubation, according to some scholars, the temperature in the nursery has to be maintained within a three-degree variable: virtually a constant level. It cannot rise more than three degrees or fall more than three degrees from that constant level. If it does, everything dies. How do you suppose bees are able to accomplish that in Oklahoma when the temperature is 110 in the shade? How do you suppose they maintain a constant lower level of temperature in the hive? You know, those bees are pretty smart. They have figured out how to air condition the hive. When the temperature starts rising, they line up, one group on one side of the hive, the other group on the other side. The ones on one side are flapping their wings and pumping the air in; the other guys are facing the opposite direction flapping their wings and pumping the air out, providing air circulation within the hive. And if the temperature is still rising, they then send out some bees to bring water into the hive. (They even know about evaporative cooling.) And they use that water to maintain their constant temperature level. And, of course, about the time they get that figured out, the temperature starts dropping. What do they do then? Well, they quit flapping their wings, and send out the message for everybody to eat a little honey. You know what happens when we get a big bunch of people in an assembly? You notice how the temperature rises when the house is full of people who have just eaten a big meal? The same thing happens in a beehive. So they eat a little honey, and that generates heat. By virtue of this, and with all of them gathering together around the eggs that need to be protected, they are able to maintain a constant level of temperature within the hive. And they do not even have a thermometer. How do they do it?

The evolutionist says it is instinct. Is that a satisfactory answer to you? I do not believe it is. There is only one satisfactory answer, and that is the fact that God has placed that instinctive thrust, that

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He has placed an interlock into the animal that establishes a rigid relationship between the instinctive thrust and the soul of that animal. And it does what it does because it can do nothing else. God made it that way.

Now, I believe that God has done something for us as Christians that is the equivalent of instinct in the animal kingdom. I am convinced that it is the function of the Spirit of God to work in our lives in precisely that same way. It is the abiding conviction of my own heart that the Holy Spirit is operative within our lives.

I do not believe—and please do not charge me with believing or saying or teaching—that the Holy Spirit will enable us to perform miracles today. I do not believe that the presence of the Spirit of God in the heart of a Christian will enable him to speak in some unknown tongue. I do not believe that the Holy Spirit is giving additional information and revelations. I believe that once the whole truth was given pursuant to the promise of Jesus in John 16:13, that the Spirit of God wrote “finis” upon it. That is the end. God is not today giving us additional revelations or information.

But having said that, I am still convinced that the Spirit of God is operative within our lives. Brethren, there are just simply too many verses in the Bible that talk about the Spirit of God being within Christians. Now, we may argue about how He resides there. We may talk about whether He is there personally or representatively. And we may have long debates over this issue. But when we get down to the bottom line, I do not think that there is anybody in this assembly who would be willing to affirm that the Holy Spirit does not, in some way, reside within the Christian. And the Bible certainly says that over and over again. And there are large portions of Scripture that would just simply have to be thrown out if that is not true.

Now, what happens in the animal kingdom is a rigid interlock between the soul of that animal and the instinctive thrust. The animal does what it does because it must. It has no choice. It cannot do anything else. In man, we have a moral option. Instead of a rigid interlock, it is my conviction that there is a moral interlock between the Spirit of God and the human spirit and soul. The human spirit gains access to God through the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 2:18, Paul says, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the

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Father." And God's Holy Spirit gains access into our lives by the human spirit.

I have pondered a great deal about that statement of Solomon in Proverbs 20:27 where he says that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. The word "candle" obviously means a lamp. It is not a wax taper enclosing a wick, the kind of candle with which we are most familiar in our day, but rather a lamp. And the lamp can produce absolutely no light until oil is placed in it, and until somebody ignites the wick. Then the lamp, in constant dependence upon the oil, gives forth its light, accomplishing the purpose for which it was made. And it just may be that this metaphor gives some hint as to how the Holy Spirit operates in the life of a Christian, enabling man's spirit to draw from God that which will empower the man to fulfill his mission as man. The Holy Spirit, dwelling within us (Rom. 8:9) and being contrary to the flesh (Gal. 5:17), makes it possible for us to mortify the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13) and live on earth while preparing for heaven!

It should be apparent that oil and a wick enable the lamp to do what it was designed to do—give light. The oil and the wick would be useless in a potato. The potato doesn't have what it takes to be a lamp. Is it possible that some people do not have what it takes to be a Christian? It is indeed possible, but only because they have been unwilling to meet the conditions—love for God, dependence on God, and obedience to God.

Our love for God derives from His love for us (1 Jn. 4:10, 19). With Christ we confess, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (Jn. 5:30). Humbly do we accept the Lord's appraisal, "Without me ye can do nothing" (Jn. 15:4-5). That being true, we must live in total dependence on God.

And that, of course, leads to absolute and total obedience to Him. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 Jn. 5:3). That means that when God tells us to do something, we do it without quibble and without question. We, out of love for God, deriving from his love for us, live in unqualified dependence upon him; recognizing our own frailties and inability; saying, "God, I can't, but you can." We then place ourselves at God's disposal and say, "God, I want to obey you. I want to do your will." Our spirits are then prepared to be the

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"candle of the Lord." We are ready to shine with a righteousness that is not our own, "but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9).

But whether we ever completely understand the process or not, we can be grateful that in the divine economy each of us has been endowed with body, soul, and spirit. Each makes its own contribution to what we are. And we don't have to know exactly how God will do it before we join in Paul's prayer that "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Nor should our ignorance of God's ways prevent us from saying with Paul: "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). God willing, it may happen to us too.
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