

# Theological Themes and Problem Passages

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The Sin of Hebrews 6: Carnality, Heresy or Apostasy?

The Principle of the Gospel in Galatians 2

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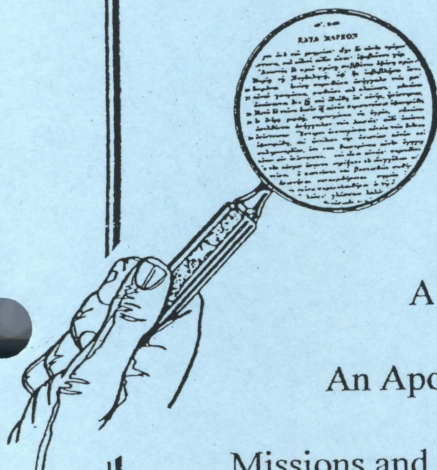
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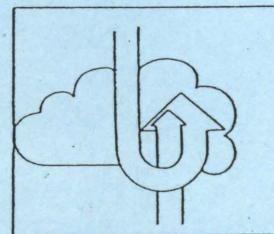
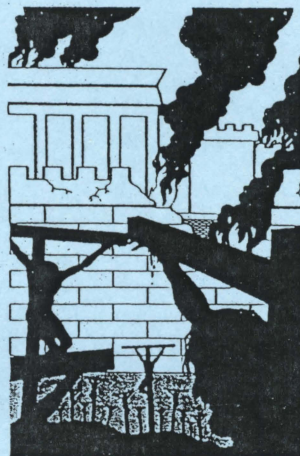
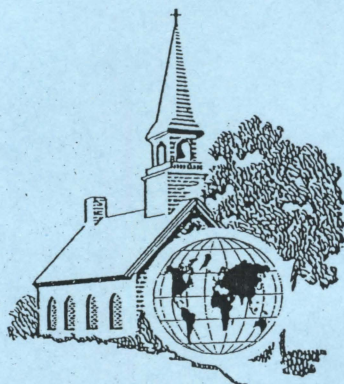
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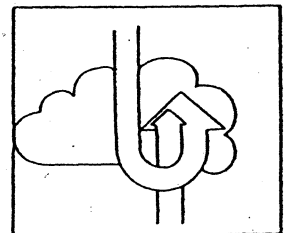
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# THE SONS OF GOD OF GENESIS 6:



DEMONS  
DEGENERATES  
or  
DESPOTS ?



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## THE SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN

In the history of the exposition of Scripture few texts have caused as many problems as Genesis 6:1-4. This passage has been the delight of novices and the despair of theologians. The text reads as follows:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

Since these verses form a part of the inspired word, any attempt to understand them meets with God's approval and is well worth the effort. It will not do, as some have done, to simply write this off as an inscrutable account "of unknown origin and uncertain purpose."<sup>1</sup> God had a definite purpose in disclosing this problematic event. It is the believer's duty to try and understand it.

### THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE INVOLVED

#### The Identification of the Persons Involved

The proper interpretation of the passage revolves around the identification of the "sons of God" and "daughters of men." An impressive array of scholars has suggested that the "sons of God" were simply

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<sup>1</sup>G. Henton Davies, Genesis. The Broadman Bible Commentary (Nashville, Tennessee: The Broadman Press, 1969), p. 149.

men of the godly line of Seth who intermarried with the "daughters of men," that is, women of the ungodly line of Cain. An equally imposing list of scholars has marshalled evidence that the "sons of God" are to be understood as fallen angels who cohabited with women of the human race. Both of these views, however, are beset with seemingly insurmountable difficulties. The result has been an Excedrin headache of monstrous proportions for students of the problem.

#### Identification of the Promiscuity Involved

If the "sons of God" are angelic beings, then their sin is one of perversion. Two worlds, the angelic and the human, are mixed through a most heinous sin. On the other hand, if the "sons of God" are the Sethites then their sin is one of pollution of the godly line. It is an indiscriminate marriage without regard to spiritual status.

#### Identification of the Progeny Involved

Some see the "giants" (nephilim) who were "in the earth in those days" as men of great stature or heroes which were living at that time or were the product of the intermarriage of the two religious communities. Others see the nephilim as the unnatural offspring of fallen angels and mortal women.

The "men of renown" (gibborim) of verse 4 are either seen as a reference to the offspring of the union of the "sons of God" and "daughters of men" or they are considered as explanatory of the nephilim. The "men of renown" would therefore be identical with the nephilim.

### THE PROPOSALS THAT HAVE BEEN OFFERED

#### Angelic Creatures

The explanation of the view. According to this view, fallen angels assume human form, seduce mortal women, and produce an offspring of giants or monsters. As a result of this satanically inspired attempt to corrupt the human race and thus the Messianic line, God was forced to send the universal deluge preserving only righteous Noah and his family.

The evidence for the view. Proponents for the "angel theory" point first of all to the antiquity of the view. Probably the oldest written reference to this theory is found in the pseudepigraphal (i.e. written under an assumed name) Book of Enoch, around 200 B.C. The Book of Enoch, a book of Jewish apocalyptic, says that 200 angels in heaven saw the beautiful women on earth, lusted after them, and took them for wives with the result that they became pregnant and bore giants. For the first time sinning angels are associated with Genesis 6. Furthermore, this view seems to have been the common Jewish interpretation. The famous Jewish historian Josephus (born 37 B.C.) wrote: "Many angels accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust" (Antiquities, 1:3:1). Likewise, the common Bible of the Jews at the time of Christ, the Septuagint version of the Hebrew scripture in the Greek language in the third century B.C. reads in Genesis 6:2 "angels of God" instead of "sons of God."

Advocates of the angelic view point out that the Hebrew term rendered "sons of God" in the English Bible is used exclusively of angels in the Old Testament. The term "sons of God" occurs three times in that sense in Job (1:6;2:1;38:7). A similar phrase, "sons of God" or "sons of the mighty" in Psalms 29:1 and 89:7 is usually interpreted to refer to angels also. Daniel 3:25 which speaks of "a son of the gods" is also sometimes cited in support.

Then too, the early church held the position that angels are referred to in Genesis 6 and understood the New Testament passages of 1 Peter 3:18, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 as references to an angelic sin of Genesis 6. Jude 6 and 7 says:

The angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication.

Coder observed: "There was something strange and terrible in those ancient unions, because their progeny were monstrous. This is a fact difficult to explain if the text refers merely to godly men taking ungodly wives."<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, it has also been pointed out that references in ancient mythology to intermarriage between gods and men must have their ultimate origin in a historical event. Unger, who very cogently argues for the angel view, notes:

One thing is certain, ancient classic writers obtained their conceptions of the gods and demigods, whose amorous propensities for members of the human race led to births half human and half divine, from some source originally pure and uncorrupted. It is not impossible that this might explain the origin.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, it is also contended that this view best explains the progeny of the union of Genesis 6, namely "giants" and "men of renown." This unnatural union produced an unnatural race of monstrosities which had to be destroyed by the flood. This view also holds that the sons of Enak (Num. 13:33, the only other place the word "giant" occurs) could

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<sup>2</sup>S. Maxwell Coder, Jude: The Acts of the Apostates (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Merrill F. Unger, Biblical Demonology (Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1952), p. 49.



also refer to another intrusion of fallen angels into the human realm.

The evaluation of the view. Even those who advocate this view admit that it is "vexed by serious questions."<sup>4</sup> The chief objection usually stated is that the concept of sexual activity involving angels is foreign to the Bible. Nowhere else in the context of Genesis 6 are angels mentioned, nowhere else in Scripture is there an analogy for the idea of intermarriage of angels and men, and Christ specifically states that angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30; Mark 15:25; Luke 20:34-36). However, advocates of the angel view point out that Christ is specifically speaking of good angels and that man does not possess a full knowledge of fallen angels.

The appeal to the Septuagint reading of "angels of God" should be tempered with an acknowledgment that it is only the Alexandrian manuscript which so reads. The critical Septuagint text by Rahlfs does read "sons of God" and therefore does not reflect an ancient "angelic" understanding of Genesis 6.

Opponents to the angelic view ask, "Why should judgment fall upon those who were tempted? Why are only the humans judged and punished in the Genesis account?" If the evil angels were the initiators of the sin, then God should have dealt firmly with them, as he did with the serpent in Genesis 3. After all, it was the "sons of God" who initiated the sin. Yet absolutely nothing is mentioned of judgment on the angels anywhere in the context of Genesis 6.

Some would appeal to 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 to support a judgment on these angels. Yet in these two passages nothing is said of

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

angelic marriages. To argue that the "in like manner" of Jude 7 equates the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah with that of the angels of Genesis 6 is saying too much, for sodomy is not the same as marrying wives, which is what happened in Genesis 6:2. The phrase in Genesis 6:2, "took them wives," means to marry in a formal way and does not carry the connotation of incestuous cohabitation. Besides, the Jude passage simply means that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are a warning example "in like manner" as the angels. Here are the two verses concerned:

And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire (A.S.V.).

The punctuation of the Authorized Version has much in its favor: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, AND THE CITIES ABOUT THEM IN LIKE MANNER, having given themselves over. . . ." C. Fred Lincoln elaborates on this interpretation:

The phrase "in like manner" of Jude 7 does not compare the sin of the angels with that of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, but says that the cities about Sodom and Gomorrah (i. e., Admah and Zeboim, Deut. 29:23 and Hos. 11:8) "in like manner" with the other two Sodom and Gomorrah committed this sin of lasciviousness.<sup>5</sup>

The sin of the angels (v. 6) and the sin of the cities (v. 7) are held up as warning examples of heinous sins resulting in eternal judgments.

The angel theory confuses the prehistoric fall of angels, mentioned in Jude 6, with the sin of Genesis 6. "The angels which kept not their first estate" are now in permanent torment. What was their first estate? Unconfirmed creaturely holiness. This they lost by

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<sup>5</sup>C. Fred Lincoln, Covenant, Dispensational and Related Studies (unpublished manuscript), Dallas Theological Seminary, p. 42.

rebellling against God's authority. Apparently the ringleaders are now in chains. Only Satan, the arch-enemy of God, is still temporarily free.

In a similar fashion as in Jude 6 and 7, Peter gives three examples of divine judgment of the wicked: First, "the angels that sinned" (v. 4); second, the pre-flood era (v. 5); third, Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 6). The examples read as follows:

- (1) "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;
- (2) "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;
- (3) "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomarrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly . . . ."

J. Sidlow Baxter notes concerning this passage:

Now if, as the angel-theory advocates say, number 1 happened at the same time as number 2, why not 2 at the same time as 3? Is it not the more reasonable thing to see that Peter here speaks in correct order, of three events which ocured successively, and not simultaneously? It is; and that means, of course, that this fall of angels happened before Noah's time.<sup>6</sup>

It is very interesting to notice, but frequently ignored, that the marriage among the sons of God and daughters of men in Genesis 6 is referred to in Matthew 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26-29 as a sign of ungodliness and wickedness of the human race at the time of the Lord's coming. The corruption of mankind will be similar to that of the time of the flood ("But as the days of Noah . . . marrying and giving in marriage . . . so shall also the coming of the son of man be"). If, then, the sin of Genesis 6 is an intermarriage of evil angels and human women, it

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<sup>6</sup>J. Sidlow Baxter, "Who Were the Sons of God?" Studies in Problem Texts (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), p. 164.

follows that such a demonic invasion must again take place.

"Sons of God" is said to refer always to angelic beings elsewhere. Actually, the phrase occurs only in Job 1:6, 2:1 and 38:7. Similar phrases are found in Psalm 89:6, Daniel 3:25 and Psalm 29:1. In every one of these passages, however, it is used only of unfallen creatures and used in a general way to specify those voluntarily submissive to the will of God. To call a fallen creature a son of God would be pointless (Cf. John 8:44, "ye are of your father the devil"). It is true that Satan is mentioned in the first two Job passages; nevertheless, it must be noted that in both passages he is presented as an intruder, and appears to be distinguished from the sons of God (" . . . the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them").

One might also wonder why Moses did not say "angels" if this is what was meant here. Surely it was a part of his vocabulary. No less than 15 times in the Pentateuch does he refer to angels, and they are always called angels, never once called "sons of God."

The angel view assumes that these creatures left one habitation and came to earth for a specific purpose. Baxter, who probably gives the best refutation of the angel view, writes:

There is not a single word or even the faintest hint that these "sons of God" somehow came to the earth for the purpose, much less is there the slightest suggestion that they were fallen angels committing a staggering monstrosity. Surely had the latter been so, the writer would at the very least have said that they "came" or "descended" or "appeared," instead of simply "saw" and "took"!<sup>7</sup>

Not only do the terminology and context of Genesis 6 seem to militate against the possibility of any reference to angelic creatures,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 174.

but there is one other difficulty which makes the angel theory untenable. Whatever the "giants" and "men of renown" might have been, they were not the product of an unholy union between angels and women. From a psycho-physiological viewpoint, a cohabiting of angelic creatures with human women is unthinkable. And yet, if such a sexual union did take place, it could have occurred, as the great commentator Keil so aptly discerns, in only three possible ways. Angels could produce offspring because (1) either by nature they possess material bodies; or (2) they have intrinsic rebellious power to create for themselves material bodies; or (3) they are capable of procreating without natural bodies.<sup>8</sup> All three ideas are utterly impossible and Lincoln's statement is much to the point:

Though angels were at times made visible to chosen men, such occurrences were under God's direct supervision and limitations. What became of those bodies, if they were temporary physical or material abodes, is not revealed in Scripture. The Angel of Jehovah, though He appeared to men in Old Testament times in a form visible to men, had to be born of a virgin in order to have a normal body "prepared for Him." Heb. 10:5<sup>9</sup>

What, then, do the advocates of the angel view say to these objections? They try to easily dismiss them by simply asserting "To deny such a possibility (of angels cross-breeding with human beings) is to assume, it would seem, a degree of knowledge of fallen angelic nature which man does not possess."<sup>10</sup> Actually, it is the angel proponents who demonstrate a more intimate knowledge of angelic nature than the Bible

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<sup>8</sup>C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament The Pentateuch, Vol. 1. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 132-133.

<sup>9</sup>Lincoln, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>10</sup>Unger, op. cit., p. 50.

would warrant. The Bible appears to be clear enough on the nature of angels. Baxter addresses himself at length to the psychological and physiological difficulties involved in such a union and states:

Let us be frank and explicit. The angels are bodiless, purely spiritual beings, and sexless. Being bodiless and sexless means that they are without sex organs, and that they are therefore absolutely incapable of sensuous experiences or sexual processes; nor are they capable of procreation or reproduction in any way whatever. There is no need to refer to this or that or the other text: the whole teaching of the Bible concerning the angels stands solidly behind that affirmation.

As for the suggestion that these evil angels somehow took human bodies to themselves and thus became capable of sex functions, it is sheer absurdity, as anyone can see. Both on psychological and physiological ground it is unthinkable. We all know what an exquisitely delicate, intricate, intimate, sensitive inter-relation and inter-reaction there exists between the human body and the human mind or soul. This is because soul and body came into being together through the wonderful process of a human birth, and are mysteriously united in one human personality. Thus, and only thus, is it that the sensations of the body become experiences of the mind. This psycho-physical parallelism of the human personality is a mystery; but it is an absolute and universal reality.

Now if angels merely took bodies and miraculously indwelt them for the time being, their doing so could not have made them in the slightest degree able to experience the sensations of those bodies, even if those bodies themselves could have been capable of real sensations, which is greatly doubtful; for the angels and those temporarily occupied bodies, not having come into being together by a real human birth as one personality, there could not be any such inter-reaction as that which exists in the case of the human mind and body. Indeed, the bodies could not have been real bodies of flesh and blood at all, when we come to think of it; for without being inhabited by the human spirit, the human flesh-and-blood body dies. Bodies occupied by angels simply could not be normal human bodies of flesh and blood.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, what can be said concerning extra-Biblical traditions of intermarriage between celestial and terrestrial beings? Do they not rest on some historical basis? And did not the events of Genesis 6 give origin to these grotesque myths? For one thing, "extra-canonical considerations may never be pitted against the evidence which scripture

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<sup>11</sup>Baxter, op. cit., p. 152.

itself determinatively provides."<sup>12</sup> It should be emphasized, as Green has done, that "the whole conception of sexual life, as connected with God or angels, is absolutely foreign to Hebrew thought."<sup>13</sup> Green points out that there is no Hebrew word for goddess, that the idea of deities having sexual functions is rejected as a heathen notion in the Bible, and that there is no analogy in the Bible for the idea of intermarriage of angels and men.

### Apostate Sethites

Although this view generally identifies "the sons of God" as the godly line of Seth, it seems more appropriate to refer to these individuals as apostate Sethites, considering their unusual sin and their unprecedented judgment.

The explanation of the view. In contrast to the first view, the "sons of God" are identified as men, and the "daughters of men" are women. Usually (although some avoid this distinction) the "sons of God" are specifically identified as the godly descendents of Seth and the "daughters of men" are the ungodly line of Cain. The sin involved is thus that of "mixed marriage," that is, of believer's marriage to unbeliever.

The evidence for the view. Impressive support may be arrayed in favor of this position. The immediate context certainly speaks of men: "Men began to multiply" (v. 1); "the wickedness of man was great on the earth" (v. 5); therefore, God said, "My spirit shall not always strive

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<sup>12</sup>John Murray, Principles of Conduct (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 244.

<sup>13</sup>Leroy Birney, "An Exegetical Study of Genesis 6:1-4," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, XIII, Winter 1970, p. 45.

with man" (v. 3). If the angel hypothesis is right, why should the spirit of God strive with men rather than angels? It is quite beyond comprehension that the spirit should strive with men for a sin which the angels committed.

Another strong argument is based on the general context. It is argued that the context preceding Genesis 6 favored this view. Specifically, the descendents and achievements of Cain are listed in 4:1-24, while those of Seth appear in 4:25-5:32. Without question, two lines are contrasted here and they are distinct. Cain and his descendents were ungodly. Cain's line begins with improper worship and murder and ends in polygamy and an arrogant boast of self-defense. That the "daughters of men . . . were fair" (6:2) is in keeping with the meaning of the names of the women in the line of Cain: Adah means "ornament" or "beauty," Zillah means "shade," and Naamah means "pleasant."

In connection with Seth's line, it is said "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (4:26). Enoch, of this line, "walked with God" (5:24), and Noah was "perfect in his generations," and also "walked with God" (6:9). The Seth line were the true worshipers of God and the title "sons of God" befitted them.

Furthermore, the understanding of "sons of God" to refer to the godly line

. . . is consistent with the Biblical concept that Israel is the son of God, and the chosen people are His children. This concept occurs in Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; 32:5,6,18,19; Hos. 1:10; Isa. 1:2; 11:1; 43:6; 45:11; Jer. 31:20; and Psa. 73:15.<sup>14</sup>

Another argument for this view comes from the Lord Himself. On the basis of Matthew and Luke the marriages of Genesis 6 must be of the

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 46.



same nature as those among the ungodly in the future. The Genesis marriages must be the same as those of Matthew 24:37-38 and Luke 17:26-27. In these New Testament passages there is nothing to suggest that Christ had anything more than human marriages in mind. If Genesis 6 records what angels did, there is no parallel at all between the antediluvial age and the days of the end of the age.

In view that the "sons of God" are the godly line fits in well with the pronounced aversion of the book of Genesis to marriage between the godly and the ungodly, as seen in the cases of Isaac (24:3-4), Jacob (27:46; 28:1-3), Esau (26:34-35; 28:6-8) and Dinah (ch. 34). "In this context, Gen. 6:1-4 furthers the practical aim of preventing indiscriminate marriage without regard to spiritual status."<sup>15</sup>

In summary, the view that the "sons of God" were men of the godly line Seth is tenable because the group is already distinguished from the ungodly line of Cain in the context. Also, the designation is consistent with the Biblical concept of spiritual sonship; it fits the theme of Genesis which warns the godly against intermarriage with the ungodly; and it is consonant with the context which demonstrates the progressive corruption and ultimate destruction of the human race.

The evaluation of the view. While the view has much to commend itself, it should be noted that it is also beset by certain difficulties. Unger, interestingly, calls it "naive and perfectly orthodox."<sup>16</sup> If the "sons of God" and "daughters of men" represent respectively the godly Sethite and ungodly Cainite lines which intermarried, with the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>16</sup>Unger, op. cit., p. 47.

result that the godly line was broken down, then serious textual objections may be raised. This view takes the term "men" in two different senses in verses 1 and 2. In verse one the "men" are understood as mankind generically ("When men began to multiply . . . daughters were born unto them"). In verse two the "men" are taken to be specifically of the Cainite line ("The sons of God saw the daughters of men"). That such a sudden shift in meaning is not intended is evident from the fact that the "men" of both verses are the fathers of the "daughters" of the two verses. And the "daughters" of both verses are certainly identical. In verse 1, daughters were born to men in general. In verse 2, the "daughters of men" must also be of mankind rather than specifically of the Cainite line.

To overcome the difficulty, it has been suggested that "men" in verse 2, as in verse 1, is to be understood as generic. There would then be no specific reference to women of the Cainite line. The sin of the "sons of God," of the Sethite line would be an indiscriminate choice of marriage partners out of women in general, both Cainite and Sethite, to satisfy their own unbridled desire. They selected mates out "of all that they chose" (v. 3). The Sethites were characterized by careless regard of the holy principles governing the selection of a mate.

Several glaring difficulties beset the position which makes the "sons of God" Sethites. One such problem is the untenable assumption that the "sons of God" must mean the godly line of Seth. This would be in variance with the general use of that expression in the Old Testament where it appears to be restricted to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

Gaebelien rightly notes the designation is never applied in the Old Testament to believers, whose sonship he rightly observes as distinctly

a New Testament revelation.<sup>17</sup> While some Old Testament passages indicate that Israelites are God's sons (Deut. 14:1; 32:5; Ps. 82:6, etc.), the exact term "sons of God" is never once used for believers. To see a reference to individual spiritual sonship in Genesis 6 would be anachronistic. It would ignore the fact of progressive revelation.

A more serious problem for this prevalent view is posed by verse 4. From all appearances, the giants (nephilim) and mighty men (gibborim) are the offspring of the marriages of the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men." As Kline says:

It is not at all clear why the offspring of religiously mixed marriages should be Nephilim-Gibborim, however these be understood within the range of feasible interpretation . . . But his (the biblical author's) reference to the conjugal act and to childbearing finds justification only if he is describing the origin of the Nephilim-Gibborim. Unless the difficulty which follows from this conclusion can be overcome, the religiously mixed marriage interpretation of the passage ought to be definitely abandoned.<sup>18</sup>

To summarize the problem: Why does one find the kind of offspring mentioned in verse 4 if these are just religiously mixed marriages?

The difficulties of this view have driven many to adopt the angelic interpretation. And, as Kline suspects, the continuing dominance of the angelic interpretation of the passage has been due to the absence of a satisfactory alternative.<sup>19</sup> Kline forcefully and cogently suggests such a satisfactory alternative interpretation, based primarily on findings in ancient Near Eastern literature, and studies of the term "sons of God" in cognate languages.

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<sup>17</sup>Quoted by Unger, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>18</sup>Meredith G. Kline, "Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1-4," Westminster Theological Journal, XXIV, Nov. 1961-May 1962, p. 190.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 188-189.

### Ambitious Despots

The explanation of the view. A third interpretation of Genesis 6 is that the term "sons of God" refers to kings or nobles. The term "sons of God" in its Near Eastern setting was a title for nobles, aristocrats, and kings. These ambitious despots lusted after power and wealth and desired to become "men of a name" that is, somebodies (cf. 11:4)! Their sin was "not intermarriage between two groups--whether two worlds (angels and man), two religious communities (Sethite and Cainite), or two social classes (royal and common)--but that the sin was polygamy."<sup>20</sup> It was the same type of sin that the Cainite Lamech practiced, the sin of polygamy, particularly as it came to expression in the harem, the characteristic institution of the ancient Oriental despot's court. In this transgression the "sons of God" frequently violated the sacred trust of their office as guardians of the general ordinances of God for human conduct.<sup>21</sup>

The evidence for the view. Five major lines of evidence seem to support this view. The first line of evidence is that of ancient interpretation. This view lays claim to antiquity also. In an excellent article presenting this view, Kline writes that this view anciently rose among the Jews that the "sons of God" of Genesis 6 were men of the aristocracy, princes, and nobles, in contrast to the socially inferior "daughters of men." This interpretation came to expression, for example, in the Aramaic Targums (the Targums of Onkelos rendered the term as "sons of nobles") and in the Greek translation of Symmachus (which reads

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<sup>20</sup>Birney, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>21</sup>Kline, op. cit., p. 196.

"the sons of the kings or lords") and it has been followed by many Jewish authorities down to the present.<sup>22</sup>

Biblical usage supports this view as well. The Hebrew word "God" is used in Scripture of men who served as magistrates or administrators of justice. "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges" (Ex. 21:6); "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods," i.e. judges or rulers (Ps. 82:1); "Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High," i.e. gods = rulers or judges or magistrates (Ps. 82:6; cf. Ex. 22:8-9). Thus it was not uncommon to use divine epithets to refer to magistrates, and "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1-4 could refer to magistrates or rulers.

A third line of evidence is the contextual support. It is not difficult to demonstrate that the context of Genesis 6 has much in favor of this last interpretation. To underscore the importance that the context bears upon the interpretation of Genesis 6, an extended quotation from Kline is in order:

It is the genealogical nature of the treatment of the ante-diluvian history that accounts for the focusing of attention on the marriages of the royal בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים [sons of God]. The precise character of these marriages and especially of the sin involved in them can best be seen if Genesis 6:1-4 is viewed in relation to the preceding context. The beginnings of the genealogical history of the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים [sons of God] are found in the genealogy of Cain (4:16-24).

Significantly, at the very outset of Cain's genealogy the origin of city organization is noted (Gen. 4:17). It was precisely in the urban political unit that the stage was set for the emergence of kingship. What, therefore, begins as the genealogy of Cain becomes in the course of its development the dynasty of Cain.

In Cain's dedication of his city to the name of his heir there was foreshadowed the lust for a name that was increasingly to mark these city rulers until, when the city-states began to be theocratically conceived, they esteemed themselves veritable sons of the gods, and so "men of name" (Gen. 6:4) indeed. Outstanding

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<sup>22</sup> Kline, op. cit., p. 194.

representative of the Cainite dynasty was Lamech. Concerning his court life it is recorded that he practiced bigamy (Gen. 4:19) and of his royal enforcement of law it is witnessed out of his own mouth that his policy was one of tyranny, a tyranny that reckoned itself through the power of the sword of Tubal-cain more competent for vengeance than God himself (Gen. 4:23-24).

With this portrait of the kingship of Cainite Lamech the dynastic genealogy of Cain breaks off so that the genealogy of Seth may be given (Gen. 4:25-5:32). But then Gen. 6:1-4 resumes the thread of the history where it was dropped at Gen. 4:24. Structurally, the accounts of Lamech (Gen. 4:19-24) and of the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים [sons of God] (Gen. 6:1ff.) are much alike. In each case there are the taking of wives, the bearing of children, and the dynastic exploits. The one passage closes with the boast of Lamech concerning his judgment of those who offend him; the other issues in the Lord's announcement of the judgment he purposes to visit on the earth which has become offensive to Him. Gen. 6:1ff. simply summarizes and concludes the course of dynastic development which had already been presented in the individual histories of the several rulers, indicating how the evil potential of Cainite kingship, betrayed even in its earliest beginnings, was given such full vent in its final stages as to produce a state of tyranny and corruption intolerable to the God of heaven.<sup>23</sup>

The custom of Near Eastern titles for royalty also favor this interpretation. The crux of the problem passage of Genesis 6 is really this: How was the term "sons of God" understood in the cultural environment in which Moses wrote? Or, to bring it right down to where the rubber meets the road, how would Moses' son have understood the title "sons of God," had he looked over his father's shoulder as ancient Moses penned these words?

As a matter of fact, archeological discoveries of ancient Near Eastern texts throw much light on the problematic term "sons of God." Birney, in summarizing the evidence, speaks of the widespread pagan custom of referring to kings as sons of various gods.

This pagan usage could have been applied to the antediluvian kings to suggest their Satanic background. Or the term could have been applied simply because it was so widespread that everyone would immediately understand it to refer to rulers.

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<sup>23</sup>Kline, op. cit., pp. 194-195.

In Egypt the king was called the son of Re (the sun god). The Sumero-Akkadian king was considered the offspring of the goddess and one of the gods, and this identification with the deity goes back to the earliest times according to Engell. In one inscription he is referred to as "the king, the son of his god." The Hittite king was called "son of the weather-god," and the title of his mother was Tawannannas (=mother-of-the-god). In the northwest Semitic area the king was directly called the son of the god and the god was called the father of the king. The Ras Shamra (Ugaritic) Krt text refers to the god as the king's father and to king Krt as Krt bn il, the son of el or the son of god. Thus, on the basis of Semitic usage, the term be ne ha elohim, the "sons of god" or the "sons of the gods," very likely refers to dynastic rulers in Genesis 6.<sup>24</sup>

An interesting stela of ancient Mesopotamia further proves the fact that the founders of the first dynasties actually claimed to be sons of God. The stela shows Naram-Sin, Sargon's grandchild of the dynasty of Accad standing before a stylized mountain crushing his enemies by treading upon them. He does not affect to be merely a regal hero. His horned crown, such as adorns the gods, gives the impression that he claims divinity. Many inscriptions of Naram-Sin associated his royal name with the word for god (ilu) which precedes it. Moreover, Naram-Sin was considered to be the "God of Accad"--that is, Accad's protective spirit and personal god.<sup>25</sup>

On the basis of the volume of historical evidence that pagan kings were referred to as "sons of God," it is natural to draw the conclusion that the Genesis passage reflects this claim of heathen kings to divine paternity. The term בְּנֵי-אֱלֹהִים [sons of God] was appropriated in Genesis 6 as a title for the antediluvian kings. It should accordingly be translated, "the sons of the gods." Kline has some incisive comments on the reasons why Moses used this title:

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<sup>24</sup>Birney, op. cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>25</sup>Gaalياهو Cornfeld, Adam to Daniel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 27.

By this simple literary stroke the author at once caught the spirit of ancient paganism and suggested darkly the satanic shape that formed the background of the human revolt against the King of kings. For these "sons of the gods" were of all the seed of the serpent most like unto their father. One brief title thus serves to epitomize the climactic developments in the history of man's covenant breaking during those generations when the judgment of God was impending by the world that then was perished. It has been a merit of some who have thought that they found in this passage a preternatural intrusion into earthly history, a sort of pseudo-messianic embodiment of demonic spirits in human flesh, that they have sensed more fully than the advocates of the traditional exegesis, the titanic, one might almost say the eschatological, character of this ancient crisis.<sup>26</sup>

On the basis of these observations, Moses' contemporaries would have been very familiar with this title and would have seen it as a reference to antediluvian dynastic rulers and ambitious despots, claiming divine origin and divine rights. Birney has well summed up the major arguments for this view:

In summary, the view that the "sons of god" are rulers, probably Cainite tyrants, is tenable because that group is already indicated in chapter 4, the term is consistent with Biblical usage and the usage of the entire ancient Middle East, and it fits the context by carrying forward and culminating the theme of human corruption as the basis for the Flood.<sup>27</sup>

One other area of discussion remains. Who were these mysterious "giants" and "men of renown" mentioned in verse 4? "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown."

Interpreters differ whether these giants were contemporary with the polygamous marriages or were the product of these marriages. Exegetically, both interpretations are possible. It is probably best to

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<sup>26</sup>Kline, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

<sup>27</sup>Birney, op. cit., p. 48.



see them as the progeny of the tyrants. Their relationship to the "sons of God" has been shown by Kline:

The princes born into these royal houses of the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים [sons of God] were the Nephilim-Gibborim (vs. 4), the mighty tyrants who Lamech-like esteemed their might to be their right. So as man abounded on the face of the earth (vs. 1) God saw that the wickedness of man abounded in the earth (vs. 5). By reason of the polygamy and tyranny practiced by the dynasty of the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים [sons of God] in the name of divine-royal prerogative and justice, the earth became corrupt before God and filled with violence (vss. 5-7, 11-13) and so hastened to destruction.<sup>28</sup>

These Nephilim according to etymology and context were wicked tyrants who gloried in violence. Various translations of the word have been given:

The word "nephilim" occurs only here and in Numbers 13:33. In Numbers it is used of the Anakim, who were of great stature. The LXX translated "giants," and other old Greek versions translate "assailants" or "violent men." Various ideas have been tied to the root NPL, to fall, e.g. to fall from heaven (fallen angels), to fall upon others (tyrants or invaders), to be aborted (unnaturally begotten by angels). The etymology offers little help. This context and the reference in Numbers would suggest merely that the Nephilim were men known for their prowess.<sup>29</sup>

These nephilim were especially prominent in the wickedness leading to the corruption and hence the judgment of mankind. It is quite possible, as Cornfeld suggests, that:

We may perhaps link the Nephilim of Genesis with the "mighty men that were of old," these semi-legendary heroes of prehistory whose memory and deeds are recorded in the ancient annals of Mesopotamia, Egypt and other lands of antiquity. These were the founders of the first dynasties, lawgivers and the like. The word Nephilim (in Arabic--nabil) means princes. So the Nephilim need not be interpreted as a race of "giants," but "great men."<sup>30</sup>

The "mighty men" (gibborim) are probably identical with the nephilim.

<sup>28</sup>Kline, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>29</sup>Birney, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>30</sup>Cornfeld, op. cit., p. 25.

The word gibbor is used of Nimrod in Genesis 10:8. Kline has some suggested comments on the fact that Nimrod belongs to the category of the gibborim:

That Nimrod was a king is clear from Gen. 10:10 (which locates his dominion in the land of Shinar, cf. Gen. 11:2), and this supports the interpretation of the Gibborim of Gen. 6:4 and their fathers, the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים [sons of God] as a royal dynasty. If one bears in mind the divine ordinance of Gen. 9:5,6, by which the civil power was authorized to destroy manslaying beasts as well as human murderers, it will be seen that Gen. 10:9 need not be judged an interpolation which breaks the thematic unity of verses 8 and 10, simply because it specifies that Nimrod was אִי־בַר־צַדִּיק [mighty hunter]. Nimrod's hunting exploits were not mere sport but a function properly pertaining to his royal office and quite necessary in his historical situation.<sup>31</sup>

One final evidence for the validity of this interpretation of Genesis 6 as the culmination of an outrage of despots against God before the flood is the structural similarity between the Genesis account and the Sumero-Babylonian flood traditions. In these latter flood traditions, invariably the flood is preceded by the theme of kingship centering in cities under the hegemony of various gods. This kingship came from heaven and numbered a god among its representatives. The main introductory motif in the Sumero-Babylonian flood traditions is thus: that of royalty beginning in cities and claiming divine origin. Kline traces the same motif in the Gilgamesh Epic, the old Babylonian flood epic, commonly called after the hero, the Atrahasis Epic, and the Sumerian flood epic. Of the latter he writes:

A valuable contribution to our knowledge of the principal themes, particularly the introductory themes, of the ancient flood traditions is made by the Sumerian Deluge account, found on a fragmentary tablet at Nippur. The preserved portion of the first column deals with the creation. Then after a break the second column relates that kingship was lowered from heaven and that five cities were founded and apportioned to particular

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<sup>31</sup>Kline, op. cit., p. 201.

gods. When the text continues on the third column after another lacuna, the subject is the flood itself.<sup>32</sup>

In light of the fact that Genesis repeatedly parallels the themes of other ancient literature, the striking parallel of the themes of the Biblical and extra-biblical accounts is further corroborating evidence that this interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4 is correct. As Kline remarks:

The fact that an historical theme so prominently treated in the Sumero-Babylonian epic tradition finds no counterpart in Genesis 3-6 according to the standard interpretations is itself good reason to suspect that these interpretations have been missing the point.<sup>33</sup>

#### THE PRINCIPLES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

The last main point centers around principles that should be considered. It is the conclusion of this paper that the angel view is completely untenable, and that the term "sons of God" must be understood as referring to men. Therefore, it is obvious that certain of the arguments favoring the second or Sethite view may also be used to support the third, or despot view. Applying strict principles of interpretation to the passage, it becomes clear that evidence favors the view that the "sons of God" were ambitious despots.

#### The Principle of Context

The most basic rule of hermeneutics is that a passage be considered in its immediate and remote context. The angel view actually ignores the context which speaks only of men, their wickedness and God's

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<sup>32</sup>Kline, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

<sup>33</sup>Kline, op. cit., p. 199.

punishment upon this wickedness. The Cainite view, while taking the context seriously, fails to explain adequately the wicked nephilim and gibborim as products of simply religiously mixed marriages. The third view, however, sees that the context really speaks more of the progression of wickedness in the Cainite line than the fusion of the godly and ungodly line. The themes of city-building, tyranny and polygamy of Genesis 4 culminate in universal violence under the despotic rule of Cainite tyrants.

### The Principle of Culture

Another principle of interpretation states that the cultural background of any passage must be given primary attention. It has been demonstrated that the key term "sons of God," understood in its cultural context, would be most normally interpreted as a reference to dynastic rulers claiming divine origin who through polygamous marriages tried to expand their dominion, much in the same way of Solomon's practices centuries later. Power had corrupted them; their only desire was for more power.

### The Principle of Complexity and Simplicity

Bernard Ramm, in his standard work, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, mentions the principle of complexity and simplicity or "the principle of preference for the clearest interpretation." He explains it thus:

Frequently the interpreter is confronted with two or more equally probable interpretations as far as grammatical rules permit. One is a strain on our credulity; the other is not. One meaning is rather obvious, the other recondite. The rule

is: choose the clear over the obscure, and the more rational over the credulous.<sup>34</sup>

Because of this rule, Ramm favors the interpretation that the "sons of God" are men (although he suggests that they are godly Sethites). He directs some very important questions to the angel proponents.

If we interpret sons of God as meaning angels then we have on our hands a host of theological and scientific problems. Where do angels get bodies? how are such bodies able to copulate? what is the status of the children produced as far as the question of "in Adam" is concerned? If we take the expression to mean pious men . . . we are accordingly free from the nest of scientific and theological difficulties the other alternative creates for us.<sup>35</sup>

It has been shown that the angelic interpretation defies the normalities of experience, while the Sethite view denies those of language. The interpreter's task is to find the writer's meaning. What did Moses mean and how were his inspired words understood by his generation? That interpretation which fits in best with the biblical and cultural context is the view that the "sons of God" were ambitious antediluvian despots. This position does the least violence to the text and leaves the fewest questions unanswered. It is in all probability the true interpretation of Genesis 6.

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<sup>34</sup>Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 120.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

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<u>Position:</u>	ANGELIC CREATURES	APOSTATE SETHITES	AMBITIOUS DESPOTS
<u>Persons:</u>	Fallen angels cohabit with beautiful women.	Ungodly Sethites marry depraved Cainites.	Despotic chieftains marry a plurality of wives.
<u>Perversion:</u>	Perversion of human race by intrusion of angels.	Pollution of godly line by mixed marriage.	Polygamy of Cainite princes to expand dominion.
<u>Progeny:</u>	Monstrous giants.	Wicked tyrants.	Dynastic rulers.
<u>Proofs:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The antiquity of the view</li> <li>-The reference to angels in Job as "sons of God"</li> <li>-The N.T. references to the angelic sin of Gen. 6 (1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Pet. 2:14; Jude 6)</li> <li>-The resultant unnatural race of monstrosities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The emphasis on men in the context</li> <li>-Human sin as the reason for the Flood</li> <li>-The thematic development of Genesis 4-5</li> <li>-The aversion in Genesis to intermarriage between godly and ungodly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Antiquity of this interpretation</li> <li>-Biblical usage of "god" for rulers and judges</li> <li>-Reference in context to development of wicked dynasties.</li> <li>-Near Eastern practice to call kings "sons of God"</li> <li>-Reference in ancient accounts to origin of kingship just prior to Flood</li> </ul>
<u>Problems:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The words of Christ that angels do not marry (Matt. 22:30)</li> <li>-The psychological and physiological impossibilities of angelic marriages</li> <li>-The usage of "sons of God" for only unfallen creatures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Textual difficulty in making "men" of Gen. 6:1 different from "men" of Gen. 6:2</li> <li>-Absence of exact term "sons of God" for believers in the O.T.</li> <li>-Failure to explain the origin of the giants and mighty men through simply religiously mixed marriages</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">This view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-fits in most normally with the context.</li> <li>-takes into account the practice in Near Eastern culture.</li> <li>-leaves the least number of questions unanswered.</li> </ul>
<u>Proponents:</u>	W. F. Albright, A. C. Gaebelein, W. Kelly, M. F. Unger, B. K. Waltke, F. Delitzsch, E. Bullinger, C. Larkin, G. Pember, K. Wuest, J. Gray, R. A. Torrey	Hengstenberg, Keil, Lange, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Matthew Henry, C. I. Scofield, C. F. Lincoln, John Murray, J. S. Baxter, G. Scroggie, H.C. Leupold	Walter Kaiser Leroy Birney Meredith Kline Gaalyahu Cornfeld



The Principle of the Gospel in Galatians 2:15-20

*Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### Historical Background

While there is some disagreement among scholars in this matter, the probability is that Galatians was written from a city in Macedonia about A. D. 56.

False teachers known as Judaizers had crept into these Galatian churches and were seeking to undermine the faith of the recently converted Gentiles by insisting that they could not enter into the fulness of salvation unless in addition to their belief in Christ they submitted to the rite of circumcision and other requirements of the Jewish law. Paul, who was in a much better position to judge the spiritual state of these Judaizers than we are, is thoroughly convinced that they were false teachers and wolves in sheep's clothing (Gal. 2:4; Phil 3:2-3).

The objective of the Judaizers was twofold: (1) they sought to undermine confidence in Paul as a divinely commissioned apostle on a level with the Twelve; and (2) they wanted to subvert his teaching that men were saved by faith alone. Paul wrote Galatians, therefore, (a) to defend his apostolic authority and (b) to establish the doctrine of justification by faith upon a secure basis of Scripture and reason. To Paul the issue was as vivid as it was absolutely vital--the very cross of Christ was imperilled by this plausible legalism of the Judaizers, for "if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (2:21).

### Contextual Background

The book runs in three clear movements of two chapters each. The first two chapters are a narrative (pertaining to Paul himself). The next two chapters are a discussion (pertaining to the Gospel). The remaining two chapters are an exhortation (pertaining to the Galatian believers). In other words, the first two chapters are a personal explanation, the middle two are a doctrinal exposition, and the last two are the practical application.

The first main section of the book is 1:11-2:21. In it we find Paul defending his apostleship on two fronts. (1) He shows that he has received his gospel and the commission to proclaim it directly from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Then (2) he shows that he had been granted the fullest endorsement of his ministry by the apostolic council at Jerusalem, which was held to settle the issue of the status of the Gentile converts (2:1-21). So complete had been the apostles' and Paul's mutual agreement and understanding of the gospel, that when Peter on a later occasion at Antioch had lapsed into Judaistic behavior, Paul had been able to rebuke him and that very basis of that common understanding, and on the basis of his apostolic authority, which he earlier defended and now demonstrated. Paul uses this circumstantial difference between Peter and himself as a touch-stone to set forth a clear principle of the gospel.

## THE STATEMENT 2:15-16

### The Jews and Their Privileges

V. 15: We though Jews by nature and not sinners of Gentile origin.

It is somewhat uncertain as to whether vv. 15-21 are a continuation of Paul's rebuke of Peter in the hearing of the church at Antioch or whether they constitute an enlargement for the benefit of the Galatians of what he said to Peter. It has also been surmised that Paul is here mentally addressing Peter, if not quoting from what he said to him. The correct view is probably that Paul summarizes for the benefit of the Galatians that which he had told Peter because (1) the passage no doubt is merely a summary at best, of what was said and done at Antioch, and (2) v. 14 would not be enough to convince the Galatians that he had really come to grips with Peter on the matter at issue.

Paul's argument in this verse is an appeal to the course which both Peter and he had followed to come to be justified, whereby they confessed the worthlessness of their heritage and works of the law. The term ἀμαρτωλοὶ is here not used in its strict sense denoting persons guilty of sin, but rather, Paul writes of the Jew's attitude toward the Gentiles. The Jews regarded all Gentiles as sinners (Matt. 26:45; Lk. 18:32). The word was almost a synonym

in the religious phraseology of the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

With some irony, Paul says that both he and Peter had not been like these "sinful Gentiles," but they were Jews, possessing the privileges of the Jewish religion, the knowledge of the law (Rom. 3:1-2), and the special favor of God.

#### The Jewish Christians and Their Faith

V. 16: Yet knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but only through faith in Christ Jesus, even we believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of law, because by works of law 'shall no flesh be justified.'

#### The Insufficiency of the Law

The usage of δέ is somewhat problematical, as it appears at the beginning of the verse. Some manuscripts and therefore men omit the δέ and connect the verse with the preceding, regarding its ἡμεῖς as taken up by the following καὶ ἡμεῖς, the nominative to ἐπιστεύσαμεν: "We by nature Jews, knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law, even we believed in Christ." But the previous verse can be

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<sup>1</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, Classic Commentary Library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 115.

be taken as a complete statement: "We are Jews by nature; but, knowing as we do that a man is not justified by works of law, even we believed." This view has in its favor (1) the overwhelming evidence for de; (2) the natural meaning of the adversative, and (3) the meaning of the passage, for Paul indicates a transition from a trust in Judaism, so natural to a born Jew, to faith in Christ. All Jewish Christians, therefore, had initially agreed that it was utterly impossible to commend themselves to God by law-keeping. At the end of v. 16 this position is reinforced by a reference to Ps. 143:2. Paul was not teaching something new. Justification by faith had been promised in the Old Testament.

#### The Importance of Faith

In this verse, the works of the law are seen in contrast to faith. The two ways of getting right with God are set forth here: (1) by keeping the law and (2) by faith in Christ Jesus (objective genitive). Paul demonstrated that the Judaizers who kept the law were at complete variance, not only with the apostolic teaching but with their own Scriptures.

THE EXAMINATION 2:17-18

The Life of Faith

V. 17: But if through seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found to be sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin?

Found to Be Sinners

This verse contains two problems related to the justification by faith. What does it mean that they (presumably Paul and Peter) were found to be sinners? Two main views are possible: (1) While leaving the law, they therefore sinned against it by breaking it, and were constituted sinners. This would then be the illogical argument of the Judaizers against Paul and all other Jewish believers who trusted in Christ rather than in the law. Or it could have the meaning of (2) "we no less than the Gentiles have been proved to be sinners." The latter position is to be favored because (a) of the αυτοι, referring to a definite group, i. e., Peter and Paul. (b) The κα in connection with αυτοι and αμαρτωλοι links this with the sinners in v. 15, where αμαρτωλοι is to be understood with reference to our position in the eyes of God. (c) Paul would have little reason to switch to an objection by the Judaizers which is irrelevant to the argument. Rather, like the Gentiles, Jews who thought they were not sinners, when brought to Christ, found that they were.



Christ a Minister to Sin

There are two ways to interpret this difficult expression. (1) Paul either takes up the objection of the Judaizers which goes thus: "To forsake the law in order to be justified, is to commit sin; and to make this change under the authority of Christ, is to make Christ the minister of sin--a supposition not to be entertained, therefore it is wrong to appeal to Him for freedom from the law." The other view is that this is Paul's own argument (2): "It cannot be a sinful thing to abandon the law, for such abandonment is necessary to justification; and if it were a sinful thing to pass over from the law to faith, it would thus make Christ the minister of sin--but such a conclusion is utterly blasphemous. That interpretation (2) is preferable can be readily seen. (a) The phrase is introduced by ἀρα, which is a question, as seen from other uses (Lk. 18:8; Acts 8:30). That this question is based on Paul's own argument can be deduced from the use of μη γένοιτο, which is used almost exclusively by Paul of a false deduction from his own previous statements. He admits thus that they became sinner, by seeking to be justified in Christ, but denies that therefore, as his opponents charge, Christ has become one who ministers to sin. (b) This interpretation also agrees with the indicative use of εὐρέθημεν, (c) the subtle irony of ἀμαρτωλοὶ, and paves the way of the words "I died through the law."

The Life By the Law

V. 18: For if the things that I broke down, these I build up again, I show myself a transgressor.

The meaning of the verse is plain enough. But the question is, What does it refer to? And again there are two possibilities. It may either be that the Judaizers, with their reintroduction of law-keeping as an essential of salvation, are painfully rebuilding the very structure of human merit, which for Paul ended when he received Christ. Or it may have direct reference to Peter, who had ignored and lived contrary to the law for a time, so that the return to that same law would reveal him as a deliberate transgressor. Paul tactfully applies this statement to himself. It is simplest to connect γὰρ with μὴ γένοιτο:

God forbid; for in the renunciation of the law, and in the consequent finding of ourselves sinners in order to justification, there is no sin; but sin lies in returning to the law again as the means or ground of acceptance, for such return is an assertion of its perpetual authority.<sup>1</sup>

Peter's conduct had been a confession that he had transgressed in overthrowing the law. Abrogation and re-enactment cannot both be right. When Peter lived like a Gentile, he tore down the ceremonial law; when he lived like a Jew, he tore down salvation by grace.

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<sup>1</sup>John Eadie, Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, Classic Commentary Library (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n. d.), p. 178.

## THE CONCLUSION 2:19ff

### Paul and the Law

V. 19: For I through law died to law that I might live to God.

Whereas Paul spoke unemphatically of himself in the previous verse, because what he said referred actually to Peter and would have been true of any person who had trusted in Christ, Paul now employs ἐγώ and thus becomes very emphatic, speaking of his own experience in this and the following verses.

The question arises how it was possible for Paul to die through the law to the law. How did the law free him from himself? Various answers have been advanced. (1) Some say it refers to the lack of power in the law to give man life, but that faith is able to liberate man from death and give him a new principle of life. Also this statement is true, of course, it does not contain the whole truth. (2) Some ascribe to the law the peculiar function of a παλαγῶχος, which operates till the sinner is brought to Christ. But the abandonment of the law forced upon the sinners by its terror does not amount to the profound change described in the phrase τῷ νόμῳ ἀπέθανον. (3) Some refer it to the economical purpose of the law, whose sacrifices and rituals foreshadowed Christ. It was therefore an act of

obedience to the law, when Christ came, to take Him as master instead of the law. But against this is the use of νόμος, always referring to the written law. And the words διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον certainly speak of a moral and spiritual change wrought in the believer. Also, the appeal of the passage is to the heart and conscience rather than to reason and intellect.

Lightfoot explains the problem thus:

- (1) Prior to the law--sinful, but ignorant of sin;
- (2) Under the law--sinful, and conscious of sin, yearning after better things; (3) Free from the law--free and justified in Christ.

The meaning of διὰ νόμου can be seen when the meaning of νόμῳ ἀπέθανον is examined. Such a dative is found with this verb in Rom. 6:2,10; 7:4; 14:7. To die to the law is to die to the demands of the law and thus to be no longer under its penalty. Rom. 6 makes it clear that believers died to the law in the death of Christ. In Christ we died positionally to the sin for which He died.

#### Paul and Christ

V. 20; I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

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<sup>1</sup>Lightfoot, p. 118.

In the last verse the main emphasis was the release from the obligations and the demands of the law, here it is the death to the curse of the law.

What is this death with Christ? (1) It is not a mystical experience of Paul, as some assert. (2) Neither is it a daily dying to the law, a constant self-crucifixion. (3) Also, the view that this is merely a change of looking at things--a "reorientation of thought"--on part of the Apostle, based on Christ's death to the law, completely misses the point. These views are ably refuted by a proper exegesis of the text. The latter view (3) seems to confuse positional with practical sanctification. One further view, which has the word usage in its favor but misses the complete argument of the passage is that (4) συνεσταύρωμαι refers to a death to sin, the annihilation of old sins.

It should be noted, first of all, that συνεσταύρωμαι is perfect, indicating that the action has been begun in the past and its results continue in the present, thus the translation must be "I have been crucified with Christ." Not the crucifixion goes on and on but the results of it. Secondly, Paul has elsewhere indicated that the believer is free from law by virtue of the death of Christ (3:13; Col 2:14; Eph. 3:15-16). In Col. 2:20 this is expressed as a dying with Christ. The death spoken of here is not the spiritual fellowship which the believer has with the death of Christ, but

as the context and the inclusive verb point out, the death brings to an end the reign of the law. Positionally, our crucifixion with Christ occurred the moment we accepted Him as Saviour, but the effects of our acceptance of His finished work for us on the cross will continue throughout all eternity.

Identification with Christ involves not only identification in His death but also in His burial, resurrection, ascension, and glorification, for Christ did not stay dead. Through the union with Christ we satisfied the law, yielded to it the obedience which it claimed, suffered its curse, died to it, and are released from it--from its accusations and its penalty, and from its claim to obey it as the means of winning eternal life.

Release from the law is not lawlessness. This is emphasized by Paul in the remainder of the verse "and live no longer I, but liveth in me Christ." The first δέ is continuative, the second sub-adversative, introducing the positive correlative to the preceding negative statement. Christ now dwells in Paul, controls him, gives him power, and transforms him.

The ἄνω marks the time subsequent to Paul's identification with Christ. The τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ describes the object of his faith. Paul appropriates the love of Jesus, realizing that in a very real sense Christ died for him. His life is merged with that of Christ.

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# THE EPILOGUE OF JOB

Job 42:10-17

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## An Exposition



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THE EPILOGUE OF JOB

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A Commentary  
Presented to  
Dr. Merrill F. Unger

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Course  
Hebrew 205

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by  
Manfred Enno Kober  
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THE EPILOGUE OF JOB

JOB 42:10-17

TRANSLATION:

And Yahweh turned the fortune of Job when he prayed for his friends and Yahweh increased all that was Job's two-fold.

Then came to him all his brothers and all his sisters and all his former acquaintances, and they ate bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and they comforted him concerning all the evil which Yahweh had brought upon him, and each one gave him a Keshita (piece of money) and each a golden ring.

And Yahweh blessed Job's end more than his beginning and he had fourteen thousand sheep and six thousand camels and a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she asses. And he had seven sons and daughters. And the one was called Jemima (Dove) and the second Kezia (Cassia) and the third Kerenhappuch (horn of eye-makeup). And in all the land there were not found women so fair as the daughters of Job and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers.

And Job lived after this a hundred and forty years, and he saw his offspring and his children's offspring to four generations. And Job died, being old and satisfied with days.

ANALYSIS OF CLAUSES

- 10 וַיְחַוֶּה שָׁב אֶת־ שְׁבִית אִיּוֹן בְּהַתְּפַלְלוֹ בַעַד  
וַיִּסַּף הַדָּוָה אֶת־כָּל־ אֲשֶׁר לְאִיּוֹן רעהו  
לֹא שָׁגָה:
- 11 וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־אֲחָיו וְכָל אַחֵי־תִזְוֹ וְכָל־  
יָדְעֵי לִפְנֵיהֶם  
וַיֹּאכְלוּ עִמּוֹ לֶחֶם בְּבֵיתוֹ  
וַיִּנְדְּדוּ לוֹ  
וַיִּנַּחֲמוּ אֹתוֹ עַל־כָּל־הָרַעַךְ אֲשֶׁר־חָבִיא  
יְהוָה עָלָיו  
וַיִּתְגַּדְּלוּ אִישׁ קִשְׁטָה אֶחָת וְאִישׁ  
גִּזְמֹם זָהָב אֶחָד:
- 12 וַיְהוֹה בְּרַךְ אֶת־אֲחֵרֵית אִיּוֹן פְּרָאֲשָׁתוֹ  
וַיְהִי־קוֹ אֲרֻבְעָה עָשָׂר אֲלָפֵי צֶאֱן וְשֵׁשֶׁת אֲלָפִים  
גְּמָלִים וְאֲלָפֵי צֶמֶד בָּקָר וְאֲלָפֵי אֲתוֹנוֹת:
- 13 וַיְהִי־קוֹ שֶׁבַעֲנָה בָּנִים וְשָׁלוֹשׁ בָּנוֹת:
- 14 וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם־הָאֶחָת יִמְמָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית  
קֹצֵעָה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁלִישִׁית קָרוֹן הַפּוֹד:
- 15 וְלֹא נִמְצָא גְּשִׁים יְפוֹת כְּבָנוֹת אִיּוֹן  
בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ  
וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם אֲבִיהֶם גְּחָלָה בְּתוֹךְ אַחֵיהֶם:
- 16 וַיְהִי אִיּוֹב (אֲרֻבְעָה דְרוֹת): אֶסְרִי־זֹאת מֵאֵה וְאֲרַבְעִים  
שָׁנָה  
וַיִּרָא אֶת־בְּנָיו וְאֶת־בְּנֵי בְנָיו אֲרַבְעָה דְרוֹת:  
וַיִּקְרָא אִיּוֹב זִקֵּן וְשֵׁבַע יָמִים:
- 17

## INTRODUCTION

### The Position of Job

Among all writings, inspired or uninspired, the book of Job stands preeminent for its lofty representations of the pure moral personality, the holiness, the unchallengeable justice, the wisdom, the omnipotence, and the absolute sovereignty of God. The formal kinship of the book of Job is with the Eastern hokmay or wisdom literature. Within the canon of the Old Testament the function of the wisdom books was to apply the foundational Mosaic revelation to the problems of human existence and conduct as they were being formulated in the philosophical circles of the world. A figure like Job, standing outside the Aaronic-Mosaic administrations of the Covenant, was an ideal vehicle for Biblical wisdom doctrine, concerned as it was with the common ways and demands of God. (Tenney, p. 433).

The position which the book occupies in our English Bibles after the historical books and before the Psalms is that which it has always occupied in the Western Church, at least since the days of Jerome. But in the original Hebrew it stands after the Psalms and Proverbs in the third of the three divisions (the Kethubhim) into which the Scriptures are divided by the Jews. It is rightly placed in close

connection with the Psalms and Proverbs, as being, like them, poetical in form (Gibson, p. IX).

### The Period of Job

The indications of date derived from the contents of the book, from its tone, and from its general style, strongly favor the theory of its high antiquity. The style has an archaic character, replete with Aramaisms which are not of the later type, but such as occur in parts of the Pentateuch, in the Song of Deborah, and in the earliest Psalms. The events which the author narrates belong to the early Patriarchal period, as is evident from features like Job's longevity, revelation by theophany outside the Abrahamic Covenant, the nomadic status of the Chaldeans, and the early social and economic practices. The historical allusions contain not the faintest hint of any of the great events of Israelite history, not even the Exodus. Judging from those facts, the book of Job is probably more ancient than any other composition in the Bible, excepting perhaps the Pentateuch, or portions of it (Pulpit Commentary, p. 15).

The book was not written until after Job's death (42:17) and the only tradition which has come down to us with respect to its authorship ascribes it to Moses. Though this tradition, affirmed by Aben Ezra (c. A. D. 1150) and the Talmud, is of little critical value, leaving it we would float upon a sea



of conjecture.

### The Problems of Job

The author of Job is a didactic writer. Placing the complicated problems of human life before him, he inquires into a number of its most hidden and abstruse mysteries. Why are some men especially prosperous? Why are others crushed and overwhelmed with misfortune? Does God care for men or does He not? Is death the end of all things? How can man be just with God? How can man know God? But above all--why must man suffer? These are the questions the book asks and which are directly or indirectly answered by the author.

Job is tried and tested in every possible way: by unexampled misfortunes, by a most painful and loathsome disease, by the defection of his wife, by the cruel charges of his friends, by the desertion of his relatives, by the insulting language and actions of the rabble (30:1-10). Yet he retains his integrity; he remains faithful to God; he continues to place all his hope and trust in the Almighty (13:15; 31:2,6,23,35). While hopelessly despondent and protesting passionately against what he interprets as an unjust divine sentence upon him, it is still to God that Job turns and cries. And although the Voice from the whirlwind has offered no explanation of the mystery of his past sufferings, it nevertheless controverts the theory of his friends, that all suffering

proceeds from sin.

With chapter 42 the drama reaches its conclusion and there only remains that the narrative should be satisfactorily concluded. This is done in 42:1-17 where the writer drops the poetical form and reverts to the plain prose of the prologue. In this epilogue Yahweh first turns to Job's friends and pronounces the verdict, condemning the friends and bidding them to offer a sacrifice, promising them pardon at Job's intercession (7-9). Thereupon follows the epilogue proper, where Job, magnificently vindicated, finds his destiny accomplished.

## I. HIS RESTORED HEALTH

### The Reason for His Deliverance.

Vs. 10: And Yahweh turned the fortune of Job when he prayed for his friends and Yahweh increased all that was Job's two-fold.

#### Job's Part

It is no coincidence and there is deep significance in the fact that the very moment when, as regards his friends, Job prays for them, he completely forgives and forgets, notwithstanding they had so grievously injured him, his disease departs from him. It happened when he prayed for his friends וְיָחַד עִתְּוֹתָיו, not "because he prayed," not "in return for his praying," for וְ before וְיָחַד עִתְּוֹתָיו can only express the idea of simultaneousness ("while, during"), though there most certainly may be a cause-effect relationship. The prayer was וְיָחַד עִתְּוֹתָיו. The preposition וְ speaks of any kind of nearness, behind or after, round about, between; here no doubt pro or for, as in Job 6:22, 2:4 (Gesenius, p. 129). The original text properly reads in the singular "for his friend," which singular, however, is to be understood generally, as a collective singular (16:21), or it may be that, as in 42:7, Eliphaz is regarded as a representative of all his friends.

### Yahweh's Part

It was Yahweh that (literally:) turned the fortunes of Job. וַיִּטְוֶה placed first in this verbal clause receives the emphasis. וַיִּטְוֶה וַיִּטְוֶה does not mean "turned the captivity of Job." Expressions of this sort were not originally combinations of a verb and a noun, but arose from a reduplication of the verb וַיִּטְוֶה וַיִּטְוֶה. The phrase simply means: to turn the turning, to restore to the former condition, to cause an unfortunate turn of affairs to be succeeded by a fortunate one, which puts an end to the former. (Tur-Sinai, p. 580). The phrase וַיִּטְוֶה-וַיִּטְוֶה וַיִּטְוֶה occurs only here, with the name of an individual in the genitive after וַיִּטְוֶה; the genitive is generally the name of a people, occasionally that of a country (Jer. 33:11). The exceptional usage can perhaps be best explained in the common origin of the words, than that the verb came from וַיִּטְוֶה and the noun form from וַיִּטְוֶה, in which case the noun form would have lost its real meaning. Better yet, as Ewald demonstrated, the verb and noun are actually from the same root (ICC, p. 349).

When Job prayed his fortunes were turned. Perhaps his complete forgiveness by God was contingent on his own complete forgiveness of his "friends" (Mt. 6:12, 14, 15; 18:32-35). At any rate, his restoration, though no doubt gradual, followed his intercession.

The Radicality of His Deliverance

Yahweh increased all that Job had two-fold לְכָפֹל.

The description which follows sets forth how this doubling of his former possessions, which need not be pressed throughout with literal exactness, was carried out in detail.

Duhm (p. 205) insists that vs. 10c is a later addition, for, how could Yahweh add (וַיִּזְכֹּר) to Job's possessions when he actually possessed nothing anymore. The verb should be וַיִּשְׂבֹּר, he insists. But although וַיִּזְכֹּר does mean to add, to increase, one need merely take this as having reference to his former possessions, mentioned in the prologue (1:1-5), to which the epilogue seems to stand in direct contrast. Job's fortunes changed completely. Literally then, the Lord added to all that had been Job's to the double. The subsequent verses speak of the restoration and doubling of Job's former prosperity (11-17). Vss. 11-12 narrate first of all the restoration of his former honor, authority, and dignity.

## II. HIS RETURNING FRIENDS

### The Relationship of the Friends

Vs. 11: Then came to him all his brothers and all his sisters and all his former acquaintances, and they ate bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and they comforted him concerning all the evil which Yahweh had brought upon him, and each one gave him a Keshita and each a golden ring.

There came to him all his brothers and all his sisters and all his acquaintances. They came en toto, as signified by the threefold use of יָבִיאוּ. Everyone came, including all his יָדָעוּ (from יָדָע, plural active participle "to know, to be acquainted with"). The question is, Where had they been all along? It seems remarkable that none of these friends came near to him during his afflictions, and especially that his sisters should not have been with him to sympathize with him. But it was one of the bitter sources of affliction, that in his trials his kindred stood aloof from him. He says therefore in 19:13-14: "He hath put my brethren far from me and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed and my familiar friends have forgotten me." Delitzsch rightly observes (p. 389) that prosperity brought those together again whom calamity had frightened away; for the love of men is scarcely anything but a number of coarse or

delicate shades of selfishness." Job, however, does not thrust his friends back.

This narrative then is to be understood as the counterpart of the sorry visit by his three "friends" in 2:11, who were nothing but miserable comforters.

#### The Rejoicing with His Friends

They came to eat bread with him in his house. A sympathetic sould of a copyist of the LXX gives to the eating ones also something to drink: וַיִּשְׂאוּ, but the וַיִּשְׂאוּ doubtless includes the drinking. The eating of bread was an ancient token of friendship and affection (Ps. 11:9, Prov. 9:5, 23:6, Jer. 41:1). He was now in his own house-- וַיִּשְׂאוּ, to which he returned after his recovery from his defiling illness (Barnes, p. 301). Before Job's calamities, his children feasted in their own houses (1:4); now that Job is restored, he resumes his hospitality.

#### The Remembrance by His Friends

They did not only eat bread with him in his house. More than that: they bemoaned him and comforted him over all the evil the Lord had brought upon him, whereof the worst part was their own coldness and desertion (19:13, 14, 19). Two verbs, containing a noteworthy alliteration, express their sympathetic attention. And exactly the same terms are used for the comfort

and sympathy of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar in 2:11: וַיִּנְחֵם and וַיִּנְחֵם. וַיִּנְחֵם means "to be moved, to be agitated" and followed by a dative, "to pity, to commiserate," as signified by a motion of the head (cf. Job 16:4-5). When followed by וַיִּנְחֵם, as here, it means "to comfort the afflicted." Hence, in comforting there is real physical empathy involved. The verb וַיִּנְחֵם properly means to pant or to groan, and in the Piel indicates "to signify, to declare grief or pity" (Gesenius, pp. 535, 544), followed by an accusative of persons (Gen. 50:21, Job 2:11). It sometimes includes the notion of help put forth, especially when used of God (Is. 12:1, Ps. 23:4). And it can be seen from the following context of this passage that the idea of help is included here too. Their comfort and sympathy, whether genuine or not, evidenced itself in real compassion and help. So it must ever be with our sympathy. Real compassion does not sit by idly at the need of others (Prov. 3:27-28).

Of special note is the fact that here Yahweh, instead of Satan, is seen as the bringer of the evil: וַיִּנְחֵם וַיִּנְחֵם וַיִּנְחֵם וַיִּנְחֵם. וַיִּנְחֵם includes the loss of possessions which do not yet seem to be restituted at this time. Was it not Satan who had originated all the evils which befell Job? Perhaps the inspired writer of the book, in his concluding remark, wants us to see the truth that God is sovereign in all of man's affairs and that nothing comes into



our life which does not first meet the approval of God. Ultimately it was God who tested Job, not Satan. God gave the approval; He set the limits for the evil; He terminated it in His own good time. Now it was Yahweh who restored His servant to honor. Everything is now subordinated to him, who was accounted as one forsaken of God.

#### The Riches from His Friends

Finally, to establish the renewed friendship, every man also gave him a piece of money and everyone an earring of gold. This they all did. ו'א is repeated twice. They all came; they all gave. The writer wants us to see the totality of the restitution. These gifts were presents of well-wishes, much like the present-day wedding gifts. This is probably one of the earliest instances in which money is mentioned in history. The Hebrew word נחשון occurs only in this place and in Gen. 33:19, where it is rendered "pieces of silver." It is evident therefore that it was one of the earliest names given to a coin, and its use here argues strongly for the antiquity of Job. Had the book been composed at a later age, the word shekel, or some word in common use to denote money, would have been used. The relationship of a Qesita--a weight for silver--to other weights is unknown. For a hundred Qesita Jacob bought the field where he spread his tent in Shechem (Gen. 33:19). The basic meaning of the word is "correct (measure),"

Aramaic ܫܘܘܩܐ. Arabic qist (= قسط) likewise means "correct measure, correct weight." Talmudic sources variously interpret this word as denoting a coin, an ornament, a sheep, like a similar word in the Talmud, but there is no room for these meanings here (Tur-Sinai, pp. 580-581). It is not an improbable supposition, however, that the figure of a sheep or lamb was the first figure stamped on coins, and this may be the reason why the word here used was rendered in this manner in the ancient versions.

Everyone also brought a ring of gold. The word rendered "ear-ring" (דָּוָד) may mean a ring for the nose (Gen. 24:47; Is. 3:21, Prov. 11:22; Hos. 2:13), as well as for the ear (Gen. 35:4). The word "ring" would better express the sense here, without specifying its particular use (cf. Jud. 8:24, 25; Prov. 25:12). It should be remembered that the oldest Egyptian coins had the form of a ring and that ṭṭṭ (talent) originally means ring. Ornaments of this kind were much worn by the ancients (cf. Is. 3, Gen. 24:22) and a contribution of these from each one of the friends of Job would constitute a valuable prosperity (Ex. 32:2-3). It was not uncommon for friends to bring presents to one who was restored from great calamity, as in the case of Hezekiah (II. Chron. 32:23)(Barnes, p. 303).

### III. HIS REGAINED POSSESSIONS

Vs. 12: And Yahweh blessed Job's end more than his beginning and he had fourteen thousand sheep and six thousand camels and a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she asses.

#### The Reason for His Wealth

Job's friends, which vanished with his fortune, returned with the same. Again they sit at his hospitable table and comfort him because of his misfortune. Their small presents, which no doubt were originally intended to be a present towards the basis of his new prosperity, serve now as folio, on whose background the whole fulness of God's blessing now comes to the fore. גַּרְדָּךְ הָיָה; Yahweh had given, Yahweh had taken away, and now He was blessing again. Yahweh takes away only to enrich, never to ruin and to destroy the faithful. Job's latter end, אֲחֵרֶיךָ, is blessed more than the former, רִאשִׁיתוֹ. The comparative כִּי highlights this change in Job's fortune. And the remainder of the verse emphasizes in detail just how radical the rewards were. James in the New Testament carries on the theme by pointing to Job with the following words: "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. The end is the Lord's and therein lies the comfort: גַּרְדָּךְ הָיָה .

The restoration of prosperity prophesied by Eliphaz (5:18-26), Bildad (8:20-21), and Zophar (11:13-19), but not expected by Job, came, not in consequence of any universal law, but by the will of God, and in His pure grace and favor. It in no way pledged to compensate worldly prosperity in the case of another sufferer; and certainly the general law seems to be that such earthly compensation is withheld. But, in combination with the instinct which demands that retributive justice shall prevail universally, it may be taken as an earnest of God's ultimate dealings with men and a sure indication that, if not on earth, at least in the future state, each man shall receive "the deeds done in his body," according to that he had done, whether it be good or evil.

#### The Rewards in Detail

The number of sheep and goats, camels, oxen, and she asses is exactly twice the number given in 1:3, which were Job's former possessions. Several interesting observations can be made from Job's property. First of all, the absence of horses or mules from the list is an indication of the high antiquity of Job. Horses were not known in Egypt till the time of the shepherd-kings (ca. 1900-1650 B. C.), who introduced them from Asia. None are given to Abraham by Pharaoh contemporary with him (Gen. 12:16). We hear of none as possessed by the Patriarchs in Palestine, and on the whole it is not probable

that they had been known in Western Asia very long before their introduction in Egypt from Central Asia.

Secondly, the items of Job's wealth accord with those of Abraham's (Gen. 12:16). Thirdly, Job's wealth of cattle is not beyond credibility. Egyptian lords of the 4th dynasty are known to have had similar possessions. Further, the proportion of the camels is noticeable and implies a residence on the borders of the desert (Pulpit Commentary, p. 2).

Job's possessions are those of a large and princely household. Although Job is not to be regarded as a Bedouin, but as a settled prince, or Emir (1:4, 18; 29:7; 31:32), who also engaged in agriculture (1:14; 5:23; 31:8, 38ff), his wealth is nevertheless, after the manner of those countries, estimated according to the extent of his flocks and herds (1:3: לְאֵלֶּיךָ), together with the servants belonging to it.

Job had fourteen thousand לְאֵלֶּיךָ. Sheep and goats are expressed in Hebrew by this single collective term, inadequately rendered "sheep" or sometimes, less inaccurately "flock," so Gen. 30:31f, a passage which proves the extent of the term in Hebrew. A simple term sufficed to cover the two classes of animals, inasmuch as the flocks generally contained both sheep and goats, as they commonly still do today (ICC, p. 5).

Moreover, Job possessed camels and a thousand yokes of oxen. יָכָוֶה is a yoke, i. e., a pair. Oxen were being

worked in pairs in tilling the land, as seen in 1:14: "oxen were ploughing." Only the she asses are mentioned as forming the most valuable part of this species of cattle property and also indicate that Job's wealth is not stated exhaustively. In Syria even today the she asses are far more numerously owned than the males, and sold at three times the value of the latter, and this is not so much for the milk as for breeding (Delitzsch, p. 390). The terms used for sheep and goats, לְאֵז and for oxen בָּקָר, are collective and as such include females; the masculine plural used of the camels, גַּמְלֵי, is applicable also to females (Gen. 32:15).

The only thing which is omitted here, and which is not said was doubled, was his "household," or "husbandry" (1:3), but it is evident that they must have increased in a corresponding manner, to enable him to keep and maintain such flocks and herds.

#### IV. HIS RENEWED POSTERITY

Vs. 13-15: And he had seven sons and daughters. And the one was called Jemima and the second Kezia and the third Kerenhappuch. And in all the land there were not found women so fair as the daughters of Job and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers.

##### His Sons

In contrast to 1:2, the children appear here only after the possession of the herds, because the cases of misfortune happened in this order (1:13ff) and because the birth of the sons and the daughters was completed later than the doubling of the flocks. Job has the same number of children which he had before his trials. Nothing is said of his wife or whether these children were or were not by a second marriage. The last mention that is made of his wife is in 19:17, where he says that "his breath was strange to his wife, though he intreated her for the children's sake of his own body."

The character of this woman does not seem to have been such as to have deserved farther notice than the fact that she contributed greatly to increase the calamities of her husband.

Job receives the same number of children again, which is also so far a doubling as deceased children also, according to the Old Testament view, are not absolutely lost (II. Sam.





of their acquaintance bestowed upon them. Concerning the giving of names among the Shur even in present-day Arabia, A Musil writes: "Der Name hat immer Bedeutung: er soll die gewuenschten Eigenschaften angeben...Oft entspricht der Name der augenblicklichen Stimmung des Vaters" (Peters, p. 500). Names were bestowed because they were significant of returning prosperity (Gen. 4:25), or because they indicated hope of what would be in their time (Gen. 5:29), or because they were the pledge of some permanent tokens of divine favor (Is. 8:18) (Barnes, p. 304).

Jemima.--Of the three names, יְמִינָה seems to signify the "dove" or "pure as the dove" (possibly "dove-eyed" cf. Cant. 1:15, 2:14, 4:1), unless the Vulgate, LXX, and Chaldee versions are followed, which bring the word into connection with יָמִים, "day," Arabic يَوْمَانِي, explaining it to mean "pure, bright as the day" (Lange, p. 631). The name thus conferred would indicate that Job had now emerged from the night of affliction, and that returning light shone again on his tabernacle.

Keziah.--The basic meaning of קִיָּיָה is "peel," as the Mishnaic קָצַע, קָצַעַה "to peel." The name was used specifically of the peel of the aromatic plant Laurus cassia. The bark resembles cinnamon but is less aromatic. Cassia grows in Arabia and was used as a perfume. The Chaldee

Paraphrast explains this as meaning that this name was given to her because she was as precious as cassia. Cassia is mentioned in Ps. 45:8 as among the precious perfumes: "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia." The agreeableness or the pleasantness of the perfume was the reason why the name was chose to be given to a daughter (Barnes, p. 304).

Keren-happuch.--The third one was called קַרְנֵי הַחֶפְצִים. \_\_\_\_\_ is a box or jar and thus the term means "paint horn, box of ointment." The שִׁבְיָה (stibium) was a paint or dye made originally, it is supposed, from sea-weed, and afterward from antimony, with which oriental women have from a remote antiquity anointed the upper and lower eyelids in order to give lustre or beauty to the eye and to make the eye appear larger. The קַרְנֵי is mentioned in I. Sam. 16:1,13, the שִׁבְיָה in Jer. 4:30 and II. Kgs. 9:30, Ez. 23:40. Large eyes are considered in the East as a mark of beauty.

The name of the daughter perhaps pointed to the exceedingly beautiful eyes of the girl (Peters, pp. 500-501), or it was given on account of her graceful nature and action, which served to heighten her natural beauty. Therefore she is the charming one who spread her charm all about her (Lange, p. 630). The third daughter was perhaps the most beautiful--as younger daughters often are--possessing a beauty heightened by artificial means. There were therefore like three graces and verse

15 shows that they were all their names implied.

### Their Ravishing Beauty

"And in all the land were no women found as beautiful as the daughters of Job," reads v. 15a. The אֵלֶּיךָ is plural in the LXX, Syriac and Vulgate since this Niphal perfect, used in the passive impersonal sense, has reference to a plural noun, בָּנִי. In the same verse there is another grammatical form, worthy of note. Three times the third masculine plural ending should correctly be a third feminine ending, in the words בָּנִי, בָּנִי, and בָּנִי. This apparent discrepantcy is due to a weakening in distinction of gender, which is noticable elsewhere and which probably passed from the colloquial language into that of literature; masculine suffixes referring to feminine substantives, as here and in Gen. 31:9, 32:16, 41:23, Ex. 1:21, 2:17 and many other places (Kautzsch-Cowley, p. 440, par. 1350). Even with the difference in gender, the reference is clearly to Job's daughters. The use of אֵלֶּיךָ expresses an objective unconditional negation here, comparable to the οὐκ in Greek. The meaning then is clear: there simply were no more beautiful girls found among the women of the land. Beauty has always been highly valued in the East; and Job would feel himself greatly favored in having three beautiful daughters.

### Their Rare Inheritance

The fact that their father gave them an inheritance among their brethren is mentioned as a general proof of his special regard and is also recorded because it was not a common custom. It was strictly at variance with the regulations of the Mosaic law and sounds more Arabian than Israelitish, for the Thora only recognizes a daughter as heiress where there are no sons (Num. 27:8). The writer is conscious that he is writing extra-Israelitish pre-Mosaic history. The equal distribution of property gives a pleasing picture of family unity in the commencement of history. At the same time it implies that Job did not lack sons-in-law for his fair, richly-dowered daughters. This fact is confirmed by verse 16 and it further serves as corroborating evidence for the antiquity of Job.

In this equal inheritance then is seen the proof of Job's wealth and fatherly regard. And it is also a provision for allowing his daughters after marriage to continue to live among their brothers. Thus the same concord prevails among these later children of Job as among the earlier (1:4).

## V. HIS REALIZED LONGEVITY

### His Real Age

Vs. 16: And Job lived after this a hundred and forty years, and he saw his offspring and his children's offspring to four generations.

Since it is not known how old he was when his afflictions came upon him, it cannot be precisely determined the age at which he died; but as he had previous to his affliction a family of ten children all grown up, he could hardly have been less than sixty or seventy years. The hundred and forty years are probably also to be taken as double of that number of years which he had lived thus far (Ps. 90:16), since God granted him twice as much in other respects too. The LXX emphatically represents Job as being seventy years old at the time his sore trials befall him, although for unknown reasons it adds thirty years to his total age, making him two-hundred forty years old (Duhm, p. 256).

A further indication of Job's old age is the fact that in all likelihood Job's sons had already families of their own (1:4). It should be remembered that in Patriarchal times, when men lived to a great age, marriages did not occur at so early a period of life as they do now. Barnes (p. 306) makes a cogent argument for the age of Job:

In this book, also, though the age of Job is not mentioned, yet the uniform representation of him is that of a man of mature years; of large experience and extended observation; of one who had enjoyed high honor and wide reputation as a sage and a magistrate; and when these circumstances are taken into the account, the supposition of the translators of the Septuagint, that he was seventy years old when his afflictions commenced, is not improbable. The age to which he lived is mentioned as remarkable, and was evidently somewhat extraordinary.

Barnes then goes on to observe that the length of human life after the flood suffered a somewhat regular decline until, in the time of Moses, it was fixed at about threescore years and ten (Ps. 90:10). He gives instances which show the regularity of decline, and enable us, with some degree of probability, to determine the period of the world in which Job lived. Noah lived 950 years; Shem, his son, 600; Arphaxad, his son, 438 years; Salah, 433 years; Eber 464; Peleg, 239; Ren, 239; Serug, 230; Nahor, 248; Terah, 205; Abraham, 175; Isaac, 180; Jacob, 147; Joseph, 110; Moses 120; Joshuah, 110. If it is therefore supposed that the age of Job was somewhat unusual and extraordinary, it would fall in with the period somewhere in the time between Terah and Jacob; and if so, he was probably contemporary with the most distinguished of the Patriarchs.

#### His Resultant Joy

Job saw his sons and his sons' sons, even four generations. אֲנִי, י: instead of אֲנִי, י the K're exhibits the

unusual form וְאֵלֶיךָ, which Lange prefers on account of its fuller musical tone (II. Sam. 17:42; Ez. 18:14) (p. 361), but Kautzsch seems to prefer the K'tib וְאֵלֶיךָ for the full forms (without the apocope of the וְ) not infrequently occur after waw consecutive, especially in the first person in the later books but never in the Pentateuch; also in the third person as here and in Ex. 18:28 (Kautzsch-Cowley, p. 211, par. 75t). The longer form וְאֵלֶיךָ probably merely indicates that there was an awareness among the scribes that in popular language frequently the unshortened imperfect occurs after the וְ consecutive (Duhm, p. 206).

Job was privileged to see וְאֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ. וְאֵלֶיךָ has simply the general sense of descendents: this is demanded by the דְּרֹתָ דְּרֹתָ דְּרֹתָ דְּרֹתָ--four generations (cf. Gen. 50:23; II. Kings 10:30; Ps. 128:6). Job saw his grand-children and great-grandchildren. According to the Hebrew inclusive practice of reckoning, it may be understood that his own generation is included, otherwise one would be justified to insert after וְאֵלֶיךָ the conjectured וְאֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ--and their children (Peters, p. 501).

To see one's posterity advancing in years and honor and extending themselves in the earth, was regarded as a signal honor and a proof of divine favore in the early ages: Gen. 48:11; Ps. 128:6; 127:5; Gen. 12:2; 17:5-7, Job 5:25 and Prov. 17:6, "Children's children are the crown of old men."

His Rich Life

Vs. 17: And Job died, being old and satisfied with with days.

The accounts of the Patriarchs, Abraham (Gen. 25:8); Isaac (Gen. 35:29, where the exact phrase "old and full of days" occurs); and Joseph (Gen. 21:23, 26), close in the same fashion. This style of ancient Israel, which is recognized everywhere in the book, is retained to the last words. The phrase ד'ד' וַיִּשְׂבֵּן יִשְׂרָאֵל is analogous to the Accadian balatu ischtenibbi--"he was satisfied with life." Exorcist formulas for sicknesses close often with belata lu uschbi--"may I be satiated with life" (Peters, p. 502). וַיִּשְׂבֵּן means "satisfied, satiated" and is used metaphorically both in a good sense, to abound in anything (Deut. 32:23) and in a bad sense, abounding in troubles (Job 14:1, 10:15) with the additional idea of weariness (Gen. 35:24 and here) (Gesenius, p. 783). In the case of Job it no doubt has reference to both the good sense and the bad sense. The two need not exclude each other.

Job more than filled up the ordinary terms of human life at that period of the world. He reached an honored old age and when he died was not prematurely cut down. Long life is a gift from God, but neither his greatest nor final gift. In his misery Job had prayed for death; in his renewed posterity, life is a boon. The Old Testament blessedness of a long life is enlarged in the New Testament and appears as the



gift of eternal life--man's greatest blessing.

The Alexandrian version presents after verse 17 a long addition that Job belongs to those who shall be resurrected by God; a combination of 19:25f and Dan. 12:2 (Ez. 14:4ff). Then follow several genealogical and historical details about the person of Job from the Aramaic Midrash, which were compiled with a good deal of confusion and recklessness and are completely worthless. Accordingly even Origen and Jerome rejected it (Lange, p. 632).

## CONCLUSION

The epilogue to the book shows Job brought safely through all his trials; evidencing that after all his friends had said and he had said and suffered, he was a good man. There was the divine interpretation in his favor at the close of the controversy, the divine approbation of his general character and the divine goodness shown him in the removal of his calamities, in his restoration to health, in the bestowment on him of double his former possessions, and in the lengthening out his days to an honorable old age. In his latter days his friends come around to cheer him in his declining years and make him honored in the earth.

A New Testament writer would have closed the book in some other way than with the recital of an abundant temporal recompensation, for it is certainly true that the New Testament regards the recompense of affliction and sore tribulations as belonging to the hereafter, and always points to those who suffer for Christ and the gospel to a future reward in heaven (Mt. 5:3, 10-12; 19:29; Mk. 10:29-30; Rev. 7:14). But it would be a one-sided inference from the conclusion of the book to regard it as a ministering to an external, temporal theory of retribution. That Job, after enduring to the end a trial of suffering of inexpressible severity should be rewarded with prosperity in this life and receive full

vindication, is first of all consonant with the spirit of the Old Testament people of God. In the next place, his conclusion harmonizes with the Old Testament stage of progressive revelation, in which the future life was but a mere shadow. Israel was promised earthly rewards; the Church anticipates heavenly recompense.

This close of the narrative has nothing to say of what took place in the hereafter after Job's arrival there, as was the case in ch. 2 when the reader was permitted a glimpse of the celestial realms. Neither is there any prophetic description of Job's entrance into the communion of the blessed. Rather, in natural freshness his restored earthly prosperity is pictured and purposely the wishes and hopes which Job had frequently uttered (ch. 17, 19) for vindication from God in the future life are eclipsed by the splendor of that which in part he enjoyed here on earth.

The question why Job had to suffer is never answered to him, and yet the conclusion is fitting. Without it the heart's need of the Old Testament believers would have found no true satisfaction. Limited to the anticipatory and typical faith of the Old Testament, they would not have been able to derive from the book true comfort and consolation. But God in His grace gave us this earliest of all biblical writings to answer one of man's most perplexing questions: Why must man suffer? and to demonstrate that unconditional

submission to God's holy will and child-like resignation to the heavenly Father alone bring true and lasting happiness.

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*An*  
*Irresistible*  
*Invitation*

A Grammatical  
Exegesis of  
Isaiah 55:1-7



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54.7 יִבְרַגְעִי קִמְוֹן עֲזֹבְתִיךָ וּכְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבְּצֶךָ :  
 5 בְּשִׁצְפִי קִצַּף הַסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רָגַע מִמֶּךָ  
 5 וּבְחֶסֶד עוֹלָם רַחֲמִיךָ אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ יְהוָה :  
 5 בְּיָמַי נָח נָאֵת לִי  
 54.8 אֲשֶׁר־י נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבְר מִרְנַח עוֹד עַל־הָאָרֶץ  
 5 בֶּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקִּצַּף עֲלֶיךָ וּמִגְּעַר־בְּךָ :  
 54.9 כִּי הָהָרִים יִמוּשׁוּ וְהַגְּבָעוֹת תִּמְוָטְנָה  
 5 וְחִסְדֵי מֵאֲתָךְ לֹא־יִמוּשׁוּ וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט  
 5 אָמַר מִרְחֹמֶיךָ יְהוָה :  
 54.10 עֲנִיָּה סַעֲרָה לֹא נִחַמָה  
 54.11 הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִרְבִּיץ בַּפּוֹלִי יֵאֱבֹלֶךָ וַיִּסְדַּתִּיךָ בַּסְּפִירִים :  
 5 יִשְׁמַתִּי כְּכַד שִׁמְשֹׁתִיךָ וְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לֹא־בִנְיָ אֶקְדַּח  
 5 וְכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ לֹא־בִנְיָ חֶפֶץ :  
 5 וְכָל־בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹתֵי יְהוָה  
 5 וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ :  
 5 רַחֲמֵי מַעֲשֶׂךָ כִּי־לֹא תִירָאִי וּמִמְחַתָּה כִּי־לֹא תִקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ :  
 5 הֵן גּוֹר יִגּוֹר אִפְסֵם מֵאוֹתֵי מִי־גַר אֲתָךְ עֲלֶיךָ יִפּוֹל :  
 54.12 הֵן אֲנֹכִי בְּרֵאתִי חֶרֶשׁ נִפְחָ בְּאֵשׁ פָּחִם  
 5 וּמוֹצִיא כְּלִי לְמַעֲשָׂהוּ וְאֲנֹכִי בְּרֵאתִי מִשְׁחִית לְחַפְלִי :  
 54.13 כִּי־לֹא יִצְרַר עֲלֶיךָ לֹא יִצְלַח וְכָל־לְשׁוֹן תְּקוּם־אֲתָךְ לְמִשְׁפָּטֵי  
 5 זֹאת נִחַלְתָּ עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה וְצַדִּיקְתָּם מֵאֵתִי נֹאֵם־יְהוָה :  
 54.14 הוֹי פֹּלֵצֵי־לֶבַע לְכֹו לְפָנִים וְאֲשֶׁר אֵין־לֹו יִכְסֹף לְכֹו־  
 54.15 שִׁבְרוּ וְאֵבְרוּ יִלְכּוּ שִׁבְרוּי בְּלֹא־כֶסֶף וּבְלֹא מַחִיר יִין וְחֶלֶב :  
 54.16 לָמָּה תִשְׁקַלְדוּ כֶסֶף בְּלֹא־לֶחֶם וַיִּגְשַׁעְכֶם בְּלֹא לִשְׁבַעַה  
 5 שְׁמַעוּ שְׁמוֹעֵי־אֵלִי וְאֵבְרוּ־טוֹב וְתַתְּעַנְגוּ בְּדָשׁוֹן נִפְשֵׁכֶם :  
 54.17 הִטּוּ אָזְנוֹכֶם וּלְכֹו אֵלַי שְׁמַעוּ וְתַחֲיוּ נִפְשֵׁכֶם  
 5 וְאֶכְרַתְהָ לָכֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם חֶסְדֵי דוֹד הַנְּאֻמִּים :

VERBAL  
 COMPOUND SUBJECT

Cp 54, 7 \* 53 || 11 \* Var<sup>Ka</sup> וַיִּסְדַּתִּיךָ || 16 \* K הֵן Q תִּנְהָה || Cp 55, 1 \* 2 \* > 5<sup>b</sup> (\*).

8 \* 1 ft בְּשִׁמְפָה || 9 \* sic C pc MSS ΣΘΣΣ; L mlt MSS כִּרְמִי || 1 \* c 5 בְּאֵי || 11 \* 1  
 בְּנִיךָ (cf 5 δὲ θρακα) || 13 \* 1 prb בְּנִיךָ || 14 \* trsp ? huc :  
 בְּנִיךָ || 15 \* 1 sed v 15 frr crp || 17 \* add ? || Cp 55, 1 \* 1 \*  
 2 \* trsp ante שמעו in 3.

c 1 מִנְכֵי || 13 וְסוֹדוֹתֶיךָ || סוֹדוֹתֶיךָ || 11 וְהַמְּוָטְנָה || 10 עֲלֶיךָ post עוד + 9 || וְחִסְדֵי  
 supra add pr וְאֲנֹכִי || 16 יִפּוֹלוּ || גַּר pr יִגַּר || מִי־גַר || 15 בְּכִנְךָ || 2 כְּבָר || Cp 55, 1 > || תְּרַשְׁעוּ  
 שְׁמַעוּ pr שְׁמוֹעֵי || (ל >) שְׁבַעַה || 2 וְאֵבְרוּ וְלֹא שְׁבַר > || Cp 55, 1 || תְּרַשְׁעוּ

50 ב יהו עד לאומים נתתיו נגיד ומצוה לאמים:  
 4 ב יהו גוי לא תדע תקרא וגוי לא ידעוך אלקיך ירוצו  
 1 ב למען יהוה אלהיך ולקדוש ישראל כי פאחד:  
 1 ב ודרשו יהוה בהמצאו קראהו בהיותו קרוב:  
 ויעוב רשע דרכו ואיש און מחשבתיו  
 50 ב ב ב ב וישב אל יהוה וירחמהו ואל אלהינו פירכה לסלוח:  
 50 ב כי לא מחשבתי מחשבתיכם ולא דרכיכם דרכי נאם יהוה:  
 5 כר גבהוי שמים מארץ בן גבהו דרכי מדרכיכם ומחשבתיו  
 10 כי כאשר ירד הגשם והשילג מן השמים וממחשבתים:  
 ח ושמה לא ישוב כי אם הרונה את הארץ  
 והולידה והצמיחה ונתן זרע לזרע ולחס לאכל:  
 11 בן יהוה דכרי אשר יצא מפי לא ישוב אלי ריקם  
 3 כי אם עשה את אשר חפצתי והצליח אשר שלחתי:  
 12 ב ב כר בשמחה תצאו ובשלום תוכלון וכתו  
 5 ההרים והגבעות יפצחו לפניכם רנה וכל עצי השדה ימחאו:  
 13 ב תחת הנעצוץ יעלה ברזש תחת הסרפר יעלה הגם  
 1 כס ונתן ויהוה לשם לאות עולם לא יכרת:

56 כס 1 יכה אמר יהוה שמרו משפט ועשו צדקה  
 ב כר קרובה ישועתי לבוא וצדקתי להגלות:  
 2 כס 2 אשרי אנוש יעשה זאת ובן אדם יחניק בה  
 3 שמר שבת מחללו ושמר ידו מעשות כל רע:  
 ב ואל אמר בן הנבר הנלוה אל יהוה לאמר:  
 ב הבדל ימנעלני יהוה מעל עמו  
 4 ואל אמר הסרים הן אני עץ יבש: כר כה ואמר יהוה  
 ב לפריטים אשר ישמרו את שבתותי  
 5 ב ובחרו באשר חפצתי ומחויקים בכריתתי:  
 5 ונתתי להם בביתי ובחומתי יד ושם  
 טוב מבנים ומבנות שם עולם אתן לוי אשר לא יכרת:

4 \* 3 - | x3 \* mlt MSS Q Vrs | ות' Cp 56, 3 \* > 6.  
 4 \* 1 c Vrs לעמים | 5 \* dl גוי | 9 \* 1 frt c Vrs כנבואה | 10 \* 6 לאכל, frt recte |  
 Cp 56, 2 \* 1 | נירז | 3 \* 1 | 5 \* 1 c Vrs | 5 \* 1 -  
 | תכלון pr חלכו 12 \* | אשר ante חא + 11 | לאכל 10 | יגברז pr כוטה 9 | ירוץ | רעה 5 | רעה 4  
 | ואל pr אל 3 | כה ante כא + 1 Cp 56, 1 | לאח ולשם (+ ו) invers | ויהוה pr ודיו | 2 דתח pr ודח 13  
 | לו pr לכה | ומבנות pr ומן כוטה 5 | וסררו pr וסררו 4 | ון אני pr רעה אנו

AN IRRESISTIBLE INVITATION

ISAIAH 55:1-7

TRANSLATION:

- 1) Ho, every thirsty one,  
    come to the waters  
and he who has no silver (money)  
    come, buy, and eat; and  
    come buy without money and without price wine and milk.
- 2) Why will you weigh money for (that which is) not bread, and  
    your labor for (that which is) not satiety?  
Rather hearken unto me  
    and you shall eat that which is truly good  
    and your soul shall enjoy itself in fatness.
- 3) Incline your ear and  
    come unto me;  
    hear so that your soul shall live and  
    I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
    even the sure loyal love of David.
- 4) Lo, (as) a witness of nations I have given him,  
    a chief and commander of nations.
- 5) Lo, a nation (that) you know not you will call and  
    a nation (that) have not known you shall run unto you  
    for the sake of Yahweh your God and  
    for the Holy One of Israel

because he glorifies you.

6) Seek Yahweh while he may be found,

Call upon him while he is near.

7) Let the wicked forsake his way and

the man of iniquity his thoughts, and

let him return unto Yahweh

and he will have mercy on him,

and to our God,

because he will multiply pardon.

## ANALYSIS OF CLAUSES

Code:

All clauses are verbal.

s--subject

o--object

v--verb

m--modifier (incl. adv.)

Vs. 1: s/v/m

s/v

v/(s)

v/(s)

v/(s)

v/(s)/m/o

Vs. 2: v/o/m

(v)/o/m

v/m/o

v/o

v/m/s

Vs. 3: v/o

v/o

v/(s)

v/s

v/m/o/m

Vs. 4: o/m/v

o/m/(v)

Vs. 5: o/m/v

o/m/v/m

v/s

Vs. 6: v/(s)/o/m

v/s/o/m

Vs. 7: v/s/o

(v)/s/o

v/(s)/m

v/(s)/o

(v)/(s)/m

v/(s)/o

## INTRODUCTION

### The Last Chapters of Isaiah

The last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah are a poem. They are a Messianic Poem. Their ever-recurrent subject is the coming Christ, the redemption of Israel, and the ultimate consummation. The chapters are closely related to each other in a well-knit unit and form the greatest Messianic poem in the Bible. They form three groups of nine chapters each, the end of each group being marked off by the same solemn refrain of warning (48:22; 57:21; 66:24). The greatest of all the O. T. passages concerning the atonement of Christ, Isaiah 53, forms the middle chapter of the middle nine. At the very center of this tremendous Messianic poem God has put the Lamb.

In the first group of these nine chapters the supremacy of Yahweh is emphasized. In the second group it is the Servant of Yahweh. In the third group the emphasis falls on the challenge of Yahweh. The passage under discussion lies in the second group. The Servant of Yahweh, as the personal Messiah-Redeemer who was to come, is clearly seen in 52:13-53:12. Springing from this, in chs. 54 and 55 we have the restoration of the nation Israel and the reigning Christ as Davidic leader and commander.



The Limited Context of the Passage

No doubt the immediate application of this passage is to the exiled nation in Babylon. The captives are summoned from their vain attempts to find satisfaction in the material prosperity realized in the exile, and to make their only true blessedness their own by obedience to God's voice. As is evident from 55:2, Isaiah sees with prophetic vision that the Jews in Babylon have expended much money and time to gain prosperity and riches. Consequently there was the danger that they would forsake Yahweh, would become too deeply rooted in this foreign land, would follow the pagan gods, and refuse to return to their homeland.

The passage is to cheer them in their painful captivity by the prospect of what should yet occur under the Messiah who was to come. The main thought is that the effect of the work of the Redeemer would be to lay the foundation for a universal and irresistible invitation for men to come and be saved. So ample would be the merits of His death (ch. 53), so full and universal the design of the atonement, so rich the provision of mercy, that all might be invited to come and all might come and partake of eternal life.

I. THE DIVINE INVITATION: COME (1-3)

Universal Call

Vs. 1: "Ho, every thirsty one, come to the water, and he who has no silver (money) come, buy, and eat; and come, buy without money and without price wine and milk."

The וּ is designed to call attention to the subject as one of importance. It is more than a mere particle of invitation which Luther translates as "wohlan!", Gesenius as "auf" and De Wette as "ha!" The particle is to be taken in the usual and strict sense as expressing pity for the exiles: Alas!--as in Zech. 2:10-11 (Alexander, p. 324-325). Yahweh expresses His sorrow for the unsatisfied thirst and the toilsome labor which fails to satisfy.

To the weary captives water, bread, wine, and milk are offered. The first and third line invite the thirsty and hungry to drink water and eat bread; the second and fourth lines say that this can be accomplished without payment. Then the fifth line adds wine and milk as freely offered gifts.

The invitation here is made to all. "Every one" (כָּל) is entreated to come. It is not made to a part. It is not offered to the elect only, nor to the rich and noble alone but to all. But needless to say, it is equally true that only those will come who are truly thirsty and hungry and see their need. Wine, water, bread, and milk are figurative representations

of spiritual revival and nourishment. Water, milk, and wine are all beverages of a simple civilization, differing in their operation, but are all precious to a thirsty palate. Water revives, milk nourishes, and wine gladdens and inspires. Expressed is the idea of refreshment, nourishment, and exhilaration (Maclaren, p. 135).

### To the Thirsty

When Yahweh summons the thirsty ones of His people to come to the water, He must refer to something more than the water to which the water carriers in the East even today call: "O thirsty ones, water!" אֵלַי is not properly a participle (thirsting), but a verbal adjective (thirsty). The combination of the singular אֵלַי (every one) with the plural verb (come you) may be either an idiomatic licence, or intended to extend the call to every individual. The latter view is more probable. Waters, floods, overflowing streams, or showers are often used in the Scripture to denote abundant blessings from God and especially the blessings which would exist under the Messiah (Isa. 35:6; 43:20; 44:3).

God's invitation ever meets man's specific need. The Lord accomodates His ministry to human necessity. When men are thirsting for water He does not offer them sublime visions of the future, or profound expositions of doctrine. This offer of spiritual water and abundant blessings is made even today (Rev.

22:17).

### To the Hungry

Three times in v. 1 בָּרָא appears. It is used in the sense of "come!" rather than "go!" for the one speaking possesses the things to which He invites. The second invitation receives an addition to that of the first. Not only the thirsty shall be satisfied who might have money, but also the poor without money. They shall be filled. The בָּרָא בָּרָא is therefore a second subject of בָּרָא and a further identification of בָּרָא. The וְ before בָּרָא also may consequently be translated "indeed." In the third invitation with בָּרָא, בָּרָא בָּרָא, a third subject is found, namely that of hunger and its correlate, bread.

The poor, those who would be unable to purchase salvation if it were sold--those who are without money--are exhorted to come, buy, eat. (The imperatives are placed first and in immediate succession to emphasize the magnitude of the offer). The imperative בָּרָא comes from בָּרָא which properly means "to break," "break in pieces," then to purchase grain or food, as that which is broken in a mill (Gesenius, p. 803). The word is used in this sense only here in Isaiah but is found in Gen. 41:57; 42:25.

### To the Needy

Actually, the thirsty, the hungry, and the needy are

one and the same group addressed. Each phrase only heightens the liberality of the giver and the graciousness of the gift. These needy persons are to come, buy, and eat without money and without price. מִן is a "price, hire," as that which is placed in front of one, "presented, offered" (BDB, p. 564).

This last clause enlarges on the first two in pointing out the greatness of the gift. This can be seen in (a) the rare use of לֹא with the predicates as an objective unconditional negation, thus, "non-money," "non-price." It is seen (b) in the repetition of synonyms: money, price; and (c) and in the reference to the object of the buying as "wine and milk."

There seems to be an incongruity in the invitation to buy without money and without price. But this apparent contradiction was intended by the writer to express in the strongest manner the gratuitous nature of the purchase. Wine and milk are combined, either as necessities or luxuries, by Jacob in Gen. 49:12. They are mentioned together in Cant. 5:1: "I have drunk my wine with my milk." Milk is the wine of infancy and wine is the milk of maturity (Lange, p. 640). Consequently, not only the necessary (water) but the most costly, most precious satisfaction is given to the one who desires it (wine). It is interesting to notice the significance of these two refreshments.

Wine.-- יַיִן was commonly used in feasts and indeed was an article of common drink. Here it is emblematic of the

blessings of salvation. Wine is usually spoken of as that which exhilarates or makes glad the heart (Jud. 9:13; II Sam. 13:28; Ps. 104:15) and it is possible that the image here may be designed specifically to denote that the blessings of salvation make men happy, or dissipate the sorrows of life, and cheer men in their troubles and woes.

Milk.--חלב in the Scriptures denotes that which nourishes or is nutritious (Deut. 32:14; Jud. 4:1; 5:25; Isa. 7:22; I Cor. 9:7). It is mentioned with honey in Cant. 4:11: "Honey and milk are under my tongue." The sense here is that the blessings of the gospel are fitted to nourish and support the soul as well as make it glad and cheerful.

This, then, is the universal call by Yahweh, extended to both rich and poor. Yahweh offers the blessings of salvation to all. Men need merely come and take.

#### Unprofitable Commodities

Vs. 2: "Why will you weigh money for (that which is) not bread, and your labor for (that which is) not satiety? Rather hearken unto me and you shall eat that which is truly good and your soul shall enjoy itself in fatness."

Next, the gratuitous blessings are contrasted with the costly and unprofitable attempts of mankind to gain the same end in another way. They did not refuse food, neither were they unwilling to buy it, but they mistook for it that which was not

nourishing and satisfying.

### Spiritual Famine

Vs. 2a: "Why will you weigh silver for (that which is) not bread, and your labor for (that which is) not satiety?"

Before money was coined, the precious metals were weighed, and hence, to make a payment is represented as weighing out silver. In this passage it is a poetic expression for paying, since in ordinary life undoubtedly coins were used at that time and the weighing was made only for larger payments and in trading with foreigners (Duhm, p. 385). They spend their money for לֹא-לֶחֶם, "not-bread." Such a negative expression joined by the use of לֹא may have a various antithesis, according to the context; a superius or inferius may be its antithesis. Thus in 10:15 לֹא-עֵץ is to be taken as "not-wood but something much higher." Isaiah gives here in v. 2 an evangelical statement of the free grace of God, of whose meaning and long range he was probably not completely aware. Not קָדְשׁ nor עֲמָלָה ("labor, toil" here probably the product of labor, riches, wealth; Isa. 45:14) cannot quench the spiritual famine, do not give שָׂבִיב וְשָׂבִיב, "satiety, fulness, satisfaction." Legal works do not satisfy or bring peace. They do not procure our wedding garment but only our own clothes with which one will be cast out (Matth. 12:12-13). What truly satisfies the soul comes from above and, not being of an

earthly nature, may be had even by one who is the most destitute of earthly things.

### Spiritual Food

Vs. 2b: ". . . rather hearken unto me and you shall eat that which is truly good. . ."

The imperative יִשְׁמַע followed by the infinitive absolute may variously be expressed in English as denoting "to hear diligently, attentively, by all means, or to purpose." Perhaps the best translation would be "rather hearken unto me." In these words is indicated the way to true satisfaction. It is the path of obedience by faith, for יִשְׁמַע includes the idea of comprehending (Ps. 19:4), obeying (Ps. 18:45), giving attention to (Isa. 46:3). Isaiah cannot mean the hearing with the outward ear, for Yahweh would not be satisfied with that.

The second imperative, יִשְׁמַע, which is connected with the first by a ו, is predictive (cf. 36:16; 45:22--Edel, p. 132): "Obey my words and trust my promises and you shall eat that which is truly good." The לֵיט is emphatic, meaning that which is truly good, in opposition to the non-bread, which seemed to satisfy but did not. The prophet returns to the image of the former verse. Their only prerequisite is to listen obediently and their spiritual hunger shall be satisfied.

### Spiritual Fulness

Vs. 2c: ". . . and let your soul delight itself in fatness. . ."



The third verb, לֵךְ יִשְׂמַח, because it is in the third person, is a jussive. (Feldmann, p. 183). לֵךְ יִשְׂמַח means to live softly and delicately and in the Hithpael stem "to delight oneself, be glad in anything," used even of sexual pleasure (Gesenius, p. 641). The term נֶפֶשׁ -- "soul" may have been used to show that the hunger and food referred to are not bodily but spiritual (Alexander, p. 525), but Feldmann is probably correct when he takes נֶפֶשׁ as the organ with which man enjoys things. שֶׁמֶן is fatness, abundance, luxuriance, here passing over into the figurative use of spiritual blessings (BDB, p. 206). Fat, by a figure common to all languages, is put for richness both of food and soil ("fat of the land" etc.; 5:1; Ps. 36:9; 63:6; Job 36:16). The spiritual blessings of the Messianic Kingdom are richer dainties than any that this world has to offer. The soul that obtains them "delights" in them and is satisfied with them (Ps. 17:15).

#### Underscored Commands

Vs. 3a: "Incline your ear and come unto me; hear so that your soul shall live. . ."

A series of three commands underscores the same offer Yahweh made in vs. 2. It is evident from this that the preceding two verses cannot have reference to literal food or bodily subsistence.

Attention: Incline

אָזְנֶךָ תִּשְׁטַח. The first command is that for paying attention. תִּשְׁטַח actually means "to stretch out or extent" but in the Niphal is also used of inclining downwards, especially of the ear (Jer. 7:24,26; 11:8 etc.) The picture of the command then is clear: "Get your ear in such a position that you can hear." A decided effort is implied. Yahweh says: "Pay attention!"

Appropriation: Come

Duhm (p. 385) takes this clause to read, "go to me" because the LXX has the translation of לֵךְ אַחֲרַי, but as in v. 1, it can well be taken again as "come to me," for it is God who possesses the spiritual blessings which are offered. And any who come may appropriate them. God is not satisfied with just one invitation.

Application: Hear

"Hear so that your soul shall live." Here again the word וְגַי necessarily suggests the thought of spiritual life and this sense is admitted here by Kimchi and Abarbend. Neither of the animal life nor of the appetite could it be said that it should live (Alexander, p. 326). Hearing God's commands and promises, obeying them, brings life. The ל can be taken as that of logical sequence or result: "so that." The

abbreviated form בְּיָמָי gives the future an imperative sense.

### Unconditional Covenant

Vs. 3b: ". . . and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure loyal love of David."

### Its Confirmation

The salvation and blessing which Yahweh brings is encompassed in an eternal covenant. Nothing is required on the part of Israel but hearing and coming and taking. The covenant is made in this case by a higher person in relation to a lower. This can be seen by the technical use of אִתְּךָ with the dative instead of with the customary לְךָ. The covenant has a twofold aspect. It is a promise in which the promiser binds himself with all the force of a covenant (as in 61:8; cf. II Chron. 7:18) and it includes the idea of a spontaneous offer (as in Ez. 34:2), seen in "the sure loyal love of David" (Delitzsch, p. 326).

### Its Content

The אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּנֶה לְךָ is an expression appended, as the closer specification of the object, to the idea of offering or vouchsafing implied in the expression "I will make with you an everlasting covenant." Because of the promisory nature of the covenant, one may legitimately translate "I will grant you."

It cannot be doubted that v. 3b rests on II Sam. 7:11ff.

In the future God will make good the solemn promises which He made to David. The transaction referred to here is that which is celebrated in Ps. 89:2-4:

For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever;  
Thy faithfulness wilt thou establish in the very heavens.  
I have made a covenant with my chosen,  
I have sworn unto David my servant:  
Thy seed will I establish for ever,  
And build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

The promises made to David included that the Messiah should be of his seed, and sit on his throne, and establish an everlasting kingdom (Ps. 89:2-5; 19-32), and triumph over death and hell (Ps. 16:9-10), and give peace and happiness to Israel (Ps. 132:15-18).

The promises to David are called נִפְּלָאוֹת, "sure ones," (Niphal participle) i.e. sure to be accomplished; or it might be rendered faithful, credible, or trusted. רַחֲמֵיךָ, a stative construct plural of רַחֲמִים, properly means kindness, good will, pity, compassion; then goodness, mercy, grace. Perhaps the term "loyal love" would be the best translation. The word order puts emphasis on the אֲנִי. Those that follow the invitation shall have a part in the blessings of the Millennium.

### Its Continuation

The whole expression denotes that the covenant made with David promised great favors and was not to be abrogated, but was to be perpetual. With all who embraced the Messiah, God would enter into such an unchanging and unwavering covenant--

a covenant promising mercy and one who was not to be revoked. The perpetuity of the covenant is based on its unconditional nature, the veracity of God, the solemn and repeated promise by God, and the express statement that the covenant would be □□iy. Its final fulfillment will be, as the following verses indicate, in the Millennium.

## II. THE DIVINE INDIVIDUAL: CHRIST (4-5)

### His Unequivocal Identification

Vs. 4: "Lo, (as) a witness of nations I have given him, a chief and commander of nations."

By ordinary rules of grammar, the pronominal suffix of לְיָדָיו (have given him) should refer to David; and so the passage is understood by Gesenius, Maurer, Hitzig, Ewald, Knobel, Delitzsch, and Cheyne. But, as Isaiah frequently sets aside ordinary rules of grammar, and as the position of the person here spoken of seems too high for the historical David, a large number of commentators, including Vitranga, Michaelis, Dathe, Rosenmüller, and Umbreit consider that the Messiah is intended (Spence and Exell, p. 329-330).

That indeed Christ is in view is seen by various factors. For one thing, the name David in v. 3 suggests Christ and in passages like Ez. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:5, David is named but the reference is clearly to Christ. Further, the interjection וְ has reference not to a past event but to one of either present or future. The וְ at the beginning of the next verse undoubtedly relates to the future and the change would be abrupt and the meaning obscure if v. 4 refers to David and the וְ were to be taken as past. Finally, David could not with truth be so emphatically styled the chief or leader of the nations. The foreign nations which he

subdued did not constitute the main part of his kingdom and the Scriptures always represent him as a theocratic king.

#### His Unsurpassable Administration

The emphasis in v. 4 is on the nations (גוים from גו) which are repeated without change of form. The essential meaning is the same as that of ch. 49:6. Messiah was sent as the Savior not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles. His relation to the latter is expressed by three terms.

#### As a Witness

In prophetic anticipation Isaiah sees Christ as an עֵד to the nations. This word has received various renderings. Rosenmüller translates it "monitor"--one whose office it was publicly to admonish or reprove others in the presence of witnesses. Jerome renders it "a witness." The LXX renders it "a testimony," (μαρτύριον); the Chaldee, "a prince" (גביר). The Hebrew word עֵד means properly a witness (Prov. 10:5-9), then testimony, witness borne (Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17), also, according to Gesenius, a prince, chief, legislator, commander. He adds the note that the common meaning "witness" can well be included in the above titles (p. 607). BDB makes it "witness," from reiterating, hence emphatically affirming (p. 729). The parallelism requires this sense--as one who stood forth to bear solemn testimony in regard to God--to His law, and claims and plans; and one who was therefore designated to be the instructor,

guide, and teacher of men. He is the great appointed witness for God, and thus He sustains the relation of the instructor and monitor of mankind (Barnes, p. 488).

Christ is that witness. He witnesses to the truth (Jn. 18:37); He witnesses against sinners (Mal. 3:5); and before Pilate witnessed a good confession (I Tim 6:13). The same office is ascribed to Christ in Rev. 1:5 and 3:14. As this witness, Christ carries out to the Gentiles the same gospel to whose believing acceptance Israel was summoned in vs. 1-3.

#### As a Leader

A לְפָנָי is a prince, a leader, a ruler. It is a general word comprehending even the royal dignity, as in I Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 13:14 etc. (Gesenius, p. 531). It is clear that לְפָנָי (from לְפָנַי, "in front") is properly the one in front, the foremost, and is therefore naturally used to signify a chief or leader. This title is expressly applied to the Messiah by Daniel (9:27) and the corresponding titles ἀρχων and ἀρχηγός to Christ in the N. T. (Acts 3:15; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 1:5), considered both as an example and a leader. Undoubtedly the idea of royalty is included, as the Chaldee equivalent "king" indicates. Christ is leader and king.

#### As a Commander

מְצַוֵּנִי is a Pual participle from the verb צִוָּה



which means to command. The title may be considered as equivalent either to "preceptor" or "commander," both derivatives from the verbs of the same meaning. Now as both meanings agree with the two first titles respectively, there is no reason why לְמַדְבַּר cannot combine both offices in one. However, since לְמַדְבַּר sometimes means to command in a military sense, but never perhaps to teach or give instruction, the idea of commander must predominate. This commander is the Son of Psalm 2 who will rule the nations with a rod of iron. In other words, the prophetic and regal aspects of the Suffering Servant of ch. 53 are here brought together.

#### His Unhindered Accessibility

Vs. 5: "Lo, a nation (that) you know not you will call and a nation (that) have not know you shall run unto you for the sake of Yahweh your God and the Holy One of Israel, because he glorifies you."

#### The Call Offered

The problem of this verse is whether the object of the address is the Messiah or Israel. The most natural interpretation is, that after speaking of the Messiah, Yahweh now turns to Him and addresses Him directly. If this be so, v. 4 could not refer to David, who in that case would be subject of the promises ages after his decease. At the same time, the facility with which the words can be applied to either the Messiah

or Israel, may be considered as confirming the hypothesis that although the Messiah is the main subject of the verse, Israel is not entirely excluded.

The interjection וַיִּקְרָא wants to direct the attention of the reader to the prediction of the future which is about to be made, namely the promise that the Gentiles should be called by Messiah to the fellowship of the gospel. The construction of the second וַיִּקְרָא with two plural verbs shows it to be collective. The prediction was fulfilled in part during Messiah's first advent, but it will find its final fulfillment during His Millennial reign. A people which He did not know, with whom He had until now no covenant, He would call. It was a nation that was strange to Yahweh and His laws, a nation that had not been regarded as His own people. The call is not only one of offering salvation but also a call to service (Job 19:16). The phrase recalls the words of Ps. 18:44: "a people whom I have not known shall serve me." Through His disciples Christ called all nations to Himself (Matth. 28:19); but this will be true in a much fuller sense in the Kingdom when Israel shall fulfill its calling of being a light to all the nations (Isa. 40:9 etc.).

#### The Call Obeyed

וַיִּקְרָא is usually used of non-Israelites and the attributive sentence limits the meaning solely to them (Feldmann,

p. 185). The nations are called by Yahweh through Israel, not so much as a master calls his servants but in the sense that a glorified nation attracts another. Although during this age this is not coming to pass, the Millennium anticipates an effective call to all the nations.

The וַיָּבֹאוּ is said to רָצוּ "to run" unto Christ. It will be a voluntary, spontaneous, joyous coming.

The cause for the coming.--God's kingdom will be enlarged by the addition of the וַיָּבֹאוּ and Israel's glory will be increased "for the sake of Yahweh. . . because he has glorified you." The וְעַתָּה, then, introduces the cause. וְעַתָּה is a pausal form. The pronominal suffix is third masculine singular instead of second feminine singular and has reference to Christ. The Piel form of וְעַתָּה (beautiful, ornamented) means to adorn. The apparent reason for the rushing of the nations to the Messiah is because of what Yahweh has done to Jesus Christ. He has glorified Him, adorned Him, made Him so lovely that the nations are irresistibly drawn to Him. This glory God the Father bestowed upon His Son by raising Him from the dead and exalting Him to a seat at His right hand in heaven (Acts 2:32-35; 3:13-15; Jn. 17:1,5). During the Millennium the glory of the Son of Man will no longer be concealed but fully revealed.

The cynosure at the coming.--The cynosure or center of attraction of this Millennial scene is וְעַתָּה וְעַתָּה. The preposition בְּ before וְעַתָּה takes here, as often, the place

of the preceding longer preposition (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל) (Duhm, p. 386). Verse 5b is designated as the object and goal of this running hither. They come, not for Israel's sake, who brought them the glorious news, but for the sake of Yahweh its God, and not to Israel but to the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah. But it is nevertheless a high and unique honor that Israel is favored with being the instrument of calling the nations to Yahweh. And the honor that Yahweh has for Israel has its own roots just therein. For this reason it is עַלְיוֹן כָּל הָעַמִּים ("high above all nation"--Deut. 4:6ff; 26:19; 28:1; II Sam. 7:23ff). "Salvation is of the Jews," (Jn. 4:22) and Israel is also repeatedly called directly the "witness of Yahweh (43:10; 44:8). The coming of the nations is graphically described in Isaiah 60:9-10:

Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of Jehovah thy God and for the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And foreigners shall build up they walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee.

### III. THE DIVINE IMPERATIVE: CONVERSION (6-7)

#### Unhesitating Concern

Vs. 6: "Seek Yahweh while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."

The passage before us details some of the hindrances or difficulties which actually oppose the "hearing" that the Lord has demanded in vss. 2-3.

#### Seek:

Yahweh implores the people to seek Him, because the first difficulty is that so many men are unable to make up their minds to lay hold, i.e. to respond to the Lord's call, and on their side to desire and seek what offers itself to them. Salvation is all of grace but it does not exclude human responsibility. The command is יִשְׁאָל, which means "to seek, enquire," but also denotes the applying oneself to anything, to practice anything, and the Ethiopic equivalent is used of composing a book studiously (Gesenius, p. 206). Thus the word signifies the obtaining of experimental knowledge and intimate acquaintance.

As usual, the וְ, when joined with the infinitive, is a particle of time. By a sudden apostrophe Isaiah now turns from the Messiah to those whom He had come to save and exhorts them to accept this salvation unhesitatingly. They are to come now

while there is time. Both this clause and the next one have a note of urgency about it.

### Call

"Call upon him while he is near." קִרְבֵּי is the infinitive absolute of קָרַב, meaning "to approach or come near." The Lord is not near and able to be found without limitation. The day of grace has limitations (Zeph. 2:2). At a certain point the Lord withdraws. Biblical illustrations of this abound. Esau reached a point where he found no more room for repentance though he sought it with tears (Heb. 12:12). At a certain stage people can no more believe as those who have slipped past the fateful "today" (cf. Heb. 3:7ff: 4:7 and the parables of the invited guests of Lk. 14:17ff and the laborers in the vineyard of Matth. 20:1ff).

This unhesitating concern for salvation is urged upon not only the Jewish exiles but the Jews and Gentiles of all ages, since the coming work of the Messiah is in view. That work was so full and ample that an invitation could be extended to all.

It is implied in this passage (1) that men are ignorant of God or unacquainted with Him; (2) that if men will obtain His favor, it must be wanted and thought. God does not impose Himself on men. (3) That the invitation should be made to all since all are sinners; and (4) that the knowledge of

God is of inestimable value. God's incessant inviting and urging could not be in regard to something worthless.

### Unqualified Conversion

Vs. 7: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and let him return unto Yahweh and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, because he will multiply pardon."

The second and foremost hindrance to believing is that men cleave too much to evil. They love it too much and their imagining and doing is directed to it. Hence the prophet commands that the wicked first of all forsake his way and the man of iniquity his thoughts. The similarity of this passage to Prov. 6:12,18 is striking.

### Repenting of Sins

Verse 7 expresses both sides of the μετάνοια--the forsaking of sinful selfishness (7a) and the return to God for salvation (7b). The jussive לִיּוּ from לָיו expresses a command (Greene, p. 320). With יָשׁוּב and לְדַרְכֵי וְשׁוּב individual sinners are in view, yet the address is made to all men since all are such. דַּרְכֵי--"way"--is a common figure for the course of life. What is meant is the evil way as Jeremiah calls it (56:1)--a habitually sinful course. לֹא is a negative expression, strictly meaning non-existence or nonentity. In a secondary moral sense it means the destitution of all goodness which is put, by a common Hebrew idiom, for the existence of

the very opposite. The וְאִישׁ שׂוֹנֵא is the man of unrighteousness, or, as Hendewerk translates, "der Mann der Missethat" (Alexander, p. 330). The word דְּבָרֵי, translated thoughts, is commonly employed, not to denote opinions, but designs or purposes, in which sense it is joined in a parallel construction with דְּבָרָיו, in order to express the whole drift of the character and life.

### Return to the Savior

This is the other side of μετάνοια, the positive side: a return to God. Man, in the Scriptures, is everywhere described as having wandered away from the true God. The prodigal son returned to his father's house; the man who loves sin chooses to remain at a distance from God. The return to God is encouraged with the expression אֱלֹהֵינוּ--"our God." To the Jew it would suggest motives drawn from the covenant relation of Yahweh to His people, while the Gentile would regard it as an indirect assurance, that even he was not excluded from God's mercy.

### Undeserved Compassion

#### Promise of Mercy

There is a paramount encouragement that the sinner should return to God. He will have mercy. With אֲנִי יְהוָה begins the apodosis containing the promise "then he will have compassion on such a one." אֲנִי speaks of tenderest affection,



compassion; it denotes gratuitous and sovereign mercy.

### Pronouncement of Pardon

The phrase וַיְכַפֵּר וַיַּכְפֹּר means literally "he will multiply to pardon." He will not pardon as if with niggardliness or reluctance, but will add pardon to pardon, forgiveness to forgiveness, as wave chases over wave over the face of the deep (Parker, p. 244). The words are not to be taken in a general sense (Ps. 130:4,7; Neh. 9:17) but individually, and to be translated in the future. וַיַּכְפֹּר means "to pardon, forgive," with the primary idea of lifting up, lightness (Gesenius, p. 588). This clause too is an apodisis, emphasizing the absolute certainty of forgiveness. The explicit promise that He will abundantly forgive is founded on the natural and obvious import of the terms and is imperatively required by the favorite law of parallel construction, in this case with וַיַּכְפֹּר.

A general promise of forgiveness of sin upon repentance and amendment of life was first given to Israel through Solomon (II Chron. 7:14). The doctrine is largely preached by the prophets but is nowhere more distinctly and emphatically laid down than here. God abounds in forgiveness. This is the conviction of those who are pardoned; this is the promise of inestimable worth which is made to all who are willing to return to God. On the ground of this promise all may come to Him; and none who come shall be sent away empty. "And let him that heareth say, Come!" (Rev. 22:17).

## CONCLUSION

Nowhere in the Bible is there found a passage more replete with rich invitations than this; nor perhaps is there anywhere to be found one of more exquisite beauty. While this precious passage remains in the book of God no sinner need despair of salvation who is disposed to return to Him: no one can plead that He is too poor, or too great a sinner to be saved; no one can maintain successfully that the provisions of mercy and pardon are limited in their nature or applicability to any part of the race. It is impossible to conceive of a language more universal than this and while this stands in the Bible, the invitation may be made to all, and should by made to all, and must by made to all. The call of God, the concern of God, and the compassion of God, when rightly understood by man, make this a truly irresistible invitation.

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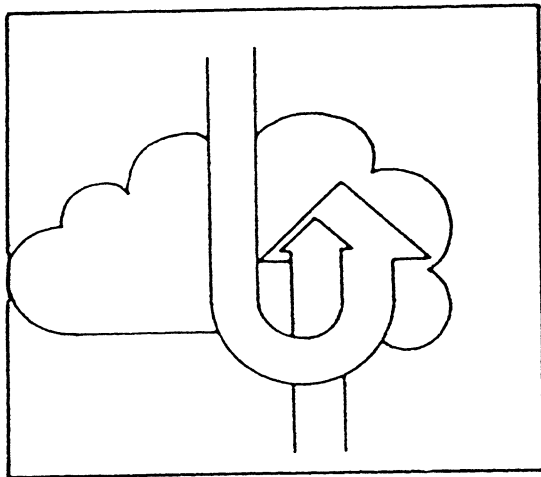
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# **The Rapture in the Thessalonian Epistles**

**Grammatical and Theological Considerations**



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

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## INTRODUCTION

The ministry of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians is remarkable in many particulars. According to Acts 17:1-10, Paul accompanied by Silas and Timothy had ministered in Thessalonica "three sabbath days" involving at least fifteen days and at the most twenty-seven days. In this brief period of time their ministry had been so effective that a small group of believers was formed. Paul had instructed them in the rudiments of the Christian faith, including the doctrine of the first coming of Christ as the promised Messiah and Savior, and the doctrine of the second coming of Christ attended by the resurrection of the dead, the rapture of the living, then finally the revelation of Christ and his reign. Paul left the Thessalonians because of persecution. However, he hoped to return to them soon. Because he was unable to do so, he wrote I Thessalonians to explain his absence. Further, he explains the nature of the return of the Lord, which had been troubling these believers, and discusses the matter of their suffering. This epistle was probably the first one that Paul wrote. It was written in the year A. D. 52. The second epistle was written soon after the first, likewise from Corinth. Its chief object was to correct an erroneous notion which had begun to prevail among the Christians at Thessalonica, that the appearance of the Savior and the end

of the world were at hand, as well as to protest against some practical misapplications of the belief.

Thus, the coming of the Lord is one of the central themes of the Thessalonian epistles. It is evident that Paul had taught these believers much concerning these truths, although his stay in this city had been brief. This fact accentuates the importance of this doctrine. And its relevance is also readily seen. As the test of orthodoxy is what one believes about the first coming of Christ, so the test of spirituality is: What do you believe about the second coming of Christ? A church that believes in the imminent personal return of the Lord will be on fire for God. It is the purpose of this paper to delineate this grand theme of the personal return of Christ for his own, as it is found in the pages of these two epistles.

## THE RAPTURE A PROMISE TO BELIEVERS

### I. THESS. 1:8-10

#### The Commendation of Paul

In the first portion of this epistle, the Apostle expresses his gratitude and joy on account of the manner in which the Thessalonians had received the gospel, and for their fidelity and constancy in the midst of persecutions and afflictions; vindicates the conduct of himself and his fellow-laborers in the preaching of the gospel, and declares his affectionate concern for their welfare.

The believers' work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope (v. 3) became evident to all the regions round about them. In their work of faith they had turned to God; in their labor of love they served God despite the persecutions; and in their patience of hope they awaited the return of Christ (vvs. 9-10).

In v. 8 their testimony is seen to be still sounding forth, as stressed by the perfect tense. The result of their complete change of life continue to influence the pagan society round about them. Their testimony is not only limited to Macedonia or Achaia, but extends to the whole known world, "in every place." The faith of the Thessalonians is so universally spoken of that the Apostle himself has no need to

say anything about it.

The γὰρ of v. 9 is explanatory. Anybody, both Christian and heathen, could tell that the Thessalonians had been converted, therefore Paul needed not say a word to anyone about them. The people of Macedonia and Achaia (where Paul was as he wrote the letter) speak continually of the example of these believers.

#### The Confirmation of Paul

In v. 10 Paul confirms their hope in the personal return of Christ: "And to constantly wait for his Son out from within the heavens, whom he raised up from among the dead, Jesus, the one who is delivering us out of the coming wrath."

#### The Character of the Hope

The Christian knows that the Lord Jesus is coming again because it is a precious promise. The present infinitive of ἀναπερω speaks of the daily watchfulness and expectation. A. T. Robertson rightly remarks that "the hope of the second coming of Christ was real and powerful with Paul as it should be with us . . . . He alludes to this hope at the close of each chapter in this epistle."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press), IV, 14.

### The Content of the Hope

The content of their hope was for the Son who would appear from heaven, It would be the bridegroom returning to receive his bride. It would be Christ the head returning to be joined to his body, the church.

### The Center of the Hope

Paul confirms in v. 10b that Jesus would deliver the believer from the wrath to come. There are two views in respect to this "wrath to come." (1) Some hold that it has reference to the Great White Throne, or the second death, or eternal damnation. However, the context speaks of the result of the resurrection of Christ. The believer has been delivered from the above judgments by the death of Christ. (2) The reference is no doubt to a deliverance from the tribulation period, "the day of wrath," because this deliverance depends on the resurrection and return of Christ.

The preposition ἀπο means "away," "away from," and the ablative case, the case of separation, gives the statement the meaning that we are separated from the coming wrath. τῆς ὀργῆς, "the wrath" points to a particular wrath of God. It is the holy anger of God poured out upon the wicked during the great tribulation. This same deliverance of wrath is mentioned in I Thessalonians 5:9 and Revelation 3:10 clearly establishes the fact that the believer will not only be kept

from the wrath, but he will be kept from the very time, "the hour" of temptation. When God's displeasure is unleashed upon the evildoers, the believer will be preserved and separated from this judgment, because the Lord would rapture his own first. This is the implied teaching of 1:10, further developed in the epistle.

## THE RAPTURE A PAROUSIA FOR BELIEVERS

### I. THESS. 2:19; 3:13

The two passages above refer to the παρουσία of Christ. They will illustrate that the term is non-technical in usage. Its meaning depends on the context. Three New Testament words are used to describe the coming of the Lord. They are παρουσία, ἀποκάλυψις, and ἐπιφάνεια. The context always determines their meaning. The former word means "presence," occurs 24 times, 16 of which it refers to our Lord's return. In 8 out of 16 it is used in connection with the coming of the Lord in judgment (Matth. 24:3, 27, 37, 39; I Thess. 5:13; II Thess. 2:8; II Pet. 1:16; 3:4), while the remaining 8 describe that aspect of his return connected with rewards, commonly called the rapture (I. Cor. 15:23; I Thess. 2:19; 4:15; 5:23; II Thess. 2:1; James 5:7, 8; I John 2:28).

The word παρουσία comes from παρα and ἔιμι -- "along side of" "to be", thus literally, "to be alongside of one," hence "to be by," "to be at hand," "to have arrived." The word was used of the arrival of a king or ruler who expected to receive his "crown of coming."<sup>1</sup> The Thessalonians, Paul says

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<sup>1</sup> John Lineberry, Vital Word Studies in I Thessalonians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), p. 65.

in 2:20, will be his crown, glory, joy when Jesus comes. The grammatical structure of v. 19 betrays the emotional intensity of Paul. The latter part of v. 19 is best taken as a parenthesis. Paul is looking forward to the arrival of Christ who will reward the faithful servants. The believer will be at hand at that time. This is an entirely different event in view in 3:13, some say. One view holds this to have reference to (1) the revelation of Jesus Christ as he appears with the saints and angels to judge the world at the end of the tribulation. But although it is possible that this may refer to this event, it can also be taken to refer to (2) the rapture. The context (4:13-18) speaks of the rapture. Also, the Church is exhorted to look for the rapture instead of the revelation, and "all his saints" seems to be defined by 4:14, 15, the "all" referring to the sleeping saints.

These two verses contribute to the understanding of the rapture in that they clearly teach that the believers' part in the rapture does not depend on his readiness. Rather, the Thessalonian Christians were well instructed that they should be ready, because the rapture was imminent, and that this anticipation should be an incentive for holy living and faithful witness.



## THE RAPTURE A PROBLEM TO BELIEVERS

### I. THESS. 4:13-18

#### The Problem

Timothy, after ministering to the Thessalonians, came back to Paul with good tidings. But he also brought back some questions which were beyond his understanding. These questions which troubled the Thessalonian believers are answered by the apostle in this section. One of the most important questions concerned the relationship of the translation of the living church to the resurrection of Christians who had died. It seems apparent that this issue had not been raised while Paul was with them. Their question was whether those believers who had died since Paul's departure, would be raised at the same time the living church was raptured, or whether this resurrection would take place at some later time. They had been filled with confusion and dismay at the thought of their departed fellow-believers being robbed of their part in Christ's return through the hand of death. Paul instructs these believers that they sorrow not because the departed believers shall share in the rapture. That this is so is amplified by the apostle with a preview, a promise, and a picture of the rapture.

The Preview

Whenever Paul uses the phrase, "I would not have you be ignorant, brethren," one can always be sure that the brethren were ignorant. And so in v. 13. But they needn't have been. Neither need they sorrow, because they have a preview of what the resurrection will be like.

"Them that sleep" in v. 13 refers to dead believers. The Lord used the figure of sleep to describe death for the saved person (John 11:11). The present participle can either mean "those that are lying asleep" or "those who fall asleep from time to time." At any rate, the metaphor suggests that a sleeping person will awake at some future time. As sleep is temporary, so death is only temporary. Therefore, there is no need for sorrow. Sorrow characterizes the heathen, comfort and anticipation the Christian.

In v. 14 the resurrection of Christ is said to be a preview of the believer's resurrection. Likewise, the truth of the Lord's return is tied in with the indispensable essentials of the faith, namely, that Jesus died and rose again. The εἰ γὰρ πιστεύομεν is not a conditional, hypothetical case, because the particle εἰ refers to a fulfilled condition. The translation is thus, "For in view of the fact that we believe." "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," refers to the fact that when Christ returns, he will be accompanied by the dead in Christ, whose souls and spirits

are with the Lord, while their body rests in the tomb. These will be rejoined at his coming.

The Promise

To assure the Thessalonian believers that their departed loved ones will not be at a disadvantage when Christ returns, he reminds them that the promise of Christ is clear, that the dead shall precede the living. This promise could either be an unrecorded saying of Christ (cf. Acts 20:35) or it may have come to Paul by direct revelation.

The word παρουσία in this v. 15 is most appropriate. In the Greek papyri this word is found with a semi-technical sense in that it is employed of the arrival of a royal visitor to a certain district, and includes the thought of the preparation occasioned by the visit. The term stresses the preparedness of the King's subjects as they anticipate the Savior's return.

Paul includes himself in the living ones at the time of the rapture. The ἡμεῖς in "we which are alive" is emphatic. It illustrates that Paul anticipated the imminent return of Christ during his lifetime. The time of it was unknown; no intervening prophetic events need to transpire. It could take place at any moment.

The latter part of the verse contains an emphatic double negative: "we shall positively not precede those who

have fallen asleep." This was the comfort the Thessalonians were waiting for. We shall not attain to the fellowship of Christ sooner than the dead in Christ, nor have precedence in blessedness.

### The Picture

Paul now supplies the details of what will happen when the Lord returns.

### A Return

We are introduced by the word "for" in v. 16 to a more detailed statement of this precious promise. One is immediately impressed with the emphatic position of the words αυτος ὁ κυριος -- "the Lord himself." The terminology furnishes indisputable proof that our Lord's return will be personal, and likewise suggests the thought that when he comes for his own, he will do so without any attendant, just as Isaac alone came forth to meet Rebekah when she came to be his wife. There will be no ethereal phantom, nor even a delegated representative, but the Lord himself. When he comes it will be with the symbols of monarchical majesty. The record reveals that three things accompany his return: (1) a shout, (2) a voice, (3) a trumpet.

A shout.--The Greek word translated "shout"--κελευσ-  
ματα, is used of the huntsman calling his dogs, of a chariot-driver speaking to his steed, and of the cry of the captain

to the rowers in a vessel.<sup>1</sup> This signal-shout apparently indicates that all the Lord's own will hear and understand it, though there seems no reason for believing that this will be true of the unbelieving world. It may be that unbelievers will hear the signal-shout, but, like those described in John 12:28, 29, they will not understand the significance.

A voice.--The ἐν φωνῇ ἀρχαγγέλου will herald the Lord's return. The greek word for "archangel" occurs in only one other place (cf. Jude 9), and while attempts have been made to identify the archangel as the Lord Jesus Christ, it appears from Jude 9 that this cannot be for two reasons: (1) the archangel is specifically called Michael, and (2) Satan is represented as being originally higher than Michael. It is significant that the definite article is omitted before either "voice" or "archangel". This places emphasis on the quality of the voice rather than on the person connected with it, so that discussion concerning the person of the archangel is beside the point here. The chief of the angelic hierarchy will carry out the will of God. Angels have the special part in God's work, especially towards the saints.

A trumpet.--A third accompanying feature of the Lord's return is that of "the trumpet of God." As Ellicott points

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<sup>1</sup> C. Ellicott, Commentary on the Epistles to the Thessalonians (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), pp. 63-64.

out, the genetive is best regarded as possessive,<sup>1</sup> and this, together with the fact that the definite article is omitted, indicates that it is such a trumpet as is employed in God's service. The trumpet was frequently associated with the Old Testament theophanies (e.g., Exod. 19:16, 19; cf. Heb. 12:19), so that it is not surprising that we should meet with it here on this climactic event. As in the Old Testament the trumpet was used to summon to battle and to summon to worship, so here the command will be, "Come and worship!" The liberated saints will be called to worship.<sup>2</sup>

Continuing the vivid discription of this event, Paul indicates that the dead in Christ shall rise first. The phrase οἱ νεκροὶ ἐν Χριστῷ undoubtedly refers to the sleeping ones of v. 13, though it certainly embraces all such throughout the church age. The monster of death cannot break the bond that binds us to the Lord. The despairing grief, so evident at Thessalonica, is completely unfounded.

This resurrection is not a select resurrection, even as the rapture is not a select rapture. The resurrection will include all the dead in Christ; it is not a resurrection of rewards but part of God's gift.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Prophecy for Today (Grand Rapids, Mich.: 1964), p. 30.

### A Rapture

V. 17 points out the immediacy of the event with ἐπιτα--"then" and this thought is further accentuated by ἄμα--"at the same time"--"we, the living, who are remaining, shall be snatched away." I Corinthians 15:42-44, 52-54 tells of the specific changes which the living and dead will undergo at that moment.

The word ἁρπάγησθε--"shall be caught up," means literally, "to take away by force" as a wild beast carries off its prey. The word is used 13 times in the N. T., and is used, for example, of one being pulled out of the fire (Jude 23); of Satan catching away the seed (Matt. 13:19); of Philip being caught away (Acts 8:39); and of Paul being caught up to paradise (II Cor. 12:2). The Lord's redeemed will be gathered to him, irrespective of every obstacle and the impeding law of gravitation.

This passage further indicates that the living, "together with them" (the dead), will be snatched away. It will be "together," at the same time and in the same manner. The "with them" undoubtedly implies a re-union and a recognition. The ἐν is locative and points to the clouds of heaven as the sphere. We shall meet the Lord in the atmospheric heaven and after his return enjoy eternal union and communion with him. Though not stated implicitly, it is plain that we will also be with our loved ones in Christ forever.

### A Reassurance

The verb παράκαλεω in v. 18 is in the present imperative. They are commanded to comfort continually. The pronoun is reciprocal, meaning that each one of them was to receive the spiritual encouragement from the other in talking about the return of the Lord. The truth of the rapture is a great consolation and expectation to the believer. Were the church to go through the tribulation, the exhortation might well be in that case: "Therefore scare ye one another with these words." But a deliverance from the wrath, a union with the departed believers, and an eternal communion with Christ are the basis of a comforting hope.

The passage above teaches clearly why the Thessalonians need not sorrow. The return of the Lord will effect a reunion of the body with the soul and spirit, thus making man complete again. Living believers will be united with those who have departed this life. And all believers will be reunited in visible manifestation with the risen and ascended Lord.



## THE RAPTURE A PRECEDENT TO THE DAY OF THE LORD

### I. THESS. 5:1-11

#### The Chronology of the Rapture 1-2

Immediately following the passage of the rapture of the church there follows a discussion of the question when these end events will be fulfilled. The exact time of the rapture cannot be established chronologically since it is not a subject of revelation. But by examining the relationship between the rapture and revelation certain facts become evident.

The Thessalonians were duly instructed by the Apostle Paul and his associates concerning the prophetic timetable of God. They knew that the rapture of the saints was next on God's program, followed immediately by the day of the Lord, which is that extended period after the rapture, beginning with the covenant of the beast (Dan. 9). It extends through the Millennial reign of Christ. Though some of its major events would not take place immediately, the period would extend from the rapture. Concerning the relationship of the rapture and the day of the Lord, Dr. Walvoord has written:

The coming of the Day of the Lord, therefore, is coincident with the rapture itself and for this reason the apostle discusses its arrival as if it were one and the same as the rapture of the church itself. Just as the Day of the Lord would come as a thief, so also the rapture. Though expected by those who believe in the doctrine of the rapture, it would come upon the earth in their state

of total unpreparedness.<sup>1</sup>

The day of the Lord comes "even as a thief in the night" because it will come suddenly, unexpectedly, as a prowling thief in the night, since the unregenerate, sleeping world is blinded through the deceitfulness of sin and Satan (II Cor. 4:4; I John 5:19), to the program of God.

### The Contrast With the Rapture 3-8

The rapture is timeless and signless; the day of the Lord is characterized by delusion and destruction. The second advent of Christ will be preceded by all the signs of the tribulation. When false security in the heart and false promises upon the lips hold men in their grip, at that very moment, judgment falls on the ungodly. As the rapture will deliver the godly; the day of the Lord will destroy the ungodly. The ὄλεθρος does not mean the destruction of being nor the putting an end to the existence of a person or thing, but its ruin so far as the purpose of its existence is concerned. In judgment the sinner suffers endless loss.

As the rapture will bring pleasure and peace, the day of the Lord will bring pain as of childbirth, "and the comparison involves inevitable certainty, suddenness, and intense pain."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Church in Prophecy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>C. C. Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 70.

In striking contrast to the miserable plight of the wicked, the Christian will escape the judgment day of the Lord, in view of the fact that he is not in darkness (v. 5). The sufferings of the Thessalonian Christians were not part of the day of the Lord. Paul writes that they "are not in darkness, that that day (of the Lord)" should overtake them. Post-tribulationists would take the term "not in darkness" as being synonymous with "not ignorant", but the contrast here is between: darkness--unsaved--Day of the Lord, and light--saved--rapture. The believer has no part in this judgment.

Paul then calls upon the believers to conduct themselves in a manner commensurate with their privileges and position in Christ. They are not to sleep as the others but to watch. It is most important to note that the apostle does not in any wise indicate that they will enter the day of the Lord with its judgments upon the world. Nor does the apostle hold before them the signs which would normally be included in a revelation concerning Christ's coming to establish his kingdom. They are exhorted to watch for the coming of the Lord himself and not for preceding signs. The idea thus is that the coming of the Lord is imminent and an event to be expected at any time.

The helmet of salvation's hope in v. 8 is that of the imminent return of Christ to rapture the church. The

Christian can expect future deliverance.

The Call to Watchfulness 9-11

Verse 9 is a summary of what the apostle has been discussing in the preceding verses of this chapter: "For God hath not appointed us to wratch, but to obtain salvation." In Revelation 6:17 the tribulation is described as a day of wrath, and the teaching is unmistakable that the church will have no part in this day. It is not a protection in the wrath but rather, this is not our appointment. Rather, the destiny of believers is to obtain σωτηριαν--"deliverance," not only from the guilt of sin or the present evil world, but that deliverance from the time of tribulation which will befall the Christ-rejecting earth (Rev. 3:10). How this will be accomplished has been described in 4:13-18.

The basis of this deliverance, as described in v. 10, is not the meritorious behavior of believers but the substitutionary death of Christ. The holy purpose of the Lord's redeeming death is whether we are alive or dead at Christ's appearing, we shall live with him in glory (Rom. 14:8). The expectation of the believer is therefore not wrath (v. 9) but the revelation of the Son from heaven.(v. 10).

As at the close of ch. 4, so here after the close of the discussion, the Thessalonians are exhorted to comfort one another and to build up one another, because the deliverance is sure. On the basis of the text, it cannot be otherwise.

## THE RAPTURE AND THE PERSECUTION OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

### II THESS. 1:3-10

#### Persistence Despite Persecution 3-6

Persecution seemed to be especially severe for the new believers in Thessalonica. Some of the Christians seemed to be asking the question, Why? Paul starts his letter with a strong commendation. They had persisted in their persecution as their faith and love continued to grow. Their constancy in trial was a testimony to all the other churches as well. These tribulations and persecutions were still continuing, for the word ἀνέχεσθε --"bearing" is in the present tense. Paul goes on to say that their trial is but for a season. Glory always follows suffering. For the unbelieving world, their sin and seeming well-being is followed by judgment. The faith working within the believers is a guarantee that God will keep his promise to deliver them and grant them a place in the kingdom.

#### Peace Despite Tribulation 7-8

In verse 6 Paul had stated the God will recompense affliction to the persecuters. In this section he stresses the blessed fact that God will give rest to the persecuted. This judgment of the unbelievers, so graphically described in these two verses, will take place at the second advent. The rest spoken of is therefore not that which comes to

believers at the rapture. While the believers are raptured before, they do not witness judgment of their enemies until the revelation of Christ, at which time they enter into the rest. The persecuters will reap that which they have sown and will receive everlasting destruction. It is eternal separation from the presence of God.

#### Punishment Versus Glorification 9-10

The coming of Christ will bring with it two things about which these believers needed to be instructed: (1) retribution upon the evildoers and (2) glorification of Christ. Vengeance on those who have not obeyed the gospel by receiving the Savior is meted out at his coming. But more than that. The Lord will be glorified in his saints. The ἐν<sup>1</sup> is a locative of sphere. The believers are the sphere in which Christ will find his glory at the revelation.<sup>1</sup> They themselves will have been already glorified. Their completely changed lives will draw attention to their Lord. These instructions are given to be an encouragement for the believers to continue steadfastly.

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<sup>1</sup>Robertson, p. 44.

## THE RAPTURE AND THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT

### II THESS. 2:1-17

#### Is the Day of the Lord Present?

Because of their persecutions, some of the Thessalonians had begun to wonder whether they were ~~not~~ already in the day of the Lord, the predicted time of divine judgment. Someone had tampered with Paul's doctrine (v. 3), professing to represent Paul. Thus there continued to be this confusion concerning the day of the Lord. But Paul shows that this teaching that they are already in the day of the Lord is false and groundless. He hastens to assure them that they are not in this period, and he gives them definite signs, which could not possibly occur while the church is still on earth.

The ἐνεστίν in v. 2 means "present" not "imminent." The day of the Lord is indeed imminent, but it was not yet present, despite the fact that the persecutions and the false teachers seemed to have pointed in that direction.

#### What Is the Relation of the Day of the Lord to the Man of Sin?

Paul gives two proofs that they are not in the day of the Lord. (1) There must first be a falling away. The word ἄποστασία (v. 3) may either refer to a departure from

the faith or a departure of the saints from the earth, as already mentioned in verse 1, but this is of little consequence. However, the likely interpretation is that it speaks of the aggressive and positive falling away from and rebellion against God. It is religious and spiritual defection.<sup>1</sup>

There will also first have to be (2) the revelation of the man of sin, or the lawless one (v. 3b), further described in Revelation 13. According to v. 5, Paul had already taught them these things, to expect just what Daniel had prophesied concerning this person, who is the personification of evil and the culmination of the opposition to God. Daniel relates (ch. 9) that the day of the Lord cannot begin till after this willful King has made a covenant with the people of Israel. This signing of the covenant will therefore signal the start of the tribulation period.

What Is the Relation of the Day of the Lord  
to the Restrainer?

In v. 6 there is a third reason why they are not in the day of the Lord. There is something which holds back the revelation of this man of sin. Until the obstacle is removed, the day of the Lord cannot begin.

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<sup>1</sup> Ellicott, p. 108.



Various views have been held as to the identity of this restrainer. Human government, law, the visible church will not explain this, for these will continue in a measure after the manifestation of the lawless one.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Ryrie writes concerning this restrainer:

Whoever the restrainer is, He must be more powerful than Satan, who empowers the man of sin. Only a person of the Godhead would so qualify, and since each and all of the persons of the Godhead indwell the believer (Eph. 4:6; Gal. 2:20; I. Cor. 6:19), the removal of the restrainer requires the removal of believers whom He indwells. Thus the rapture of the Church must precede this tribulation period when the man of sin holds sway.<sup>2</sup>

The most natural explanation of the taking away of the restrainer is to identify this particular action with the time when Christ will come to take out his church. The Spirit will be taken out of the world, and this means the reversal of Pentecost.

What Is the Relation of the Day of the Lord  
to the Unbelievers?

Unbelievers will be deceived by the man of sin. This is to be a judgment from God. Those who are deceived had opportunity to receive Christ. They will be hardened so that they will believe "the lie," i.e., that this man of sin is the Messiah who fulfills the covenants. Their end is damnation.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Co., 1961), p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> C. C. Ryrie, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 216.

## CONCLUSION

The coming of the Lord is one of the central themes of the Thessalonian epistles. The return of Christ for his saints is promised to the believers (I Thess. 1:10), it is held forth as the hope of all believers (I Thess. 2:19), and it is marked as the goal of holiness (I Thess. 3:13). Paul carefully describes the events accompanying the rapture (I Thess. 4:13-18) and relates it chronologically to the Day of the Lord (I Thess. 5:1-12). In II Thessalonians too the rapture is clearly taught, especially so in ch. 2, where three good reasons are given why the Day of the Lord will not start until the body of Christ has been removed: (1) the apostasy must come, (2) the man of sin must first be revealed, and (3) the indwelling Spirit will be taken away first. The tribulation therefore cannot come until Christ comes and takes his church home to glory.

It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,  
When sunlight thro' darkness and shadow is breaking,  
That Jesus will come in the fullness of glory,  
To receive from the world "His own."

It may be at mid-day, it may be at twilight,  
It may be, perchance, that the blackness of midnight  
Will burst into light in the blaze of His glory,  
When Jesus receives "His own."

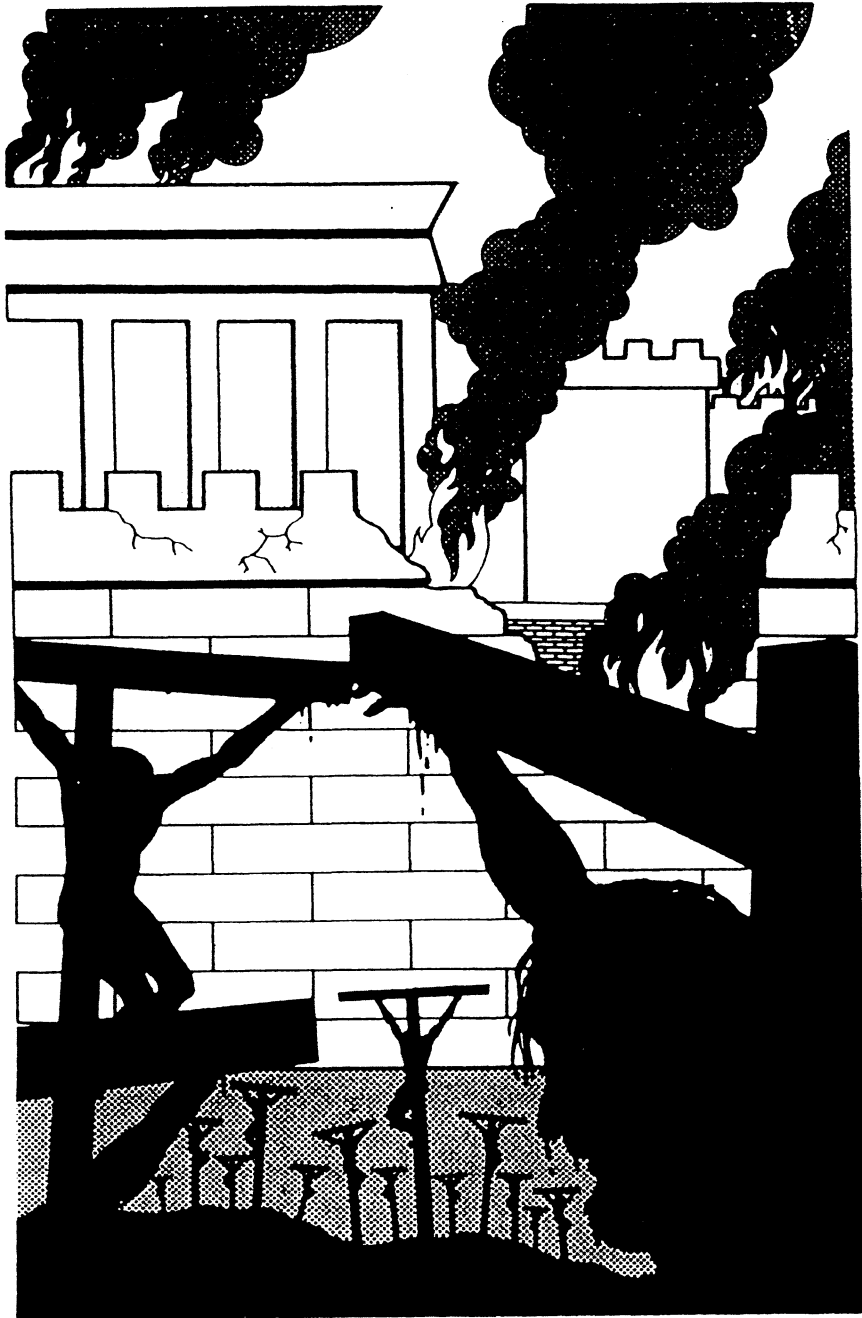
O Lord Jesus, how long, how long  
Ere we shout the glad song,  
Christ returneth! Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Amen, Hallelujah, Amen.

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# *An Outline Study of the Tribulation*



"FOR THEN SHALL BE GREAT TRIBULATION"

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## INTRODUCTION

The Jews have always had a special place in the sovereign program of God. Ever since the time of Abraham, the Father of the Jews, until the close of the first century A. D., there have been revelations of God's dealings with His people. Many prophecies were fulfilled accurately in ages past. Other prophecies, however, still point to the future and indicate what is to happen to the Jewish people in days to come. One of these predictions--the backbone of prophecy--is found in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel. Here is a time-table of seventy weeks given, which encompasses the course of the Jewish nation from Daniel's time up to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Sixty-nine weeks of that seventy-week period have already been fulfilled. There remains yet one week, commonly known as the seventieth week of Daniel or the Tribulation. This prophetic week of seven years shall be considered in the form of an outline study. Though a more detailed study of any one aspect of this period might be desirable, the writer wishes to make this paper of practical use for his future ministry. Furthermore, a study of some aspect of this prophetic revelation becomes only then intelligible, when it is seen in its general context and perspective.



## CHAPTER I

### THE MEANING OF THE TRIBULATION

The tribulation may be defined as a specific and definite period of judgment which will occur in the final phases of Israel's earthly history and will affect not only Israel but all existing Gentile nations, as well as apostate Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Terminology of the Tribulation

General meaning.--The word "tribulation" is derived from the Latin "tribulum" which means threshing-sledge. This term is used in the Bible both in a general and a specific sense.<sup>2</sup> In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul teaches that one of the benefits of justification is that the believer can glory in tribulation, for he knows that it is conducive to patience. The idea here is that of any trial or affliction.

Specific meaning.--Much Scripture could be cited to support the specific usage. Matthew and Luke, in their respective records of the eschatological discourse of the Lord,

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<sup>1</sup>William F. Foster, Class Notes in Systematic Theology, "Eschatology," p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Feinberg, Premillennialism or Amillennialism? (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1936), p. 125.

reveal a time of tribulation at a definite point in the history of the world and particularly that of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

Jeremiah speaks of the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). We note three things of this period. First of all, it is to be future from Jeremiah's time. Also, the trouble is to be unprecedented in nature, and finally, Israel shall experience salvation during this time.

Another term used in the Old Testament of the tribulation is the word "indignation" (Isa. 34:2). This term is the characteristic Old Testament term, as "wrath" is in the New Testament. Both are technical terms referring to the expression of God's wrath upon all the unregenerate world. This judgment is to be universal.

Christ employs the term "great tribulation" (Matt. 24:21) in describing this period of time, with a more specific reference to the last forty-two months. This period cannot begin until the abomination of desolation is revealed and will be terminated with the second advent of Christ.

The "great day of wrath" of Rev. 6:17 and 16:19 refers to the same period of time but indicates the active expression of God's anger against the unregenerate.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lorraine Boettner, The Millennium (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1958), p. 256.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), IV, 360-361.

The Purpose of the Tribulation

A time of purification for Israel.--God has an abiding purpose for the nation of Israel, but this purpose cannot be accomplished until the Israelites turn to their Messiah (Dan. 9:24). God has always blessed obedience and cursed disobedience, and this principle shall continue (Deut. 28:1-2, 15). Because Israel has rejected her Messiah she will be punished for the purpose of purging (Jer. 30:7-9).

A time of separation for the apostates of Israel.--The time of separation is clearly forecast by the prophets Isaiah (10:21-22) and Zechariah (13:8-9). Zechariah writes:

And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God.

This passage clearly indicates that only a remnant of Israel shall return and about two-thirds of the nation will be cut off.

A time of judgment for the Gentiles.--During the tribulation the Gentiles of the world will be judged (Rev. 6:15-17; Isa. 24:1-11). All the judgments predicted for this time--the seals (Rev. 16:1-17), the trumpets (Rev. 8 and 9),

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations from the English Bible are from the King James Version.

and the vials (Rev. 16:1-21)--will be poured out upon the Gentiles as well, for they have also rejected Christ. God's judgment will fall upon all who blaspheme the name of God and fail to give Him the glory.

#### THE DURATION OF THE TRIBULATION

It cannot be definitely proven that the time of Jacob's trouble, the period which is designated as the tribulation throughout this paper, starts immediately subsequent to the rapture. There may be an intervening time of preparation, during which the man of sin increases in power and might. He finally will be revealed for what he is when he makes a covenant with many of the Jewish people. This signals the start of the tribulation. According to Daniel 9:24-17, this period will be approximately seven years in duration. Matthew writes (24:27) that this time will be shortened a little, or perhaps pass by more quickly for the elect's sake. Daniel's prophecy of the sixty-nine weeks ended when Christ died and the last week is still future. Each week, as has already been confirmed by history, is seven years in duration. Daniel 9:27 confirms the fact that the tribulation is yet to come:

And [the prince that shall come] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The division of the period.--Daniel also indicates in the quote just given, that the tribulation is divided into two equal parts. The latter half of this time is the "great tribulation" and is also called "time, times, and a half" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7), "forty and two months" (Rev. 13:4-7), and "a thousand two hundred and three score days" (Rev. 12:6). It is therefore evident that the tribulation is approximately seven years in duration and is divided into two equal parts.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of the period.--The last three and a half years are marked by judgments of unprecedented severity. Matthew writes that "then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (24:21) and then adds that "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (24:29-30). Christ's return with power and great glory will mark the end of this period.

#### The Cause of the Tribulation

Those who insist that the Church will go through the tribulation claim that the period is only one of intensified

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Caldwell Ryrie, The Basis of Premillennial Faith (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), pp. 139-140.

persecution. Ladd writes the following along these lines:

The final Tribulation will be the most fearful the world has ever seen, but the difference will be quantitative and not qualitative . . . . The sufferings which will be inflicted by the Antichrist will be more fearful than anything previously experienced, yet they are not different in kind from all the tribulation and persecution of the ages.<sup>1</sup>

The following discussion will show that there is indeed a qualitative difference between former tribulations and the tribulation immediately prior to Christ's return.

The development of human iniquity.--Evil, vice, and idolatry shall get worse and worse. Even in John's day there was the development of the spirit of lawlessness (I John 2:18). This spirit of lawlessness shall reach its climax when the restrainer is removed (II Thess. 2:7), and there will be no more deterrent of sin.

Coeval with the removal of the restrainer of lawlessness there develops a widespread mental deception, which comes upon the people as a result of the rejection of the truth (II Thess. 2:10-11). Having rejected the one of whom the truth speaks, the people will plunge into unprecedented religious apostasy and idolatry (Rev. 13:4). The direct result of this will be gross moral degeneracy (Rev. 20-21) and volitional impenitence (Rev. 9:20, 16:9), which always follow

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<sup>1</sup>George Eldon Ladd, The Blessed Hope (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), pp. 128-129.

the rejection of God's truth.

The intervention of satanic power.--Satan is the one who contributes most to the development of human iniquity. At the middle of the tribulation God will cast him out of heaven and his activities will be confined to earth (Rev. 12:7-9). He will be given the power to unleash the demonic forces, thus there will be the multiplication of demonic activity (Rev. 9:1-11). Simultaneously there will be the energizing of the antichristian beast, which shall have control of all the world's affairs (Rev. 13:14). Satan will then do everything in his power to persecute and kill the redeemed saints.

The outpouring of divine wrath.--The period of tribulation is a time when God's wrath is poured out upon the earth. This is not done today. The wrath of God upon a rejecting world arises out of two separate punishments of God mentioned in II Thessalonians 2:7-8 and Revelation 16. The removal of the Holy Spirit as the restraining influence upon sin and the infliction of direct punishment upon earth shall cause conditions more catastrophic than this world has ever seen. Each of the actions in the book of the Revelation originates in heaven; God is directly responsible for them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Foster, p. 9.

The Companies of the Tribulation

One more point to be considered in this chapter is who the people are who will endure this period of intense wrath. This is a point of great controversy, especially as relates to the Church, which many believe will have a part in the tribulation. Unfortunately, because of the limits and purpose of this paper, the opposing views can only be briefly touched upon. One point is certain, those who adhere to the pretribulational rapture of the Church do not do so because of their own wishful thinking, as Ladd charges.<sup>1</sup> Their doctrine of the rapture is not based on their desire that they do not want to suffer the great tribulation.

The Church.--The Church is promised deliverance from the wrath of God. Romans 5:8 and other passages give ample proof the Christ Himself bore the wrath and judgment of God for those who are in Christ. The antithesis of I Thess. 5:9 proves this conclusively: "For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Suffering is often the portion of Christians, but not wrath! Wrath has been reserved for unbelievers. So it may confidently be stated that the Church will be in heaven with her Savior.

Repeatedly reference has been made to the restrainer

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<sup>1</sup>Ladd, p. 164.



who will be removed before the tribulation can begin. Only someone more powerful than Satan can restrain the forces of evil and thus it is pretty clear that the restrainer is God. The God-indwelt Church is the instrument of restraint, and when the indwelling Holy Spirit is removed, all believers are withdrawn also, since they cannot be "disindwelt."<sup>1</sup> The tribulation starts therefore upon only the unregenerate of mankind.

The Gentiles.--For the Gentiles, the tribulation marks the close of the period called the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), which started with the Babylonian captivity, when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians. Frightful judgments will be poured out upon the Gentiles, their cities, and civilization, leading to a complete doom just prior to the return of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The elect.--The saved or elect of the tribulation period are those Jews and Gentiles, who have probably never heard the Gospel previously, and who then shall turn to Christ for salvation. They are said to be "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people," (Rev. 7:9) who because of the extreme suppression of

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Caldwell Ryrie, First and Second Thessalonians (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), pp. 111-112.

<sup>2</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 315.

religious freedom and increased persecution during the last forty-two months, will for a large part die a martyr's death.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRIBULATION

#### The Inauguration of the Tribulation

The revelation of the Lawless One.--Although the tribulation is only seven years in duration, it will nevertheless be a period of great and concentrated activity. The visible sign for the start of the tribulation is the revelation of the Antichrist. The Scriptures give him several designations.

His names primarily reveal something about his character. Though he is spoken of as Antichrist (I John 2:18-20), this has reference to his spirit of error rather than the person. Daniel calls him "the little horn" (Dan. 7:8), and he is seen to be the final leader of the fourth empire. Also he is foreseen as the prince (Dan. 9:16-17) and the willful king (Dan. 11:26). In the New Testament he is called the "man of sin" (II Thess. 2:3) and "the beast out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1). Posing as Christ, Antichrist will oppose Christ.<sup>1</sup>

This individual will possess an extremely enigmatic character. Except for Jesus Christ, he will be the most

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<sup>1</sup> Everett F. Harrison (ed.), Baker's Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 46.

remarkable person the world has ever seen. From some of the verses already referred to, it can be seen that he will be the very incarnation of religious error and moral evil. Not only will he be possessed with an extraordinary personality and genius, but he will even attempt to change prophecy and the law of God:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time . . . . And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exhalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished. (Dan. 7:25, 11:36)

This man of sin will also have a companion to assist him in his evil work. This individual is known as the "false prophet" (Rev. 19:20, 20:10), and is called "the second beast" (Rev. 13:11-17). He will be influential in religious matters (13:11) and compels the earth to worship the first beast as God (13:12). The tribulation will evidently see the establishment of the trinity of hell, with God's place assumed by Satan, the place of Christ usurped by Antichrist, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit discharged by the false prophet.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the Jewish covenant.--Daniel relates (9:22) the confirmation of a covenant which the

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<sup>1</sup>J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1958), p. 335.

prince shall make with many of Israel for the seven years. This necessitates, first of all, that the Jews have returned to their land. Ezekiel foretells this regathering:

After many days thou shalt be visited; in the latter years thou shalt come into the land . . . that is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. (38:8)

The people will think that they are dwelling safely and will have a false sense of security because of the covenant with the world ruler. The purpose of the covenant seems to be that they might be preserved from a great northern power, "the overflowing scourge" (Isa. 28:14-15), which in all likelihood is Russia. However, it is prophesied elsewhere that these precautions are in vain. The king of the North shall invade Palestine anyway. Pentecost writes concerning this:

Since the covenant is said to be broken in the middle of the week (Dan. 9:27) and the invasion from the north is seen to be the cause of the breaking of the covenant (Dan. 11:41) it may be concluded, that this invasion takes place in the middle of the week.<sup>1</sup>

This invasion by the king of the North results in his destruction. Thereupon the beast moves into Palestine. He will break the covenant, stop the sacrifices and oblations which he had tolerated for forty-two months, and will set up an image of himself in the temple at Jerusalem (Rev. 13:14-15).

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 354-355

This will mark the beginning of Israel's great tribulation.

The Progression of the Tribulation

His rise to power.--Having his arch-enemies destroyed, this willful king has to subdue the rebellious nations that are left, by "going forth conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2b). Likewise, the kings of Daniel's fourth kingdom must be subdued. This is done either by diplomacy or force (Rev. 17:12-13).<sup>1</sup>

His exercise of autocracy.--This universal rule shall last for forty-two months. John relates in Revelation 13 that this ruler will demand universal worship. Not only that, but because the true Jewish believers will not worship him, he persecutes them (Rev. 12:14-17). The apostate church, which he uses for his purpose during the first part of the tribulation, shall be utterly destroyed once he has gained complete power (Rev. 17:16-17). At last his aim shall be reached: final and absolute dictatorship, for

he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (Rev. 13:16-17).

His experience of judgment.--God never permits sin to go unpunished, especially sin personified as in the Man

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<sup>1</sup>Foster, pp. 9-10.

of Sin. His judgment comes swiftly upon him, his kingdom, and his subjects. The fifth vial of wrath from heaven is directly poured out upon the beast (Rev. 16:10). This judgment is not only poured out upon Antichrist and his people, but also upon the whole commercial world system of this despot. Babylon the great, the symbol of the commercial world power of Antichrist, is destroyed within one hour (Rev. 18:19)! Chafer has well written of this event:

The destruction of political and commercial Babylon is the termination of the entire cosmos world system. It is evidently brought to its end by divine power and the execution of those judgments which have been determined. This great event is closely connected to the second advent of Christ and is the first such judgment in the Day of Jehovah. The stupendous character of this consummatory judgment is beyond human comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

In close relation with this event is the destruction of the armies of Antichrist at the glorious advent of Christ. This fierce, exceedingly short battle is described in Revelation 19:11-21. Scofield observes that this battle of Armageddon is to be west of Jordan near the plain of Jezreel. In this battle the Lord will deliver the besieged Jewish remnant from the beast, the false prophet his helper, and the Gentile armies. The besieging hosts are seemingly alarmed by the signs which precede the Lord's coming (Matt. 24:29-30) and fall back to Megiddo. There their destruction begins and is

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<sup>1</sup>Chafer, IV, p. 397.

consummated in Moab and in the plains of Idumea.<sup>1</sup> This event fulfills precisely Daniel 2:34-35:

. . . and brake them to pieces and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Immediately subsequent to this last battle, Antichrist and his prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20). This is their eternal judgment and doom, which they have so justly deserved. Satan himself, who empowers these two men to do wonders and signs to deceive the people, will then be bound by chains in the bottomless pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). Then begins the Millennium, that literal, earthly reign of Christ which the prophets have foretold and the Jews have longed for. But before the nation of Israel can enter into their earthly blessings and inheritance, it is necessary for them to be saved. As will be shown in the next chapter, this comes about during the great tribulation.

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<sup>1</sup>C. I. Scofield (ed.), Scotfield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), pp. 1348-1349.



## CHAPTER III

### THE SALVATION IN THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

#### The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

In relation to the conversion of Israel.--The Old Testament has much to say in relation to the salvation of Israel, and many proof-texts could be cited to indicate that the Holy Spirit has a vital ministry in the salvation of Israel during the tribulation. Suffice it to quote Joel 2:28:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

This "pouring out" of the Spirit refers to the second advent and especially to the new covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit. In faith Israel shall look upon Christ whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10), as the Spirit of grace comes upon them. Joel indicates that the Spirit will be poured out upon all people, thus His ministry is not confined to Israel. "He will be present and active in the world; He will indwell and empower His people; He will use believers in witnessing."<sup>1</sup> However, "his work of restraining by means of indwelling believers as the temple of God will not carry over into the

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Caldwell Ryrie, The Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 109.

tribulation."<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the restoration of Israel.--Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37: 1-14) speaks symbolically of the ministry of the Spirit in relation to the restoration of Israel. Though this passage does not directly prove the resurrection from the dead, it does so indirectly for it takes for granted the future fact as one recognized by believing Jews. The symbol of physical resurrection may also be used to indicate the conversion of the Israelites.<sup>2</sup> Other passages speak of the restoration of Israel in greater detail, though not directly referring to the Spirit's ministry:

At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord. (Zeph. 3:20)

#### The Basis of Salvation

Salvation in the tribulation will be entirely upon the faith principle. Just as the Old Testament saints were redeemed by faith (Heb. 11), so shall those saints of the future be saved by faith. John writes of the saints as having patience and faith (Rev. 13:10) and as being those who keep the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:12).

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, David Brown, A Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1871), pp. 610-611.

Salvation in the tribulation will not only be by faith but it will also be based upon the blood of Christ, as in all other ages. Writing of the tribulation martyrs, John notes that they overcame the accuser by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony (Rev. 12:11). They "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). Looking back on the finished work of Christ, they are cleansed from all sin.

This future salvation will be made available through the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, as predicted by Christ in Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

#### The Proclamation of Salvation

Though the basis and content of salvation will be the same as it is during this age, with the added factor of the approaching kingdom, the way the message is to be proclaimed is unique. The gospel will be sounded forth by the two witnesses, the Jewish remnant, and the angelic herald.

The two witnesses.--First, there are two witnesses mentioned, endowed with supernatural powers, to be able to destroy their enemies, who will bear witness for forty-two months (Rev. 11:3-5). Despite the fact that their identity has been the subject of much discussion, it is commonly believed

that they will be Moses and Elijah. This view is based on the statement that they "have power over waters to turn them to blood" and "power to shut heaven that it rain not" (Rev. 11:5). Upon completion of their testimony they shall be martyred. But "after three days and a half" (Rev. 11:11) they will be resurrected--much to the consternation of their enemies. And then they will ascend bodily into heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The Jewish remnant.--Blindness in part is decreed upon Israel until the Church is completed, then the Jewish remnant, as a national entity shall be saved (Rom. 11:25-27). This remnant shall bear a testimony and Isaiah 24:14-15 plainly indicates that the witness is proclaimed both in the East and in the West. Because of this testimony which the remnant bears during the tribulation, Satan attempts to destroy it and its witness (Rev. 12:17).

The remnant is comprised of two distinct groups of people, a chosen group of 144,000 Jews and those Israelites which will be saved because of their testimony. Of this sealed group of Jews, mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8, Seiss has written:

These 144,000, then, are Israelites, living in the period of judgment, who are only then brought to be confessors and praisers of God, whilst the most of their kindred continue in unbelief and rebellion. Viewing the Son, as their fathers never would view Him, they acknowledge

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<sup>1</sup>William F. Foster, Class Notes in Systematic Theology, "Eschatology," p. 8.

Him as their Messiah and Judge. As Jews, they thus constitute a distinct company to themselves, and are blessed. As the result of their conversion they are also very active in practical righteousness.<sup>1</sup>

The angelic herald.--God uses one more means to induce men to receive His message. He shall send an angel who will, finally, declare the everlasting gospel "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6). Only the love of God could go to such extremes in seeking to redeem lost and sinful mankind. What will the result be? Will many listen to these special messengers of God, repent, and be saved?

#### The Consequences of the Proclamation

The consequences to Israel.--Because of the intense persecution during the latter part of the tribulation, many of the saved Jews will be martyred. John writes of these martyred saints in Revelation 6:9-10:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

It can be safely assumed that included in this group of martyrs will be many Jews and that through the witness of Moses and Elijah, the 144,000, and the angelic herald, many of God's chosen people will find salvation, as the Old

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<sup>1</sup>J. A. Seiss, The Apocalypse (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964), p. 163.

Testament had anticipated. The blindness which in part has befallen Israel (Rom. 11:26-27) will then be taken away, so that there will be a turning to God and a recognition of Christ as their true Messiah.

Both Isaiah and Christ are clear that there will not only be a martyred remnant for Israel, but also a living remnant. Multitudes of Israelites who have turned to God will be preserved from persecution and when Christ shall appear in His glory, He will send His angels and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:31). Then, as His people, a nation of priests, they shall worship the Lord in the holy city of Jerusalem:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isa. 27:13).

The consequences to the Gentiles.--Notwithstanding the fact of the common belief that only a few people will be saved during the tribulation, the Bible indicates otherwise. It has been demonstrated that a great elect Jewish remnant will be saved. But Gentiles too shall find redemption. John saw in a vision a multitude without number standing before the throne of God (Rev. 7:9). It seems that these are the martyred multitudes because "these are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white

in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14).

It is evident that there will also be living Gentiles when Christ returns. When during the Olivet Discourse Christ spoke of the judgment of the nations which is to take place immediately after His return, He referred to the sheep and goat nations, comprised of the Gentiles (Matt. 25:32-33). The sheep nations are those redeemed Gentiles who have lived throughout the period of the tribulation. The goats are the ungodly Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> This then is the result of the universal proclamation of the gospel: Many Jews and Gentiles will be redeemed. A great multitude of both groups will meet martyrdom, but there is predicted a remnant which, without suffering death, shall enter that reign of Christ when He will rule with righteousness and equity over the nations.

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<sup>1</sup>John F. Walvoord, The Millennial Kingdom (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham Publishing Company, 1959), pp. 287-289.

## CONCLUSION

The great tribulation is a time of judgment, to be sure. But it will also be a time of salvation. God has not cast aside His people, but, while the Church is in heaven with her Redeemer, God shall try and purge His people on earth. One-third of the nation shall escape His wrath and by the Spirit's operation through affliction turn to the Lord. It is the remnant which shall form the nucleus on earth of the Israelite nation, which will stand at the head of the Millennial nations of the world. Israel shall then be an honor to all nations of the world. God's faithful promises, made long ago to Abraham, shall then find their complete fulfillment. But momentous events and movements must take place before this consummation. It has been the purpose of this outline study to give an over-all perspective of the seventieth week of Daniel, its origin, cause, events, and movements. This then is the tribulation: a time of purging, of hope, and of salvation for Israel.



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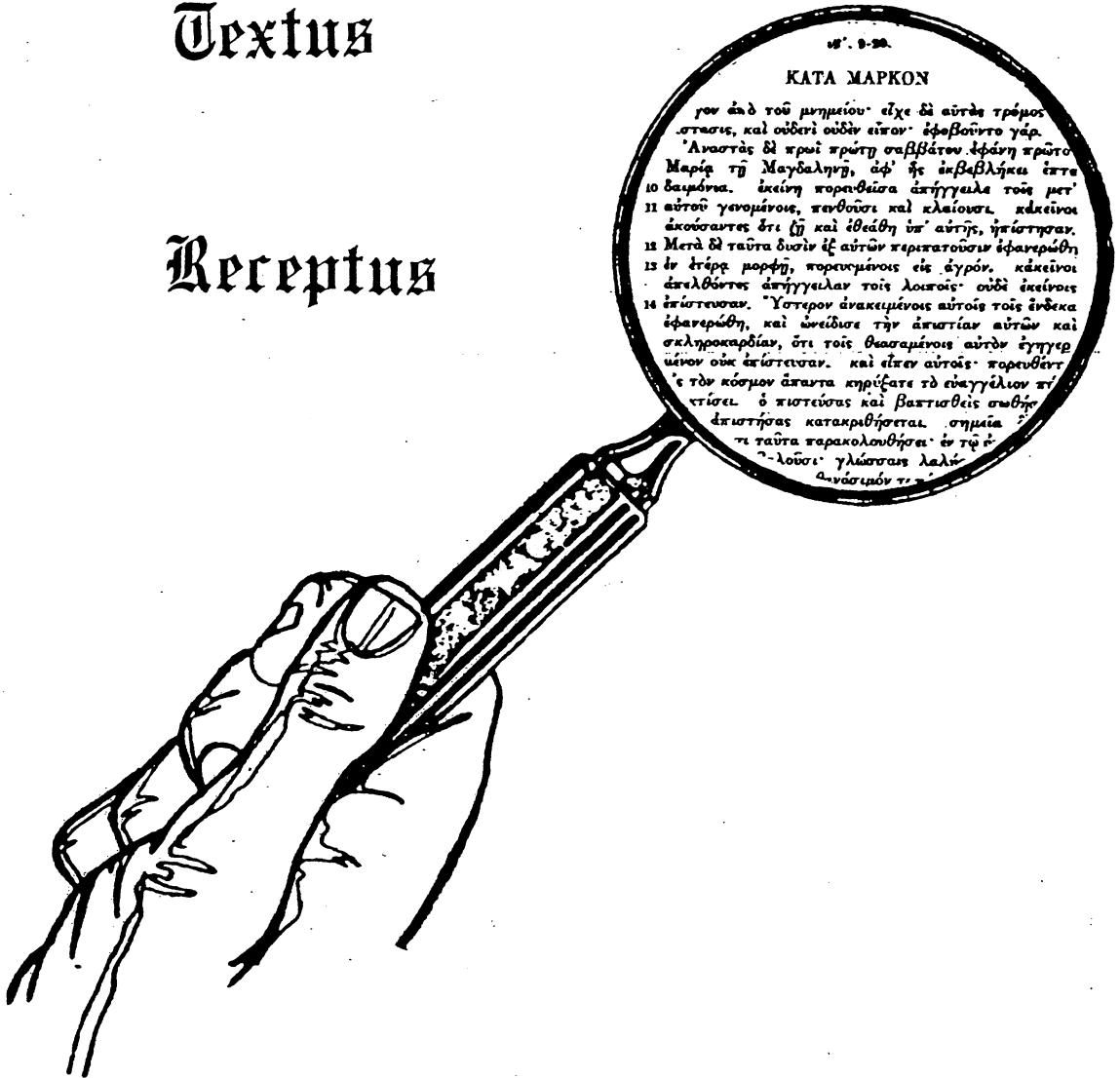
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# A Timely Re-evaluation of the

## Textus

## Receptus



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

1A. THE PROBLEM OF THE TEXT

1b. The Modern Fad:

The average well-taught believer has often heard the King James Version (henceforth KJV) corrected on the basis of "better manuscripts" or "older authorities." He has been told from the pulpit and in print that the Greek text used by the translators of 1611 is inferior to that used for more recent translations. The science of textual criticism has supposedly led us to a more accurate knowledge of the original text of the Bible.

This explains, in part, the current avalanche of new versions, each one aiming to replace the KJV. A new version is said to belong into the pulpit the same way a partridge belongs in a pear tree. The KJV, we are told, needs to be replaced.

2b. The Textual Families:

1c. The number of manuscripts:

A very large number of Greek manuscripts (henceforth MSS) of the New Testament survive today. A recent list by Kurt Aland, a German scholar whose job it is to assign official numbers to Greek manuscripts as they are found, lists these figures: papyrus MSS, 81; majuscules (mss written in capital letters), 267; minuscules (mss written in smaller script), 2764. While many of these MSS are merely fragmentary, they nevertheless supply a massive accumulation of evidence for textual criticism. In addition, there are 2143 lectionaries, making for a total of 5255 MSS, as of 1967, according to Aland. The striking fact is that a large majority of this huge mass of MSS--somewhere between 80-90%--contains a Greek text which in most respects closely resembles the kind of text which was the basis for the KJV. This may come as a surprise to the ordinary believer who has gained the impression that the Authorized Version is supported chiefly by inferior manuscripts.

2c. The nature of the texts:

Since the 18th century the New Testament documents have been divided into families according to the type of text which they contain and the errors of transmission. There are three of these families, namely, the TRADITIONAL (Byzantine) family, the WESTERN family, and the ALEXANDRIAN family.

1d. The Traditional or Byzantine family:

The Traditional or Byzantine family (also the Majority Text, better known today as the Textus Receptus, i.e. the text commonly received as authoritative) includes all those New Testament documents which contain the traditional Byzantine text, including A (in the Gospels) and W (in Matthew and the last two-thirds of Luke). The Peshitta Syriac version and the Gothic version also belong to this family, along with the New Testament quotations from Chyrsostom and the other Fathers of Antioch and Asia Minor.

2A. THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF TEXTUAL CRITICS1b. The Background in Rationalism:

In a most recent study ("Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism," Bibliotheca Sacra, January 1971), Professor Zane Hodges, from whom much of this material is taken, shows that Westcott and Hort's text was constructed on rationalistic foundations. They are unwilling to subscribe to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures. They assert that:

"Little is gained by speculating as to the precise point at which such corruptions came in. They may be due to the original writer [*italics added*], or to his amanuensis if he wrote from dictation, or they may be due to one of the earliest transcribers."

Their rationalistic premise is further seen in a more blatant assertion:

"For ourselves we dare not introduce into textual criticism considerations which could not reasonably be applied to other ancient texts, supposing them to have documentary attestation of equal amount, variety, and antiquity."

Evolutionary thought permeates their system. Westcott writes:

"No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, give a literal history--I could never understand how anyone reading them with open eyes could think they did."

Hort writes:

"I am inclined to think that no such state as "Eden" (I mean the popular notion) ever existed, and that Adam's fall in no degree differed from the fall of each of his descendants, as Coleridge justly argues."

It is just one short step from a belief in evolution in nature to a belief in evolution of the biblical documents. Westcott and Hort apparently took this step.

2b. The Belief in Recension:

Westcott and Hort who reject the Byzantine text in favor of the Alexandrian text explain the Majority Text on the basis of a recension. The reason why up to 90% of all Greek texts have a common reading is due to a revision which took place at Antioch in two stages between 250 and 350 A.D. Some scholarly Christians, with the presbyter Lucian (d. 312) as original leader, deliberately created an official text by combining the Western, Alexandrian, and Neutral (B-Aleph) texts. The purpose was to construct a text on which all could agree.

Today, the whole question of the derivation of "texttypes" through definite, historical recensions is open to debate. Indeed, E. C. Colwell, one of the leading contemporary critics, affirms dogmatically that the so-called "Syrian" recension (as Hort would have conceived it) never took place. Instead he insists that all texttypes are the result of "process" rather than definitive editorial activity. History is silent concerning such an official recension.

2A. THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF TEXTUAL CRITICS

## 3b. The Break with the Received Text:

Westcott and Hort rejected the Textus Receptus (TR) because of the discovery of older, supposedly better texts. The arguments against the TR usually follow this line:

## 1c. The oldest MSS do not support the Majority Text:

The three oldest complete (or nearly complete) uncial MSS are B (Codex Vaticanus); Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus); and A (Codex Alexandrinus).

- 1d. Be was written about the middle of the fourth century. It is the property of the Vatican Library in Rome. It has been in the Vatican since at least 1475, for in that year a catalog of the library was made and B is mentioned.
- 2d. Aleph was discovered by Tischendorf (1841-72) in 1859 on his third visit to the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai. It is believed to have been written in the second half of the fourth century and is currently in the British Museum which purchased it from Russia in 1933.
- 3d. Codex A was given to the King of England in 1627 by Cyril Lucar, patriarch of Constantinople and is now likewise in the British Museum. Scholars date it from the first half of the fifth century.

But the oldest MSS do not necessarily contain the best text. J. W. Burgon (1813-1888), Dean of Chichester, and a staunch defender of the TR, demonstrates that Aleph and B are very inferior documents. Their antiquity is a point against them, not something in their favor. It shows that the Church rejected them and did not read them. Otherwise they would have been worn out through use. Furthermore, most of our ancient documents derive basically from Egypt, where the clement climate aided the preservation of the texts. These texts are at best a local family and, as Aland suggests, a revised form of the old Egyptian text whose nearness to the original is open to debate. Kirsopp Lake, another textual critic, favored the idea that the scribes usually destroyed their exemplars when they had copied the sacred books.

The oldest manuscripts extant are P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup> (c. 200) and combined with B (4th century) they frequently agree on errors, such as their reference to "Bethsaida" in John 5:2 when it should read "Bethesda." Even the most ancient MSS err, and err frequently.

## 2c. The Majority Text is a revised and hence secondary, form of the Greek text:

## 1d. The position:

Certain revisers in the 4th century are said to have created this text to present a smooth, acceptable text that combined elements from other, earlier texts. Therefore this eclectic production is only of secondary value. "Older manuscripts" are thus to be preferred.

2A. THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF TEXTUAL CRITICS3b. The Break with the Received Text:

2c. The Majority Text is a revised and hence secondary, form of the Greek text:

2d. The problem:

This view is now widely abandoned as no longer tenable. Yet it was this view of the Majority Text which was largely responsible for relegating it to a secondary status in the eyes of textual critics generally. Critics now wish to posit the idea of a "process" drawn out over a long period of time. However, this fails to explain the relative uniformity of the text, nor does it explain its rise and its dominance. Contemporary textual criticism has no explanation for the phenomena of the Majority Text.

3c. The readings of the Majority Text are repeatedly inferior to those of earlier manuscripts:

Hodges ably refutes this assertion by observing:

"Perhaps the greatest surprise to many Bible-believing Christians will be the discovery that textual critics seek to defend their preference for the older manuscripts by affirming that they are better because, in fact, they contain the better readings....In the last analysis, a manuscript is attested by its readings rather than the reverse."

Decisions whether a reading is inferior or superior are based on personal opinions and biases, as America's foremost textual critic, E. C. Colwell, points out. The two criteria used to decide a reading are purely subjective: "Choose the reading which fits the context" and "Choose the reading which explains the origin of the reading." These two standards can cancel each other.

3A. THE PRESERVATION OF THE TRUTH1b. The Uniqueness of the Bible:

According to textual critics, the Bible is a book like any other book. It has no special claim to uniqueness. Colwell writes:

"It is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed--even on a university campus--that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in a miraculous fashion by God. That is not true. Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament is one of miracle, mystery, and authority. A New Testament created under those auspices would have been handed down under them and would have no need of textual criticism" (What is the Best New Testament?, p. 8).

3A. THE PRESERVATION OF THE TRUTH

## 1b. The Uniqueness of the Bible:

But the New Testament is unique! It is breathed out by a living God and so must be treated differently from any other book. For this very reason the Bible cannot have had a history wholly like that of secular writings. While the finest literary efforts of man can suffer irreparable corruption and can even perish forever, the eternal preservation of the Scriptures is inescapably implied in the very nature of the Word itself: "All flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever" (I Pet. 1:24-25). The Psalmist wrote (Ps. 12:6-7): "The words of the Lord are pure words as silver. . . Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever."

## 2b. The Preservation of the Bible:

While we speak frequently about the inspiration, canonicity, inerrancy and authority of the Scriptures, we generally fail to give to the doctrine of the preservation of the Scriptures the rightful place it deserves. Surely no corollary of inspiration is more logical than the preservation of God's Word which lives and abides forever.

When we subscribe to Westcott and Hort's view of the Critical Text we are really asserting that the true New Testament text has been lost for nearly fifteen centuries. As Burgon so incisively remarks:

"And thus it would appear that the Truth of Scripture has run a very narrow risk of being lost forever to mankind. Dr. Hort contends that it more than half lay 'perdu' on a forgotten shelf in the Vatican Library;--Dr. Tischendorf that it had been deposited in a wastepaper basket in the convent of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai;--from which he rescued it on the 4th of February, 1859;--neither, we venture to think, a very likely circumstance. We incline to believe that the Author of Scripture hath not by any means shown Himself so unmindful of the safety of the Deposit, as these distinguished gentlemen imagine" (The Revision Revised, p. 343).

The textual critics make no allowances for the fact that the unique origin, content and purpose of the Bible imply a unique preservation. God promised the preservation of His Word. Is the Majority Text corrupt? If it is, then 90% of the tradition is corrupt. And no one is quite sure how to use the remaining 10%! Those who read the modern critical editions are reading a consensus of scholars and have no guarantee that their text will not change in the future. By contrast, those who read the Textus Receptus are reading a text resting upon a consensus of manuscripts. These manuscripts do not perfectly agree one with another and are not without certain problems; however, with all the evidence available to textual critics, it would suggest that the TR is by far the better of the two texttypes. While it would be a judgment too severe to say that the TR is God's text and the critical text is Satan's text, as some have done, it still seems reasonable to suggest that God preserved His Word in a more general way other than a handful of manuscripts that were forgotten for centuries.



4A. THE PRIORITY OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

The ordinary Christian may look upon the controversy surrounding the Textus Receptus as nothing more than an academic exercise of little practical value. The important consequences of the acceptance or rejection of the Majority Text can best be demonstrated on hand of some illustrations from the Greek text. Perhaps more than any other passage of Scripture, the last twelve verses of Mark are greatly affected by question of which of the two texts is best.

## 1b. The Last Twelve Verses of Mark:

## 1c. The situation:

Many sincere believers had their confidence shaken in the last twelve verses of Mark, since Aleph and B, which are considered to be the two best MSS of the Greek New Testament, omit this passage. But Dean Burgon has shown in his classic monograph, The Last Twelve Verses of Mark (1871, reprinted 1959) that the omission of the passage actually argues for its inclusion. In B a blank space is left for them in the MSS--the only blank space, indeed, which it contains. This proves that the verses were in the earlier manuscript from which Vaticanus was copied (see Appendix).

Sinaiticus reveals a still more startling fact. Two pages of the original have been taken out and two others inserted, apparently by the writer of the B MSS. These contain the close of Mark and the beginning of Luke. The pages were evidently re-written for the purpose of excluding the twelve verses. The writing on these pages is so spread out that they contain less matter than they ought. Even so, the last column is not completely filled out.

## 2c. The dilemma:

If we accept the Aleph and B omission, we are left with rather unenviable alternatives: either the Gospel ended on a note of utter despair--which is unthinkable for a Gospel penned especially to glorify Christ, or the ending is hopelessly lost--which in reality is a masked rejection of a belief in the providential preservation of inspired Scripture.

## 3c. The explanation:

On the other hand, it is relatively easy to determine the reasons which are responsible for the omission. The MSS were written at a bad time--that of the Arian lapse. They show a similarity of omissions in the Gospels relating to the deity of our Lord (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18, e.g., where "begotten" is omitted; Mark 1:1 omits "Son of God" etc.) as well as to everlasting punishment (e.g. Mark 9:44, 46 omitted in both MSS--fire not quenched, worm dieth not). Practical and doctrinal reasons can easily explain the omission of the verses; their preservation argues for their disuse through the years; their

9 Ἀναστὰς δὲ πρῶτῃ πρώτῃ σαββάτῳ ἐφάνη πρῶτον  
Μαρίᾳ τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, ἀφ' ἧς ἐκβεβλήκει ἑπτὰ  
10 δαιμόνια. ἐκείνη πορευθεῖσα ἀπήγγειλε τοῖς μετ'  
11 αὐτοῦ γινόμενοις, πενθοῦσι καὶ κλαίουσι, καὶ κείνοι  
ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ἦν καὶ θεῖα ὑπ' αὐτῆς, ἠπίστησαν.  
12 Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δυσὶν ἐξ αὐτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφανερῶθῃ  
13 ἐν ἐτέρᾳ μορφῇ, πορευομένοις εἰς ἀγρὸν. καὶ κείνοι  
ἀπελθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς· οὐδὲ ἐκείνοις  
14 ἐπίστευσαν. Ὑστερον ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκά  
ἐφανερῶθῃ, καὶ ὠνείδισε τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ  
σκληροκαρδίαν, ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγγερ-  
15 μόνον οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες  
εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάν-  
16 τῇ κτίσει. ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται,  
17 ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται. σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς  
πιστεύσασιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσεται· ἐν τῇ ὀνόματί μου  
δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσι· γλώσσαις λαλήσουσι καιναῖς·  
18 ἴσθεις ἄρουσι· κἄν θανάσιμον τι πίωσιν, οἱ μὴ αὐτοῖς  
βλάψει· ἐπὶ ἀρρώστοις χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσι, καὶ καλῶς  
ἔξουσιν.  
19 Ὁ μὲν οὖν Κύριος μετὰ τὸ λαλῆσαι αὐτοῖς ἀνε-  
λήφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ  
20 Θεοῦ. ἐκείνοι δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ, τοῦ  
Κυρίου συνεργούντος καὶ τὸν λόγον βεβαιούντος διὰ  
τῶν ἐπακολουθούντων σημείων. ἀμήν.

4A. THE PRIORITY OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS

- 1b. The Last Twelve Verses of Mark:  
 3c. The explanation:

place of discovery hardly argues for their divine preservation by God as the true text (Cf. Urquhart, New Biblical Guide, VII, 383ff; Bibliotheca Sacra, October 1966, p. 306ff).

- 2b. Other important omissions from Aleph and B which are in the Textus Receptus:

1c. John 3:13 "which is in heaven"

2c. Acts 8:37 "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart..."

3c. Rev. 1:11 "I am Alpha and Omega..."

4c. Mat. 6:13 "For thine is the kingdom..."

5c. John 7:53-8:11 Pericope de Adultera (the woman taken in adultery)

- 3b. Reason for the favoring the Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based:

We retain the KJV because of its preparation by godly men, God's providence in the preservation of the true text, its perfection of literary beauty, its permanence in light of the many other versions.

ΜΙΝ ΤΟΝ ΑΙΘΟΝΕΚ ΤΗΣ  
 ΘΥΡΑΣ ΤΟΥ ΜΝΗΜΕΙΟΥ  
 ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΒΑΙΝΕΙ ΑΣΑΙΘΩ  
 ΡΟΥΣ ΙΝ ΟΤΙ ΑΝΑΚΕΚΥ  
 ΔΙΣΤΑΙ ΘΑΙΘΟΣ ΗΝ ΓΑΡ  
 ΜΕΓΑΣΣΦΟΔΡΑΚΑΙ ΕΛ  
 ΘΟΥΣΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΜΝΗΜΕ  
 ΟΝ ΕΙΔΟΝ ΗΕΑΝΙΣ ΚΟΝ  
 ΚΑΘΗΜΕΝΟΝ ΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ  
 ΔΕΞΙΘΙΣ ΠΕΡΙΣΣΕΛΗΜ  
 ΝΟΝ ΣΤΟΛΗΝ ΑΕΥΚΗΝ  
 ΚΑΙ ΕΙΣΘΑΜΙΝ ΗΘΗΣΑΝ  
 ΘΑΔΕΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΑΙΣ ΜΗ  
 ΕΚΘΑΜΕΙΣ ΘΕΙΝ ΖΗΤΗ  
 ΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΝΑΧΑΡΗΘΟΝΤ  
 ΕΣΤΑΥΡΩΜΕΝΟΝ Η ΓΑΡ  
 ΘΗΘΥΚΕΣΤΙΝ ΘΛΕΤΑ  
 ΘΤΟΠΟΣ ΘΠΟΥΘΗΚΑ  
 ΑΥΤΟΝ ΑΛΛΑΥΤΙΑΓΕΤΕ  
 ΕΙΠΑΤΕ ΤΟΙΣ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙ  
 ΑΥΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΩ ΠΕΤΡΩ  
 ΘΤΙ ΠΡΟΑΓΘΙΜΑΣ ΕΙΣ  
 ΤΗΝ ΓΑΛΙΛΑΙΑΝ ΕΚΒΙΑΥ  
 ΤΟΝ ΘΥΣΘΕΚΑΘΩΣ ΣΙ  
 ΡΗΝ ΜΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΣΘΕΥ  
 ΣΑΙ ΕΦΥΓΟΝ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ  
 ΜΝΗΜΕΙΟΥ ΕΙΧΕΝ ΓΑΡ  
 ΑΥΤΑΣ ΤΟΜΟΣ ΚΛΙΕΚ  
 ΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΥΔΕΝΙΘΥ  
 ΔΕΝ ΕΙΠΟΝ ΕΦΟΒΟΥΝ  
 ΤΟ ΓΑΡ

κατε  
 δαρκον

This is a facsimile of the CODEX VATICANUS (B), showing space left for Mark 16:9-20.

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This is a facsimile of the CODEX SINAITICUS showing Mark 16:2 - Luke 1:18

THE PROBLEM OF THE

# Virgin Birth

AND APOLOGETIC FOR IT



THE ANNUNCIATION.

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

## THE PROBLEM OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND APOLOGETIC FOR IT

### Topic Outline

- 1A. Introduction.
- 2A. The Argument from Silence.
  - 1b. The Gospels of Mark and John.
  - 2b. The Writings of Paul.
- 3A. The Argument from the Early Church.
  - 1b. The Jewish Christians.
  - 2b. The Sects.
- 4A. The Argument from the Old Testament Predictions.
  - 1b. The Contribution of Genesis 3:15.
  - 2b. The Contribution of Isaiah 7:14.
- 5A. The Argument from the Gospel Narratives.
  - 1b. Their Genuineness.
  - 2b. Their Credibility.
- 6A. Conclusion.

## 1A. Introduction:

The opposition launched against the virgin birth of Christ is almost coextensive with the preaching of the gospel itself. The pagan philosopher Celsus (178 A. D.) opens his polemic against the Christians by charging that Jesus, whom they worship, was not born of a virgin but was the son of a human father. From that time on, the supernatural conception of Jesus has suffered intermittent criticisms which have varied in degrees or scope and intensity. Then, starting with the closing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has been an all-out assault upon the truth of the virgin birth of our Lord.<sup>1</sup> The attack, however, is not confined to the virgin birth but affects the whole supernatural estimate of Christ. But it is thought that this miracle is more easily got rid of than the evidence for public facts, like the resurrection, resulting in the fact that in many quarters the virgin birth is openly treated as a fable or myth, and belief in it is scouted as unworthy of modern insight and intelligence. Proof of this can be readily seen in the heretical pronouncements of Bishop Bromiley C. Oxnam, Bishop James A. Pike and more recently, the Episcopalian Bishop John Shelby Spong.

## 2A. The Argument from Silence:

### 1b. The gospels of Mark and John:

The objection to the narratives on the virgin birth on which most stress is laid is the silence concerning the miracles in the remaining Gospels and other parts of the New Testament. This is to prove conclusively that the virgin birth was not known in the earliest Christian circles, and was a legend of later origin. Respecting the Gospels of Mark and John, the objection would only apply if it were the design of the Gospels to narrate, as do Matthew and Luke, the circumstances of the nativity. Both Mark and John knew that Jesus had a human birth and that His mother was Mary. But they deliberately tell us nothing about it. Mark begins his Gospel with Christ's entrance on His public ministry, omitting an explanation of how Jesus came to be called "the Son of God" (Mk. 1:1). John tells us that the "Word became flesh" (Jn. 1:14), but does not say how this miracle of becoming flesh was wrought. It did not lie in John's plan to say so. He knew the Church tradition and had access to the Gospel narratives of the virgin birth, and he takes the knowledge of their teaching for granted. So where is the alleged contradiction?<sup>2</sup>

### 2b. The Writings of Paul:

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<sup>1</sup> Orville E. Crain, *The Credibility of the Virgin Birth* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1924), 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> R. I. Humberd, *The Virgin Birth* (Flora, Indiana: R. I. Humberd, n.d.), 243-244.

From the silence of Paul on this item nothing detrimental can be inferred. The one thing that was central to the mind and preaching of Paul was the resurrection of Jesus. He must have known of the supernatural origin of Christ because he was in company with Luke. One thing certain is, that Paul could not have believed in the divine dignity, the pre-existence, the sinless perfection, and the redeeming work of Christ as he did and not have been convinced that His entrance into humanity was extraordinary and miraculous in nature. This Son of God, who "emptied" Himself, who was "born of a woman, born under the law," "who knew no sin" (Phil. 2:7-8; Gal. 4:4; 2 Cor. 5:21) could not be the simple product of nature. Paul wrote his epistles about 53-61 A.D. If the virgin birth had been an incipient heresy, Paul must have known of it and would most surely have denounced it as he did some of the other Jewish and heathen heresies that were threatening the Church.<sup>3</sup>

### **3A. The Argument from the Early Church:**

#### 1b. The Jewish Christians:

Those who object to the virgin birth occasionally appeal to the history of the early Church in confirmation that his belief was not primitive. However, as far as one can trace back in the history of the Church, Christians have always held this doctrine. No Christian sect is known to have denied it, save the Jewish Ebionites. The general body of the Jewish Christians accepted it—and so did the greater Gnostic sects in their own way. Those Gnostics, like Cerinthus, who denied it, were vehemently repelled by the Church's greatest teachers.

#### 2b. The Sects:

At this point it is well to consider the Scriptures themselves as far as their prophetic and historical accounts of the virgin birth are concerned. Those who assert that nothing depends on this belief for one's estimate of Christ do a gross injustice not only to the plain statement of Scripture, but, in fact, deny the possibility of their own salvation. Those who are ready to deny the credibility of the Gospels are also quick to deny the supernatural element of the prophecies of the Old Testament.

### **4A. The Argument from the Old Testament Predictions:**

#### 1b. Genesis 3:15

There are those who assert that the Old Testament is strangely silent on the fact of the virgin birth. But is this true? Relevant to this discussion is the oldest of

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<sup>3</sup> Crain, *op. cit.*, 48-49.

all evangelical promises, that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). The "serpent" is Satan and the "seed" who would destroy him is described emphatically as the woman's seed. As sin entered the race through the woman, so salvation would come through a woman. The early Church writers often pressed this analogy between Eve and the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2b. Isaiah 7:14

The clearest expression of the virgin birth in the Old Testament is found in Is. 7:14, centered in the declaration, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This is none other than the child of wonder extolled in Is. 9:6-7. Critics strenuously object that the word "virgin" or "almah" actually means "virgin." They insist that it means "young woman." This is true, but the usage of the term also applied to "virgin," and throughout the whole Old Testament, "use of the term 'almah' applies only to persons who are virgins, and to such only as are in the flower of youth, in opposition to a virgin denoted by the common, indeterminate word 'betulah'."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the translators of the LXX understood the term to mean "virgin" and rendered it as such.

The prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled. In Bethlehem of Judea, as Micah had foretold, was born of a virgin mother, He whose "goings forth" were "from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2; Mt. 2:6).

### 5A. The Argument from the Gospel Narratives:

#### 1b. Their genuineness:

By general consent, the Matthew 1 and 2 and Luke 1 and 2 narratives are independent—yet both affirm, in a most detailed way, that Jesus, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, was born of a virgin, Mary of Nazareth, espoused to Joseph, whose wife she afterwards became. The birth took place in Bethlehem and announcement by an angel was made to Mary and Joseph beforehand.

Critics assail the genuineness and trustworthiness of the Gospel records. But it can be firmly retorted that the narratives are undoubtedly genuine parts of the Gospels. The only manuscripts and versions that fail to mention the narratives of the virgin birth are those that have been corrupted and mutilated by either Ebionitic or Gnostic tendencies. But even these manuscripts are few in number and cannot be employed as evidence.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hubert Vecchierello, *The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ* (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1932) 14.

<sup>5</sup> Charles L. Feinberg (ed.), *The Fundamentals for Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregels' publications, 1961) 242-243.

<sup>6</sup> Crain, *op. cit.*, 39-40.



## 2b. Their Credibility:

As to the Gospels themselves, they were not of late origin but were written by apostolic men and accepted from the first. Luke's Gospel was from Luke's own pen and Matthew's Gospel passed without challenge in the early Church as the genuine Gospel of the Apostle.

The sources for the narratives concerning the virgin birth are Joseph and Mary themselves. Matthew's account is told from Joseph's point of view, Luke's is from Mary's. The narratives are not contradictory but independent and complementary. They bear the stamp of truth, honesty, and purity.

Thus the virgin birth stands. Had Christ been naturally born, He could never have reversed the curse of sin and death brought in by the first Adam. He, as one of Adam's race, not an entrant from a higher sphere, would have shared in Adam's corruption and doom—would Himself have required redemption. Through God's infinite mercy He came from above, inherited no guilt, needed no regeneration or sanctification, but became Himself the Redeemer, Regenerator, and Sanctifier for all who receive Him. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15).

## **1 Timothy 3:16**

*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:*

*God was manifested in the flesh,*

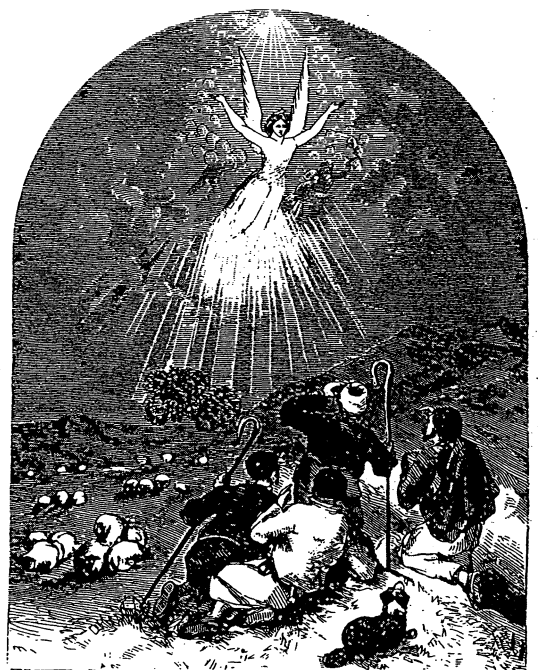
*Justified in the Spirit,*

*Seen by angels,*

*Preached among the Gentiles,*

*Believed on in the world,*

*Received up in glory.*



ANGELS ANNOUNCING THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOUR.

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# Missions and the Local Church

## Practical Guidelines



Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

## MISSIONS AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

- I. Scriptural basis for missions.
- II. Responsibility of the pastor to missions.
  - A. Knowledge of missions and missionaries.
  - B. Contact with missionaries.
  - C. Understanding of the need of missionaries.
  - D. Enlargement of his vision.
  - E. Presentation of missions.
  - F. Knowledge of mission boards.
  - G. Periodical examination of the missionaries.
- III. Responsibility of the church to missions.
  - A. Responsibilities of the church as a whole.
  - B. Responsibilities of each individual.
  - C. Responsibilities of the missionary committee.
    1. Its composition.
    2. Its function.
      - a. Annual missionary conference.
      - b. Relay of information to all church groups.
- IV. Responsibilities of the mission board.
  - A. Toward the missionaries.
  - B. Toward the local church.
- V. Promotion of missions.
  - A. The missionary.
    1. At home.
    2. On the field.
  - B. The pastor.
    1. To the church.
    2. To the missionaries.
  - C. In Sunday School.
  - D. In youth groups.
  - E. The church itself.
    1. Budget.
    2. Prayer.
    3. Activities.

- B. In the services.
- C. Youth camps.

VII. Methods and materials.

- A. Library.
- B. Posters.
- C. Exhibits.
- D. Maps.
- E. Systematic giving.

Conclusion.

- A. The importance of the pastor.
- B. The duty of the pastor.

## MISSIONS AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Our age seems to be characterized by a "crossroads" philosophy. The media of communication proclaim the democracy is at the crossroads. They say that the free world is at the crossroads, engaged in a fatal combat with Communism. On every hand men are saying that missions are likewise at the crossroads.

Unlike other crises, missions are always at the crossroads. Democracy, totalitarianism, and western culture may come to a crossroad occasionally, but from the very beginning, missions have been in crises--and they shall ever be in crises. Competing forces have always pressed down upon missionary endeavor, yet in every day and age the nature and function of missions is the same. We must admit that never in the history of mankind has the outlook for the furtherance of missions been ideal. Competing forces such as paganism, Romanism, materialism, and Communism have always pressed down and in upon the endeavor of men to carry on mission work. The Church, however, is not troubled by bad circumstances--or at least it should not be--but its hope is derived from the Lord of the Church in whose service it is engaged and for whose glory it labors. One day the Church will no longer be militant but rather triumphant and at rest; missions will no longer be at the crossroads, and its job will be completed.<sup>1</sup>

At this point it would be well to raise the elementary, yet all-important question about missions: Why should churches attempt to take the Christian religion to other men and women in

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Lindsell, Missionary Principles and Practices (New York, 1955), p. 13ff.

the world? Any missionary work which has not faced and answered this question satisfactorily is not properly grounded nor will it endure when shocks and tests come. Because the Bible is our rule of faith and practice, we should be able to prove from the Scriptures that missions are legitimate. That missions should be a vital factor in a church program, that it is a necessity to have missions, is well attested scripturally. The last words which the Lord spoke to His disciples, as recorded by Matthew, are very definite on this point. They are, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19). Generally we call this the Great Commission, the Church's marching orders. This passage certainly makes it clear that Jesus Himself imposed upon the disciples and His followers the task of missionary work. Then again in the first chapter of Acts, where is recorded the narrative of the Ascension of our Risen Lord, we note the unmistakable utterance, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8). Thus, without looking at the vast amount of other Scripture that deals with missions, from the emphatic parting messages of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Church's task is clear--its main task--its responsibility and its privilege.<sup>2</sup>

Too often there has been a tendency to look upon missions as a supplementary matter to be added to other ecclesiastical tasks of the pastor or perhaps a church group; however, the

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<sup>2</sup>Herbert Waldo Hines, Missionary Education in the Local Church (New York, 1925), pp. 2-3.

whole church, every member of it, should be made to see the proper place which missions should have in his life, and every function and activity of the church must of necessity be geared to give an understanding of missions and further the carrying out of the Lord's commission. In all our thinking we should always keep in the foreground these two fundamental facts: (1) The problem of evangelizing the world is God's--not forced upon him but undertaken by Him "according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in our Lord Jesus Christ"; and (2) in the solution of this problem of salvation God has limited Himself to human cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

In God's divine plan, every church must have an overseer, a pastor or shepherd. He is, in a very real sense, a missionary himself, and it falls upon him to instruct the members of his church concerning missions. He is the true and actual leader of the church. The policies and activities of a church are greatly dependent upon the pastor of that church; therefore it is a fact that he holds the key to missionary service. He must be well informed.<sup>4</sup>

First, the pastor must be convinced that missions are scriptural. He should be well acquainted with the history of missions as well as the missionary work that is being carried on. It is essential that he subscribes to several periodicals of mission

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<sup>3</sup> John F. Goucher, Growth of the Missionary Concept (New York, 1911), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Helen Barrett Montgomery, The Preaching Value of Missions (Philadelphia, 1931), p. 135.



agencies. If the pastor, for example, then calls attention to these periodicals, assigns various members to report in prayer-meetings what they found most interesting in the last number, soon the interest in missions will grow among his people. Also, the pastor needs missionary books, books which he can read, review, and recommend to his people. He should have contact with the missionaries his church supports and also others, and thus understand their needs, which he, in turn, will present before the church. A good knowledge of various mission boards and agencies is also important. The pastor should know their policies, practices, purposes, and much other information, which he would utilize in properly guiding those of his members who seek help along these lines or feel that they are called to mission work. Then also, he should work with missionaries, helping them arrange a schedule in his area and giving them proper time in his program when they come for the presentation of missions.

The New Testament is plain in its teaching that missions is the work of the local church. As Paul and Barnabas were sent out by their church, so should missionaries in our day be send out by the church. There are a number of general things of which the pastor should be careful to instruct his people. First of all, they ought to know the needs of the missionaries; their vision should be broad enough and increase to encompass the whole need of missions, not only that of one particular area. This would also include a knowledge of new missionary candidates and developments on the fields. Each member has the responsibility before the Lord to support missions to the best of his ability; furthermore, there should be provisions for giving and doing other than the monthly

support promised to missionaries and mission agencies. Another important factor is that there should be room for enlargement of the church's budget, to take on the support of other missionaries or mission projects without the dropping of some to take on these. As far as missionary giving and vision is concerned, no church should be stagnant.<sup>5</sup>

Lack of missionary interest and activities on the part of church members is often due to lack of knowledge. They cannot be expected to work, give, or pray for missions if they are not aware of the need, the nature of the programs, of the missionaries' efforts and achievements, and the relationship between missions and world affairs. Moreover, new members are constantly coming into the church, and it is the church's responsibility and privilege to acquaint them with missions and make them co-workers in reaching out to evangelize the world. One author well stated, dealing with the promotion of missions within the church,

Sustained missionary interest and endeavor in a church are not the result of devices, but of a carefully planned and faithfully executed educational program. It is not enough for a church to have a strong missionary history. Education in missions...is part of the total program of Christian education, for it is based on the Bible and is fundamental to the building of complete Christian experience. Enlightenment and enlistment in the field of missions are part of the process of Christian growth. So they have a place in the curriculum of Christian education. Promotion of Christian stewardship should be taught and practiced as part of this same program.<sup>6</sup>

In view of all this, every church needs a well-organized

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<sup>5</sup>"A Missionary-Minded Church," Symposium, Edwin Du Bois, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Dorothy A. Stevens, Missionary Education in a Baptist Church (Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 20-21.

to promote missions and to bring the need of missions before all the people. To carry out a good missionary program, every church should have a missionary committee. This committee is usually made up of representatives from different groups within the church: the men's class, women's class, young married people's class or group, Junior and Intermediate Young People, and Senior Young People. Young people should be included in the membership of the committee, for it will provide good training for them to share in the development of the plan, but also they will often make valuable suggestions.

Each group selects a representative and the pastor acts as chairman. All of these members should be vitally interested in the missionary work of the church, or at least be willing to become informed and go ahead to produce results. The pastor, or some one else who is appointed as chairman, if the pastor cannot hold this position, must be capable of working harmoniously with the other representatives. He should seek to lead the committee to have a regular time of meeting, preferable once a month.<sup>7</sup>

As soon as the missionary committee has been appointed, he should prepare it for its work by putting in the hands of its members certain materials and information about missions in general and especially G. A. R. B. C. approved missions. The committee then is active in planning missionary programs and conferences for the church. Also it will help in making various contacts with missionaries and mission agencies. An excellent idea along these lines would be that each group or Bible class take

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<sup>7</sup>Hines, op. cit., p. 22.

one G. A. R. B. C.-approved mission for a year and promote this. Then each year the group can select a different mission to promote.

The committee has certain responsibilities toward the class or group. It is important that the committee secures time in the monthly meetings of their respective groups to promote missions. In these meetings, offerings should be taken to promote a project for the year. Also, part of the money can be used for speakers who represent a mission, at the group meeting or at special church meetings. Then whatever the balance is at the end of the year can be put into the missionary conference and all groups start fresh with a new mission and a new project. Suggested projects include purchase of such articles as tape recorders, lanterns, record player, P. A. system, washing machine, tool kits, hospital gowns, quilts, bandages, clothing, books, school supplies, medicine, toys, cars, trucks, etc. Likewise, the committee can make lists of addresses of the missionaries and distribute them to the group, one to each member, and the person is asked to write to that missionary and pray for him every day of the month. Letters which are received in return can then be read at the meetings each month.

As has been mentioned previously, it is important that people have a thorough knowledge of missions to have a zeal to promote them. Thus the missionary committee should take it upon itself to secure information about the mission and report it to the class. This would include

- (1) The full name of the mission.
- (2) The date of the founding.
- (3) The name of the founder.
- (4) The number of major fields--also noting fields in which

- the mission has no work.
- (5) The location of the home office, its director and officers.
  - (6) The policies and practices of the mission.
  - (7) Native customs.
  - (8) The missionaries' problems: spiritual, physical, and material.
  - (9) Publications of the mission. (Perhaps every member could subscribe to the mission magazine and then pass it on.)<sup>8</sup>

After this information has been gathered, posters can be assigned containing the material and may be displayed in a room for the benefit of all. It would be a good idea to have contests between the different groups to see which can make the most interesting poster. Groups also can make missionary prayer notebooks, including small pictures, names and addresses, and the prayer requests on the back side of each page. In this manner, through the combined effort of all the church groups, missions can become a vital part of all the church life and is constantly kept before the eyes of the people.

One of the main functions of the missionary committee is its planning for the annual missionary conference. The committee can write to the different mission boards and ask for the name and schedule of the missionaries who are home on furlough. Then, when word comes, these missionaries which the committee has chosen should be contacted well in advance to determine if they are able to come to the conference. The missionary conference should be the highlight of the church year. It needs to be well advertized in town. It is most profitable if the missionaries are entertained by members of the church, because this will bring

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<sup>8</sup>Roland Allen, The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church (London, 1927), p. 3.

church people in close contact with missionaries and a better knowledge of the lives and needs of missionaries, as well as real spiritual blessings. The program of the missionary conference itself will be decided by the committee and should be varied and of interest to everybody.

The class or group which is represented in the committee has also certain responsibilities. The people should pray, give, and cooperate. They should work, making their mission known to the church through posters, displays, and curios. These curios and other displays can be exhibited every time there is a conference or even more frequently than this. Attendance at all meetings is important and mission representatives should get loyal support.

The missionary himself plays an important part in the promotion of missions. The people's attitude toward missions will much depend on how well he will present the field, the way he presents the needs, and the challenging messages he brings. It is a good idea if he suggests projects for the group. Good pictures as a means of presenting the work and the need are very necessary. Perhaps one of the main objects in the missionaries' dealing with people should be--apart from getting support--the obtaining of prayer warriors, people who will faithfully lift him up before the Throne of Grace through the years.<sup>9</sup>

After the missionary is back on the field, it is his responsibility to write letters--usually prayer letters--to those who support him. Also, he should answer all private letters, as

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<sup>9</sup>Du Bois, op. cit., p. 4.

far as possible, to keep in touch with the people in the home churches and make missions that much more real to them.

Mission boards play an important part in the relationship of the church to the missionary. Our G. A. R. B. C.-approved mission boards have the policy--and rightly so--to forward any specially designated money or gifts to the missionary for whom it is intended, instead of pooling the money. By "personalizing" missionaries in that way--making it possible for churches to have their "own" missionaries--much interest is gained and the whole missionary cause is helped. The ladies in the churches enjoy preparing bandages, old clothing, Christmas boxes, and other items for missionaries, and this is above the promised support.

Mission boards need to get printed materials distributed to the churches. Posters, brochures, tracts, books, biographies, appeals, and prayer calendars are employed by the boards. Visual aids have done more to impress the people and to acquaint them with missions than all written material put together. By slides, by black and white and color film many mission boards have brought graphically to its people the story of missionary enterprise.<sup>10</sup>

Another facet in the relation of mission boards to the churches are finances. May it only be said that the pastor should be well aware of the fact that mission boards too need to be supported. Proper provisions should be made by each church to give a certain amount of money to the mission board too.

There are two important factors against which the pastor

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<sup>10</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., pp. 133-135.

must be on the lookout and about which the people should be instructed. It is quite frequently the case that missionaries, looking for support, will bring a highly-emotional message to the congregation, moving them with pity to tears, and more than that--the real reason for the message--motivating them to shower the missionary with money. This is harmful, and missionaries of this type should be treated with caution. A common error among church people pertains to their credibility and even gullibility as for as their attitude concerning missionaries is concerned. Missionaries are looked upon as super-Christians and ultra-spiritual, people who can do no wrong. Therefore it is the exception rather than the rule that missionaries are asked by the church to give an account of their work on the field. But it is important that they do this. Dedicated missionaries will not mind this type of inquiry in the least; just the opposite, they will gladly relate the nature of their service and the use to which the church money was put. Pastors and churches have this responsibility to see that the Lord's money is properly used.

It need hardly be said that learning about missions should start in a person's life as early as possible. The Bible school is one of the most effective means by which young people, as well as older people, can be made to learn about mission.

Children of Cradle Roll age are too young for direct instruction. The aim in this period should be to control their environment--practically limited to home--to give them ability to develop the right attitude. It is important therefore that the parents have a proper attitude towards missions.



Education of Beginners should be planned in view of the physical and mental characteristics of the child. Their strong and active curiosity makes it possible to interest the child in new and unfamiliar things if they are related to their own experience, and their imagination provides them with a world of make-believe. Missionary stories with pictures, flannelgraph, and objects relating to child life are most helpful in illustrating lessons. Children of that age should be instructed in giving and their pennies should be given for some specific thing with which they are familiar, for example, a dress or some toys for a little boy in Africa.

The aim of missionary education with Primary children is to give them a knowledge of God and His love for all the other people in the world. The needs of these people should be presented, and this should cause the children to show acts of kindness. Their reasoning power is better developed and as they enter school, their contacts and associations multiply. Group activities can be now planned for them, such as making missionary posters and sand-table work of mission places in which they are interested. Missionary stories should have more plot and action. As far as giving is concerned, they should be taught that real giving means the use of money that has been earned or saved from their own funds.

The Junior-age is the time during which habits are formed and attitudes and modes of conduct are being acquired. The Junior begins to form his ideals based upon the conduct of those whom he admires. Missionary stories and biographies are therefore

good material. Scenes and customs of other lands appeal to Juniors. Missionary models of oriental homes, churches, dolls dressed in native costumes, made by the pupils will test whether they have gained clear and definite impressions from reading or study. Specific prayer for missionaries should be encouraged, and the students should be encouraged to form the habit of regular, systematic giving, for definite projects they wish to choose.<sup>11</sup>

Adolescence is divided into three periods, early, middle, and later adolescence and each period builds upon and develops the capacities and tendencies of the previous stage. One must also keep in mind the differences between boys and girls of these ages. This period is the birth time of personality and "crystallization of character" toward good or evil. The powers of thought and reason is greatly increased and emotions are a strong factor during this early period. Basic for missionary education should be the Biblical teachings concerning missions and their relation to the young person himself. Regular missionary programs, planned by the students themselves, with missionary speakers, mission themes and songs, should be part of the regular training. Reading of missionary books should be greatly encouraged, and each student should be taught his responsibility to missions.

It has been said that the marked difference between maturity and youth is the relative unchangeableness to which we come when we are "grown up." As a result, it is often taken for granted that the only chance for education is in childhood and youth,

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<sup>11</sup>Herbert Wright Gates, Missionary Education in the Church (Chicago, 1928), p. 184ff.

and adults are regarded as hopeless. But, of course, there is a definite need for adult education.

Certain characteristics of adult life, as compared with youth, must be considered to determine the choice of material and methods to educate adults, especially along the lines of mission. Adults have wider experience, their habits are more firmly established, and major interests have become more established. There are many adults in Bible school classes who seldom come to church services and who need the knowledge and vision of missions. It would therefore be very expedient to set aside a Sunday at least every quarter or perhaps even every month on which the whole time will be taken up with teaching and material relative to missions.<sup>12</sup>

An effective way of keeping missions before the Bible school classes would be to set aside a Sunday every month as missionary Sunday, on which all the classes are combined for about twenty minutes during which missionary letters are read and information is given about a certain missionary, to whom then is also designated the combined offering.

Although proper missionary education of young people will produce desired results as far as a vision and understanding of missions is concerned, yet the summer camp is one place where they learn more about missions as far as a challenge is concerned than perhaps anywhere else. There they are continually in close contact with the missionaries, and the challenging messages and camp fire services move many of the young people to dedicate their

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 175ff.

lives to Christ and even obey the Lord's call to go to the mission field. This is one of the reasons why a church should make provisions to send young people to good Bible camps each summer. It can be assured that this will pay rich dividends.

In promoting missions within a local church it is essential to have effective methods and materials. Every church should have a library with many missionary books of interest for the young and old. This can include books and magazines on travel, types of work, biographies and autobiographies of missionaries, discussions of the aims and motives of missions, and missionary fiction.

Posters are always effective if they meet some simple standards such as unity, clarity, brevity, accuracy, appeal, and attractiveness. They may be used to promote missions and even the church library itself, for a library is of value only when it is used.

Exhibits and museum collections may include almost anything from a collection of curios to a display of work done by pupils as demonstrations of what they have done. There maybe the permanent exhibit or museum, including curios, costumes, works of art, household implements, weapons, and other objects illustrating the life of the people. Then there may be also exhibitions of the work of a class or young people's group.<sup>13</sup>

This is a map-minded age and everywhere men make large use of maps. Yet the church, that has had a world-wide mission through

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 125-127.

the centuries, is still poorly supplied with maps. A church should have many good maps. A map may show where missionaries are and keep missionary prayer partners before the eyes. Also, to interpret mission studies, maps are absolutely necessary. A large, mounted world map, contrastingly colored is the map for a church. A well-lettered missionary quotation along the top will help give missionary meaning to the church.<sup>14</sup>

Now that we have somewhat discussed the means and methods of promoting missions in the local church, there remains one more part of the promoting which should be discussed in more detail--giving. It is the pastor's holy duty to teach his people the scriptural principles of stewardship.

Many of our Lord's parables and other teachings were relative to giving. His disciples were taught that their money was not their own to spend as they liked. The New Testament gives the testimony that the teachers of the early Church understood and incalculated this. We are told that "not one of them considered anything his personal property" (Acts 4:32). They held their property ready for disposal in God's service and parted with it when need became apparent (Phil. 4:16). Also relief was sent to needy Christians at home and abroad. But Christian stewardship implies also the giving of ourselves to God. We are His by creation and redemption. "Ye are not your own," said Paul to the Corinthnians, "ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God with your bodies and spirits which are his." (I. Cor. 6:20). Because we are His we must realize that God has also

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<sup>14</sup>Stevens, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

a plan for each one of us. Thus it must be a part of the missionary program to point out to men that it is their responsibility to do that to which God has called them--whether it is laboring on the mission field or working at home. In either case the efforts should be directed in reaching men and women with the message of salvation.<sup>15</sup>

In view of all the methods and systems of promotion of missions, let none of us suppose that missionary passion comes of knowing intimately the foreign fields. It comes of knowing God, who "so loved the world"--not only a part of it--"that he gave his only begotten Son," who "is the propitiation for our sins, and not ours only, but also the sins of the whole world." And it is up to the shepherd of the flock, the pastor, to bring the people to a better knowledge of their God and Savior Jesus Christ. The pastor is the key to missionary success, and every administrator should understand that the success or failure of the missionary program of the local church depends on the minister of the church. He can be a strong advocate for missions, and by the stress he places on it and the methods he employs he can either build or break a missionary church.<sup>16</sup> The only way he will combat materialism and all the satanic forces that would hinder the development and progress of missions is through the impassionate preaching of the whole Word.. No essays about birds and trees and the big out-of-doors will meet the situation. No book reviews of great novels or recent poetry will do. No eloquent essays

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<sup>15</sup>Montgomery, op. cit., pp. 152-154.

<sup>16</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 135.

about the secondary concerns of Christianity will turn the tide of men's hearts to their redeemer and the call of missions. Only one thing will do and that is the holding up of a Savior who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come to Him through faith. The old gospel needs to be shown as still the wonder-working gospel of the Grace of God. Men still need to be seen in all their sin and weakness crying out for the Living God, whom they shall permit to lead their lives.

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