

"LAUGHTER"
ECCLESIASTES 3:4

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Bee Am

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SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT LAUGHTER HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE HUMAN BODY. IT REDUCES TENSION, RELAXES THE TISSUES, AND EXERCISES THE MOST VITAL ORGANS. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT LAUGHTER IS BENEFICIAL BOTH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY. THE POET KNEW THE WORTH OF LAUGHTER WHEN HE SAID: "LAUGH AND THE WORLD LAUGHS WITH YOU; WEEP AND YOU WEEP ALONE. REJOICE AND MEN WILL SEEK YOU; GRIEVE AND THEY TURN AND GO. THEY WANT FULL MEASURE OF YOUR PLEASURE, BUT THEY DO NOT WANT YOUR WOE." SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID THAT ONE TEST OF MEN IS SEEN IN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS: ① CAN YOU MAKE OTHERS LAUGH? - THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO, WHEN THEY JOIN A GROUP, MAKE OTHERS HAPPIER FOR SIMPLY HAVING BEEN THERE. BY CONTRAST, THERE ARE OTHERS WHO LIKE A WET BLANKET, BLACK CLOUD, OR COLD WATER, SEND A CHILL OR DEEP DEPRESSION ON ANY MEETING. OTHERS SIMPLY CARRY SUNSHINE WHEREVER THEY GO. ② CAN YOU BE LAUGHED AT? SOME PEOPLE LOSE THEIR TEMPER AND COMPOSURE WHEN LAUGHED AT. A TRUE TEST OF HUMILITY IS OFTEN SEEN IN THIS REGARD. ③ CAN YOU LAUGH AT YOUR-SELF? IT IS A GREAT GIFT TO SEE ONE'S SILLINESS AT TIMES. WE ARE TOO OFTEN POMPOUS AND RIDICULOUS AND LAUGHTER AT ONESELF MAY BE A TRUE TEST OF BOTH GOODNESS AND GREATNESS. ONE IS SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THAT NOT A GREAT DEAL IS SAID IN THE BIBLE ABOUT LAUGHTER. MORRISON REMINDS US: "IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, WHEN PEOPLE LAUGH, IT IS SELDOM A PLEASANT LAUGH. IT IS THE LAUGH OF INCREDULITY, LIKE THAT OF SARAH, OR SCORN, LIKE THAT OF NEHEMIAH'S ENEMIES." IT WOULD SEEM THAT FAR MORE IS SAID OF TEARS THAN OF LAUGHTER IN THE BIBLE. LAUGHTER IS ONE OF THE GREAT DISTINGUISHING TRAITS OF MANKIND AS OPPOSED TO THE ANIMAL WORLD. THE OVERRIDING WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS JOY INSTEAD OF LAUGHTER, WHICH WOULD SUGGEST THAT WHERE THERE IS DEEP-SEATED

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re Phil. 6.

JOY IN CHRIST, LAUGHTER WILL SIMPLY BE THE EXTERNAL MANIFESTATION OF THAT EMOTION. AN OFT-ASKED QUESTION IS: "DID JESUS EVER LAUGH?" TO BE SURE, THE BIBLE PICTURES HIM AS A MAN OF SORROWS, BUT IT IS UNTHINKABLE TO SUGGEST THAT OUR LORD DID NOT SMILE, OR HAVE DEEP JOY AND A SENSE OF HUMOR! TO LOOK AT SOME OF THOSE WHO PROFESS TO KNOW HIM, WHO THINK IT BENEATH THEIR DIGNITY TO LAUGH, OR WHO SEEM TO HAVE BEEN WEANED ON ALUM OR SOME OTHER BITTER SUBSTANCE, ONE MIGHT GET THE MISTAKEN IMPRESSION THAT JESUS WAS A SOLEMN, SOUR MAN. IT IS MY OPINION THAT THIS CANNOT BE CORRECT. (RELATE STORY OF NEW CONVERT WHO WAS ASKED IF HE THOUGHT JESUS EVER LAUGHED. THE REPLY WAS: "I DON'T KNOW, BUT HE SURE FIXED ME SO I COULD!") LET US LOOK AT THREE AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION ON THE SUBJECT OF LAUGHTER:

I. THE LAUGHTER OF UNBELIEF AND RELIEF - GENESIS 18:12-15, 21:6

GOD PROMISED ABRAHAM THAT HE WOULD HAVE AN HEIR AND THAT SARAH WOULD BE THE MOTHER OF THE PROMISED SON AND THE BEGINNING OF THE HEBREW NATION. HOWEVER, AS THE YEARS SLIPPED BY, AND ALL NATURAL PROCESSES BEGAN TO FADE, IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE AND INSURMOUNTABLE FOR SARAH TO CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON. IT WAS AT THIS POINT THAT SARAH TOOK MATTERS INTO HER OWN HANDS AND SOUGHT A PHYSICAL SOLUTION TO A SPIRITUAL PROBLEM, NAMELY SHE ENCOURAGED ABRAHAM TO HAVE A SON BY HAGAR, HER HANDMAIDEN. IN TIME, THIS HASTY AND ILL-ADVISED SOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEM WOULD HAUNT SARAH.

A. THE LAUGHTER OF UNBELIEF - GENESIS 18:12-15

WHEN GOD ANNOUNCED THAT SARAH WOULD HAVE A SON, IT SEEMED SO INCREDIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE THAT SHE LAUGHED INWARDLY IN UNBELIEF. HER UNVOICED LAUGHTER WAS KNOWN TO GOD, EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS NO OUTWARD EXPRESSION OF THAT UNBELIEF. SARAH WOULD LEARN THE LESSON THAT WHAT GOD PROMISES, HE WILL DO AND APPARENT BARRIERS DO

NOT CHANGE THAT PROMISE. A QUESTION EVERY MAN NEEDS TO ASK HIMSELF IS: "IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?" - VERSE 14. ~~MEN ARE PRONE TO LAUGH AT THE PROMISES OF GOD, ESPECIALLY IN THE FACE OF PHYSICAL BARRIERS.~~ (COMPARE NOAH AND ~~11 PETER 3:3-9~~) ISAAC WAS BORN ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE PROMISE AND ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE TIMETABLE, AND THE FRAILTY AND DEADNESS OF BOTH ABRAHAM AND SARAH'S FLESH DID NOT STOP THE PROMISE OF GOD. ~~TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER GOD GAVE THE PROMISE, IT WAS FULFILLED.~~

B. THE LAUGHTER OF RELIEF - GENESIS 21:6

THE WORD ISAAC MEANS "LAUGHTER". THIS PLAY ON WORDS WOULD INDICATE THAT SARAH'S UNBELIEF CHANGED TO BELIEF, AND THAT HER FAITH DID COME ALIVE. SHE HAD LEARNED THAT NOTHING IS TOO HARD FOR GOD. SANDERS REMINDS US THAT THESE STORIES ARE ENCOURAGING TO THE ELDERLY. WE GENERALLY EXPECT EXPLOITS OF FAITH TO BE LIMITED TO THE YOUNG, BUT SARAH WAS AT LEAST 90 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME SHE GAVE BIRTH TO ISAAC. HEBREWS 11:11 GIVES INSIGHT INTO SARAH'S LIFE OF FAITH. SARAH DIED AT 127 AND TO MY KNOWLEDGE IS THE ONLY WOMAN WHOSE AGE, DEATH, AND BURIAL ARE MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE! THIS STORY IS IMPORTANT FOR MANY REASONS, BUT BOTH ABRAHAM AND SARAH REMIND THE READERS OF SCRIPTURE THAT GOD ALWAYS KEEPS HIS PROMISE. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO US? WE HAVE BASED OUR ETERNAL DESTINY AND WELL-BEING ON THE PROMISE OF GOD. (JOHN 5:24)

II. THE LAUGHTER OF UNDISTURBED DEITY - PSALM 2:4

THE SCENE IN PSALM 2 IS NO LAUGHING MATTER FOR THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD. THIS PASSAGE DESCRIBES THE GREATEST CRISIS IN HUMAN HISTORY AND BIBLE PROPHECY, AS FAR AS THE NATIONS ARE CONCERNED. THIS IS ARMAGEDDON. THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAVE MARSHALLED THEIR FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN AN AREA SOME 200 MILES LONG WHERE APPROXIMATELY 400 MILLION SOLDIERS WILL GATHER FOR EARTH'S FINAL HOLOCAUST! ACCORDING

TO SCRIPTURE, THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON WILL BEGIN WITH THE COMPLETE SIEGE OF THE CITY OF JERUSALEM. ARMIES REPRESENTING THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD WILL PRESS UPON THAT CITY. (ZECHARIAH 12:2-3, 14:2; ZEPHANIAH 3:8) ANTICHRIST WILL BE THERE, ALONG WITH THE OTHER MAJOR BLOCKS OF NATIONS IN THE WORLD. THEIR SINGLE PURPOSE WILL BE TO DESTROY ISRAEL AND ISRAEL'S MESSIAH. ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE, THAT TINY NATION WILL BE DESECRATED, THE CITY OF JERUSALEM CAPTURED, THE WEALTH OF THE CITY CONFISCATED AND LEFT IN RUINS. OF COURSE, THE CLIMAX OF THIS WHOLESALÉ MOVEMENT OF THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD AGAINST GOD WILL BE THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST. SOMEONE HAS CALLED IT AN INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE. (REVELATION 19:11, ZECHARIAH 9:14-16) ARMAGEDDON, THEN, IS THE FINAL CONFLICT OF THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD AGAINST GOD, ISRAEL, AND ISRAEL'S MESSIAH. THE PSALM SPEAKS OF A KIND OF BANDING TOGETHER OR CONSPIRACY FOR EVIL INTENT OF THE NATIONS AS THEY GATHER IN ONE UNIFIED OUTCRY AGAINST GOD. THE UNDERCURRENT OF THE NATIONS BREAKS INTO OPEN HOSTILITY AS THEY PLOT HOSTILE ACTIONS AGAINST GOD. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT TWO OF THE PRINCIPLE NATIONS OF THIS WORLD, NAMELY RUSSIA AND CHINA, ARE NATIONS WHOSE OFFICIAL POLICY IS TO DENOUNCE ANYTHING THAT SPEAKS OF GOD, FOR COMMUNISM SAYS THERE IS NO GOD! THE PSALM SPEAKS OF THESE EFFORTS TO THROW OFF DIVINE RESTRAINT, TO DO AWAY WITH DIVINE CONTROL, MUCH AS IN THE CASE OF THE WORLD BEFORE THE GENESIS FLOOD. AFTER SETTING THIS SCENE, THE SCENE SHIFTS FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN, WHERE GOD IS PICTURED AS SITTING IN THE HEAVENS AND LAUGHING! THE LAUGH IS NOT THAT OF HUMOR, BUT RATHER OF SCORN. THE PICTURE OF ONE SITTING IN LIGHT OF SUCH MOMENTOUS ACTIVITY ON EARTH SUGGESTS ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY AND COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION. IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN MAN DOES HIS BEST TO THWART THE INFLUENCE OF GOD, GOD IS ABSOLUTELY AT EASE AND LOOKS DOWN FROM HEAVEN WITH DISDAIN AND SCORN AT MAN'S FEEBLE ATTEMPT TO THRUST GOD FROM THE EARTH. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT ONE REASON GOD LAUGHS

Notes

IS BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE OUTCOME AND HIS SON WILL BE VICTORIOUS OF EARTH WITHOUT FIRING A SINGLE SHOT! THE EXTENT OF THE DESECRATION IS DESCRIBED IN GRAPHIC TERMS IN VERSE 9. THE APPEAL TO THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH IS TO "KISS THE SON" OR SUBMIT TO HIS AUTHORITY OR ELSE BE BROUGHT TO JUDGEMENT BEFORE HIM.

III. THE LAUGHTER OF AN UNHAPPY HEART - PROVERBS 14:13

THE WORD "SORROWFUL" IN THE TEXT CARRIES WITH IT THE IDEA OF PAIN, GRIEF, SADNESS, PENETRATING SORROW. WHILE THE NATURAL MAN APPEARS OUTWARDLY TO BE LAUGHING, INWARDLY THERE IS BITTERNESS AND DEEP SORROW. WHILE THE FACE MAY REFLECT HAPPINESS, THE SOUL BEARS GREAT HEAVINESS. SOME OF THE HIGHEST PAID MEN IN THE WORLD ARE COMEDIANS. MEN PAY LARGE SUMS OF MONEY TO OTHER MEN IN ORDER THAT THIS GROUP OF MEN MIGHT MAKE THEM LAUGH. IT IS THE REPLAY OF THE OLD COURT JESTER IDEA OF MEDIEVAL TIMES. YET, THOSE VERY MEN BENEATH THE EXTERIOR ARE SOMETIMES THE SADDEST AND MOST DISSATISFIED. MEN WANT TO KNOW IF THEY CAN REALLY BE HAPPY WITHOUT DOING RIGHT AND WITHOUT KNOWING GOD. IT IS MY BELIEF THAT HAPPINESS IS A VERY ILLUSIVE COMMODITY FOR THE NATURAL MAN. HE MAY FIND TEMPORARY PLEASURE BUT IT IS A FADING FEATURE BECAUSE MAN IS SO CONSTITUTED THAT NOTHING REALLY SATISFIES THE SOUL BUT GOD HIMSELF! ALL OTHER SATISFACTIONS ARE REALLY CHEAP SUBSTITUTES. THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN THE HERE AND NOW. THERE IS AN ETERNAL DIMENSION TO LIFE WHICH MEN MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND, BUT THEY DO UNDERSTAND CARL JUNG'S STATEMENT WHEN HE SAID: "THE CENTRAL NEUROSIS OF OUR TIME IS EMPTINESS." THE HUMAN SOUL CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITH MATERIAL THINGS ALONE, OR IN THE WORDS OF JESUS, "MAN CANNOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE". MAN WAS MADE BY GOD AND CAN NEVER FULLY REST UNTIL HE RESTS IN THE SAVIOR. PAUL LITTLE SUGGESTS THAT AN AUTOMOBILE, WITH ALL OF ITS FINE-TUNED EQUIPMENT, WILL NOT RUN ON WATER. IT WAS MADE TO RUN ON GASOLINE AND WILL NOT FUNCTION

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PROPERLY UNTIL GASOLINE IS USED. MAN WAS DESIGNED TO FIND FULFILLMENT IN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD. SIN MARRIED THE DESIGN AND RUINED THE FELLOWSHIP, SO THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE IS SIMPLY THE CORRECTING OF THE SIN PROBLEM BY FINDING FULFILLMENT IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS CHRIST, WHO SAID: "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE; HE WHO COMES TO ME SHALL NEVER HUNGER, HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME SHALL NEVER THIRST." (JOHN 6:35) WHEN ONE DISCOVERS JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR, HE FINDS AN INNER CONTENTMENT AND SATISFACTION, A SPIRITUAL REFRESHMENT WHICH NOTHING ELSE IN THIS WORLD CAN DUPLICATE. (RELATE BILLY GRAHAM'S STORY ABOUT HENRY FORD FIXING HIS OWN PRODUCT, THE GOD WHO MADE US KNOWS WHAT IT TAKES TO BRING SATISFACTION.) PROVERBS 14:12 IS A FITTING CONCLUSION TO THIS THEME. WHEN MAN HAS TURNED TO EVERY SPRING OR SOURCE OF EARTHLY SATISFACTION, HE WILL ONLY COME UP EMPTY AND MEANINGLESS. CHRIST ALONE CAN QUIET THE DISSATISFACTION OF A HEART AND BRING REAL PURPOSE AND MEANING TO LIFE.

Eccles. 3:11 - "eternity in their heart"

BY HIS GRACE

ROMANS 3:24

MANKIND IS DROWNING IN A SEA OF SIN. THE WORLD, IN ITS ATTEMPT TO RESCUE MAN IS BUSILY ENGAGED IN TEACHING HIM SWIMMING LESSONS! A DROWNING PERSON DOES NOT NEED A SWIMMING LESSON HE NEEDS A ROPE TO WHICH HE MAY CLING! IN THE BIBLE, THAT ROPE OF RESCUE IS CALLED GRACE. RECENTLY, I PURCHASED A SET OF BOOKS ENTITLED THE NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY. IT IS AN EXHAUSTIVE STUDY OF ALL OF THE MAJOR WORDS OF THE BIBLE. THE WORD GRACE IS FASCINATING. IT COMES FROM A GREEK WORD CHARIS FROM WHICH WE GET OUR ENGLISH WORD CHARISMA. GRACE IS RELATED TO WORDS LIKE FAVOR, BEAUTY, KINDNESS, GRATITUDE, AND FAVOR. IN THE WORLD OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS THE WORD SOCIAL GRACES IS USED TO SPEAK OF THOSE SOCIAL NICETIES RELATING TO CHARM, COURTESY, POISE AND CULTURE. IT RELATES TO THOSE SOCIAL AMENITIES OR AMIABLE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH ATTRACT ONE HUMAN BEING TO ANOTHER. THERE IS NOTHING IN THE SINNER WORTHY OF SALVATION - NOTHING! MEN ARE NOT SAVED FROM SIN BECAUSE GOD SEES SOMETHING WORTHWHILE IN THEM WHICH MAYBE EXTRACTED AND USED FOR BETTER PURPOSES. MEN ARE SAVED BECAUSE OF GODS FAVOR TOWARD THEM. GRACE IS SIMPLY GOD STOOPING OR RESPONDING TO MANS DESPERATE NEED. MEN ARE SAVED BECAUSE GOD IS GRACIOUS NOT BECAUSE MEN ARE GOOD. (THE STORY IS TOLD OF A BRITISH SAILOR WHO DESERTED TO AFRICA AND JOINED A PORTUGUESE SLAVE TRADING VESSEL. WHILE SERVING ON THE CREW THIS PARTICULAR SAILOR SUFFERED A GREAT DEAL OF ABUSE. THERE WERE MANY SINFUL ACTIVITIES AT SEA AND ONCE HE WAS KNOCKED OVERBOARD AND WAS SAVED ONLY BECAUSE THE CAPTAIN SPEARED HIM WITH A HARPOON WHICH LEFT A HIDEOUS SCAR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. EVENTUALLY THIS BRITISH SAILOR WAS SAVED AND WROTE ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN AND MOST BELOVED HYMNS DEALING WITH THE SUBJECT OF GRACE - JOHN NEWTON WAS THE AUTHOR OF AMAZING GRACE. LATER ON IN HIS CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE NEWTON SAID THAT WHEN HE GOT TO HEAVEN HE WOULD WONDER AT THREE THINGS:

(1) HE WOULD WONDER AT THE MANY PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE THAT HE DID NOT EXPECT TO SEE THERE. (2) HE WOULD WONDER AT THE MANY PEOPLE HE EXPECTED TO SEE THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT. (3) HE WOULD WONDER MOST OF ALL THAT HE HIMSELF HAD MADE IT TO HEAVEN. SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I DISCOVERED SEVERAL VERBS IN THE BIBLE RELATING TO THE WORD GRACE. THESE WORDS PROVIDE AN OUTLINE FOR OUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS WONDERFUL WORD.

I. GRACE TO SAVE - EPHESIANS 2:8

(Conversation - m. a. from Pittsburg)

IN OUR TIME, MANY PEOPLE ARE HUNG UP ON THE IDEA THAT FEELINGS ARE PARAMOUNT IN THE WORK OF SALVATION. THE MAN WHO RESTS HIS ETERNAL WELL-BEING ON FEELINGS WILL NOT ONLY NEVER BE SAVED HE WILL NEVER BE SATISFIED. CHRIST ALONE CAN FILL EMPTINESS OF THE HUMAN SOUL AND THIS IS DONE BY FAITH AND NOT BY FEELING. FAITH IS NOT SOMETHING WE DO BUT RATHER IT IS BELIEVING SOMETHING HE DID.

ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE WORKS ARE NOT THE CAUSE OF OUR SALVATION BUT THE RESULT OF SALVATION. SIMPLY STATED THIS VERSE SAYS THAT WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE FOR SURE, FOR NOTHING, FOR EVER. (THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A PREACHER NAMED HENRY MOREHOUSE WHO PREACHED IN AMERICA A FEW GENERATIONS AGO. ONE DAY HE CAME ACROSS A SMALL BOY CARRYING A PITCHER OF MILK FROM THE LOCAL STORE. WHILE HE WATCHED THE BOY SLIPPED AND FELL BROKE THE PITCHER AND BEGAN TO CRY. THE SYMPATHIC PASTOR ATTEMPTED TO PUT THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER ONLY TO WATCH THEM FALL APART AGAIN. BECAUSE THE BOY WAS SO FEARFUL OF A WHIPPING MOREHOUSE ACCOMPANIED HIM TO THE LOCAL STORE WHERE THEY PURCHASED A NEW PITCHER FILLED WITH MILK AND THE BOY WENT ON HIS WAY. WHEN ASKED IF HE WAS AFRAID OF GETTING A WHIPPING NOW, THE BOY REPLIED: "NO SIR, BECAUSE THE PITCHER I HAVE NOW IT BETTER THAN THE ONE I HAD BEFORE!" OUR BROKEN LIVES WERE IN A HOPELESS AND HELPLESS CONDITION. RELIGION ATTEMPTS TO HELP PATCH UP THE OLD PIECES BUT GRACE GIVES A NEW LIFE IN CHRIST. (II SAMUEL 9 IS A HELPFUL OLD TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATION OF GRACE.)

II. GRACE TO STAND - ROMANS 5:2

THIS VERSE SPEAKS OF THE BELIEVERS POSITION OR STATE IN CHRIST BY THE GRACE OF GOD. ONCE WE WERE IN ADAM BUT NOW WE ARE IN CHRIST. GRACE IS THE SPHERE OR REALM IN WHICH WE ARE ACCEPTED OF GOD. GRACE ENABLES US TO STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. GRACE IS THE SOIL AND CLIMATE OF OUR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. THE BELIEVER IS NOT A KIND OF SPIRITUAL SCARECROW PROPPED UP IN CHURCH ON SUNDAY MORNING TO MAKE A GOOD APPEARANCE. HE DOES NOT STAND IN THE STRENGTH OF HIS OWN HUMAN ABILITY OR RESOURCES. THE BELIEVER HAS NEW LIFE, INTEREST, HABITS AND HOPE ALL BECAUSE OF GRACE. WHEN WE THINK OF OUR STANDING IN GRACE ONE IS REMINDED OF THE PICTURE OF PSALM 1.

III. GRACE TO BE STRONG - II TIMOTHY 2:1

THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH IS GRACE. THIS IS IN CONTRAST WITH ONES OWN LIMITED STRENGTH. THE WORD STRONG IS USED SEVERAL PLACES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. ACTS 9:22, ROMANS 4:20 - THE BIBLE SAYS ABRAHAM WAS STRONG IN FAITH WHICH IS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF MOST MEN WHO ARE WEAK IN FAITH. EPHESIANS 6:10, PHILIPPIANS 4:13 - THE BELIEVER IS TO FIND HIS STRENGTH IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. OURS IS A GENERATION WHICH SEEMS TO EMPHASIZE SPIRITUAL FRAILTY AND THE PROBLEMS WHICH DEVELOP IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. WE ARE SO PROBLEM CONSCIOUS THAT WE FORGET THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ALL STRENGTH WE NEED TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST. (AN OLD TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATION OF STRENGTH AND COURAGE IS RECORDED IN JOSHUA 1:6-9) THE CHURCH SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN FLEXING ITS SPIRITUAL MUSCLES AND MOVING INTO THE DEVILS TERRITORY TO ACCOMPLISH SPIRITUAL VICTORIES. OUR CHURCHES HAVE BECOME HOSPITALS FOR SUFFERING SAINTS INSTEAD OF ARSENALS WHERE THEY MAY COME AND RELOAD AND GO OUT TO BATTLE AGAIN FOR OUR BLESSED LORD.

IV. GRACE TO SING - COLOSSIANS 3:16

THE GRATITUDE OF SAINTS IS OFTEN EXPRESSED IN SONG. PROPER SINGING ALWAYS BEGINS WITH A PROPER ASSOCIATION AND RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD. A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT IS MADE IN OUR CHURCHES TO SING AND TO MINISTER IN MUSIC IN A CORRECT TECHNICAL SENSE. I NOT ONLY APPRECIATE THIS ATTITUDE I AM FOR IT ONE HUNDRED PERCENT. HOWEVER, WHILE MINISTERING THE WORD OF GOD IN SONG IN A CORRECT TECHNICAL SENSE WE MUST AVOID BECOMING MECHANICAL AND UNFEELING IN OUR MUSIC. THAT IS WHY IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT IN A CHURCH CHOIR OR IN SOLOS OR SMALL GROUP WORK ONLY SAVED PEOPLE PARTICIPATE. WHAT DOES THE UNSAVED MAN, NO MATTER HOW WELL TRAINED HIS VOICE MAYBE, HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD? ALL SINGING IN THE CHURCH IS NOT NECESSARILY TO THE AUDIENCE BUT RATHER TO THE LORD! SOLOS, DUETS, GROUPS AND CHOIRS SHOULD BE CONSCIOUS OF THE SCRIPTURAL CONTENT OF THEIR MUSIC AND THE SPIRITUAL MINISTRY OF MUSIC. SPECIAL MUSIC IS NOT SOMETHING USED TO FILL IN BETWEEN THE PRAYERS AND PREACHING NOR IS IT THE PERFORMANCE OF A SINGLE PERSON OR A GROUP. THE BIBLE EMPHASIZES MINISTRY OF MUSIC. IF IT IS NOT A MINISTRY IT IS NOT NECESSARY IN CHURCH!

V. GRACE TO SPEAK - COLOSSIANS 4:6

NOTHING GETS THE BELIEVER INTO TROUBLE FASTER THAN HIS TONGUE! FOR MANY THE TONGUE IS LIKE A COILED SERPENT WHICH IS UNLEASHED ONLY TO POISON AND TO HARM EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES. PAUL SPEAKS OF THE CHARM OF CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION. THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF THE STRENGTH OF CONVICTION IN OUR SPEECH BUT ALSO THE SWEETNESS OF CHARACTER! OUR LORD WAS KNOWN AS A PERSON OF GRACIOUS WORDS. THE ILLUSTRATION IS OLD BUT THE TRUTH IS NEW. IT IS SAID THAT JOHN WESLEY WAS HAVING LUNCH IN THE HOME OF A WEALTHY FAMILY. THE DAUGHTER OF THE FAMILY WAS A VERY YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL LADY WHO WAS IMPRESSED WITH WESLEY'S PREACHING. HOWEVER, IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT WESLEY OPPOSED WEARING EXPENSIVE RINGS AND JEWELRY. ONE UNTHINKING PERSON AT DINNER LIFTED THE YOUNG

LADIES HAND AND SAID TO WESLEY, "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS SIR FOR A METHODISTS HAND?" THE GIRL BLUSHED WITH EMBARRASSMENT AND WESLEY RESPONDED WITHOUT A MOMENTS HESITATION - "THE HAND IS VERY BEAUTIFUL." YOU ARE NOT SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT THIS YOUNG LADY APPEARED AT THE NEXT SERVICE AND THE JEWELRY GONE. THE PHRASE "SEASON WITH SALT" DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE SHOULD COMMUNICATE WITH SALTY LANGUAGE!

A CARELESS WORD MAY KINDLE STRIFE,
A CRUEL WORD MAY RECK A LIFE,
A BITTER WORD MAY HATE INSTILL;
A BRUTAL WORD MAY SMITE AND KILL,
A GRACIOUS WORD MAY SMOOTH THE WAY;
A JOYOUS WORD MAY LIGHT THE DAY,
A TIMELY WORD MAY LESS THE STRESS;
A LOVING WORD MAY HEAL AND BLESS.

SOMEONE ASKED A TWO YEAR OLD BOY IF HIS BROTHER HAD STARTED TALKING, "WHY SHOULD HE TALK? HE GETS EVERYTHING HE WANTS BY HOLLERING!" (DR. C. E. MACARTNEY OF PITTSBURGH USE TO TELL THE STORY OF AN OLD PURITAN PREACHER IN LONDON WHO WORE A ROBE IN THE PULPIT. APPARANTLY THERE WAS SOME STRING OR TASSELS WHICH HUNG FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE ROBE WHICH BOTHERED A CERTAIN LADY IN THE CONGREGATION. SHE CAME TO THE PASTOR AT THE CONCLUSION OF A PARTICULAR SERMON WITH A PAIR OF SISSORS AND ASKED IF SHE MIGHT SHORTEN THAT PART OF THE ROBE FOR SEEING IT HAD ANNOYED HER AND DISTRACTED HER TO THE POINT THAT SHE COULD NOT GET ANYTHING OUT OF THE SERMON. THE MINISTER WHO MILDLY SUBMITTED TO HER REQUEST AFTER SHE HAD WACKED OFF SEVERAL PIECES OF HIS GOWN AND HE THANKED HER AND THEN ASKED OR SAID HE HAD A REQUEST FOR HER. "MY GOOD WOMEN, THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT YOU THAT IS ALTOGETHER TO LONG AND WHICH HAS ANNOYED ME GREATLY AND SINCE ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER I WOULD LIKE TO SHORTEN THAT." CERTAINLY WAS THE WOMENS REPLY YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO DO SO, HERE IS THE SHEARS. WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD THE PASTOR PROMPTEDLY SAID, "VERY WELL MADAME, STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE!")

VI. GRACE THAT IS SUFFICIENT - II CORINTHIANS 12:9

THIS VERSE WAS GIVEN BY PAUL DURING THE HOUR OF HIS MAXIMUM PHYSICAL CRISIS. IN THE FORGE OF AFFLICTION PAUL DISCOVERED THAT GOD'S GRACE WAS SUFFICIENT FOR HIS EVERY NEED EVEN WHEN HE VIEWED HIS CONDITION AS BEING IMPALED ON A STAKE. THIS VERSE STATES WITHOUT QUALIFICATION THAT WHAT EVER OUR NEEDS GOD'S GRACE IS ENOUGH. WHEN THE BELIEVER RECOGNIZES THE FACT THAT GOD HAS GIVEN THE RESOURCES FOR EVERY SITUATION HE IS ENCOURAGED IN HIS CHRISTIAN LIFE. SPURGEON WAS MEDITATING ON THIS VERSE ONE EVENING AND BY HIS OWN ADMISSION AFTER A HEAVY DAYS WORK WAS A BIT TIRED AND TENSE. AS HE WAS RIDING HOME IN HIS CARRIAGE AND CROSSED THE RIVER NEAR WHERE HE LIVED HE THOUGHT OF THE FISH LIVING IN THE RIVER, THE STREAM WAS ADEQUATE FOR THEIR NEEDS. HE SAID HE THOUGH OF THE MAN CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN MOVING UP OUT OF THE EASY BREATHING OF THE LOW LANDS TO THE THIN AIR OF THE HEIGHTS. DOES THE MAN NEED TO BREATHE LESS IN THE HIGHER ATMOSPHERE, NOT AT ALL HE MAY BREATHE AS MUCH AS HIS LUNGS WILL HOLD FOR THE ATMOSPHERE IS SUFFICIENT FOR HIS NEEDS. (MANY YEARS AGO A FRIEND OWNED AND SOLD A FILM PROCESSING COMPANY. PRIOR TO SELLING THIS COMPANY TO A LARGE NATIONAL COMPANY HE GAVE ME A CAMERA AND A TOUR THROUGH A WORK AREA WHICH INCLUDED A TRIP TO THE DARK ROOM. THE DARKROOM WAS PART OF THE FLIM PROCESS. THE SORROWFUL EXPERIENCES OF LIFE LEAVE DIFFERENT MARKS ON DIFFERENT PEOPLE. SOME GO THROUGH DIFFICULTIES AND EMERGE BARREN AND AFRAID OF LIFE. SOME BECOME BITTER AND RESENTFUL TOWARD GOD AND OTHERS. SOME ARE BROKEN THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES AND GIVE UP ONLY TO SINK IN SELF PITY AND DESPAIR. HOWEVER, THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN COMES THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES OF LIFE NOT ONLY VICTORIOUS OVER THE EXPERIENCE BUT A BLESSING TO OTHERS. (RELATE THE STORY OF JONI)

THE CALL OF GOD

ISAIAH 55:1-13

*The Gospel
of Isaiah -
(Criswell)*

BEFORE WE LOOK AT THE TEXT OF THE CHAPTER, LET US REVIEW SOME BACKGROUND MATERIAL OF THE BOOK. THE KEY IDEA IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH IS SALVATION; AS A MATTER OF FACT HIS NAME LITERALLY MEANS SALVATION OF JEHOVAH. THE PROPHETS WERE MEN WHOM GOD RAISED UP DURING THE DARK DAYS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY. THEY WERE MEN THRU WHOM GOD SPOKE TO THE SINFUL NATION. THEIR PERIOD IN HISTORY COVERED APPROXIMATELY 500 YEARS. THEY PREACHED FEARLESSLY TO KINGS AND COMMONER ALIKE. FROM SAMUEL TO JOHN THE BAPTIST, THESE FEARLESS MEN CALLED THE NATION TO REPENTANCE. SOMEONE HAS CALLED ISAIAH A MINITURE BIBLE. THE BOOK HAS 66 CHAPTERS, JUST AS THE BIBLE HAS 66 BOOKS. THERE ARE TWO GREAT DIVISIONS, WITH 39 CHAPTERS TALKING ABOUT THE FIRST COMING OF THE KING AND THE LAST 27 CHAPTERS DEALING PRIMARILY WITH THE KING IN HIS REGAL GLORY. ISAIAH WAS A MAN OF ROYAL BLOOD. HE WAS AN ARISTOCRAT FROM A PRINCELY LINE. HE BEGAN HIS PROPHECY BY DENOUNCING THE SINS OF ISRAEL BUT THE GREAT CHANGE IN HIS LIFE IS RECORDED IN CHAPTER 6. IT ALL BEGAN WITH THE DEATH OF KING UZZIAH WHO HAD REIGNED FOR 52 YEARS. HE HAD BEEN A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL KING, DIED A LEPER AND AN OUTCAST BECAUSE HE TRIED TO USURP THE OFFICE THE OFFICE OF THE PRIEST. THROUGH THAT ENTIRE EXPERIENCE, ISAIAH WAS GLORIOUSLY TRANSFORMED WITH A NEW VISION OF THE LORD IN ALL HIS GLORY. THE BOOK IS FILLED WITH MANY WONDERFUL PROPHETIC TRUTHS BUT IS BEST KNOWN FOR ITS GREAT 53RD CHAPTER WHICH IS A GRAPHIC PICTURE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOUR AND ISRAEL'S MESSIAH. THE BOOK IS FILLED WITH MANY WONDERFUL PROMISES CONCERNING THE COMING OF OUR LORD. FOR EXAMPLE, ISAIAH 7:14 "BEHOLD A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL." ISAIAH 9:6 "FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN: AND THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER; AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE." A GREAT DEAL IS SAID ABOUT SATAN IN ISAIAH 14:12-16. THERE ARE PRECIOUS TRUTHS SUCH AS 26:3 "THOU WILT KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE, WHOSE MIND IS STAYED ON THEE; BECAUSE HE TRUSTETH IN THEE." ALSO, 40:31 "BUT THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS AS EAGLES; THEY SHALL RUN, AND NOT BE WEARY; AND THEY SHALL WALK AND NOT FAINT." ALL IN ALL, THE

BOOK OF ISAIAH IS A SPIRITUAL GOLD MINE OF DOCTRINAL AND DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL.

THE 55TH CHAPTER DEALS WITH THE SALVATION OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL IN AN ESCHATOLOGICAL CONTEXT. HOWEVER, WE MAY APPLY THESE GREAT VERSES TO THE MATTER OF PERSONAL SALVATION. THE WORD CALL IS A VERY COMMON WORD. WE RECEIVE PHONE CALLS EVERY DAY. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOUNG MEN RECEIVED A CALL TO SERVE THEIR COUNTRY. EACH OF US GETS A CALL TO ARISE EACH MORNING. (ILLUSTRATION OF DAYS OF YOUTH AND THE USAGE OF MY FULL NAME. REMEMBER DAYS OF LINOLEUM FLOORS, QUILTS AND FEATHER TICKS AND THE PROCEDURE OF GRABBING ONE'S CLOTHES TO RUN TO THE FIRE AND THE STOVE IN THE KITCHEN TO DRESS.) WE OFTEN SPEAK OF THE "ROLL BEING CALLED UP YONDER." THROUGHOUT THE WORD OF GOD WE ARE TOLD THAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO HIS SON. "WHEREUNTO HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL, TO THE OBTAINING OF THE GLORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." (II THESS. 2:14) "WHO HATH SAVED US, AND CALLED US WITH A HOLY CALLING, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PURPOSE AND GRACE, WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN." (II TIMOTHY 1:9)

I. THE CALL TO SALVATION - VERSES 1-5

THE BIBLE HAS A GREAT DEAL TO SAY ABOUT GOD'S CALL TO SALVATION. PETER REMINDED HIS READERS TO "MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE." THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF THE CALL OF GOD WHICH INVITES ALL WHO HEAR THE GOSPEL TO COME TO CHRIST FOR SALVATION. VERSE 1 MAKES THIS CLEAR. THE WORD "COME" IS USED THREE TIMES IN VERSE 1 AND SIX TIMES IN THE CHAPTER, TO INVITE MEN TO GOD. GOD WELCOMES SINNERS TO COME TO HIM FOR FORGIVENESS, IN ISAIAH 1:18, MATTHEW 11:28, JOHN 5:40, REVELATION 22:17. IN THE REVELATION PASSAGE WHICH IS GOD'S LAST INVITATION IN THE BIBLE, THE REPEATED USE OF THE WORD COME IS SEEN, "AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME, AND LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY, COME, AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME. AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY." HOW ELSE CAN GOD SAY THAT HE WANTS MEN TO BE SAVED. IN THIS PASSAGE, GOD INVITES ALL MEN TO COME TO HIM. IT WOULD SEEM THAT ONLY THE THIRSTY AND ONLY THE SPIRITUALLY THIRSTY ARE SAVED. THE WORD "THIRST" IN THE BIBLE

JESUS APPEALED TO THOSE WHO HAS A SENSE OF NEED. CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE. (MARK 10:49!) A SENSE OF NEED! Take a sinner's place to find a sinner's Saviour. Physician to the sick! Men never come to God on their terms!

OFTEN INDICATES DESIRE. THE SINNER IS SPIRITUALLY BARREN AND DRY. ETERNAL LIFE IS THE ONLY ANSWER TO MAN'S SPIRITUAL THIRST. "JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HER, WHOSOEVER DRINKETH OF THIS WATER SHALL THIRST AGAIN; BUT WHOSOEVER DRINKETH OF THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL NEVER THIRST; BUT THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL BE IN HIM A WELL OF WATER SPRINGING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE."

(JOHN 4:13-14) "IN THE LAST DAY, THAT GREAT DAY OF THE FEAST, JESUS STOOD AND CRIED, SAYING, IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME, AND DRINK." (JOHN 7:37)

NOTICE, THE EMPHASIS OF THE BIBLE IS COMING TO CHRIST TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE THIRSTY SOUL. NO RELIGIOUS GROUP OR SYSTEM CAN BRING SATISFACTION TO THE SOUL. THE MEN LABOR FOR THAT WHICH DOES NOT SATISFY. ONLY GOD CAN BRING SATISFACTION TO THE INNER PART OF MAN. SOLOMON SAID, "HELL AND DESTRUCTION ARE NEVER FULL; SO THE EYES OF MAN ARE NEVER SATISFIED." (PROVERBS 27:20) (RELATE THE STORY OF THE COUNTRY PREACHER WHO WENT TO THE BIG CITY AND WHEN HE PRAYED AT NIGHT, HE SAID "LORD, I THANK YOU THAT I WHEN I SAW ALL THE SIGHTS I WAS GRATEFUL TO SEE THEM, BUT I THANK YOU MOST OF ALL THAT I DIDN'T SEE A SINGLE THING I WANTED.") THIS PASSAGE SAYS THAT SALVATION IS WITHOUT PRICE. THE POOR WHO MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD IT AND THE RICH WHO MIGHT TRY TO BUY IT ALL STAND ON LEVEL GROUND WITH THE SUBJECT OF SALVATION. IT IS A GIFT, IT IS FREE TO ALL FOR THE TAKING. "NONE ARE SO POOR THEY CANNOT PROCURE IT; NONE ARE SO RICH THAT THEY CAN PURCHASE IT." SALVATION IS WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL MEN! "BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS," (ROMANS 3:24) MEN WHO RECEIVE INVITATIONS OF EVERY SORT AND DESCRIPTION ALL THE WAY FROM WEDDING TO LUNCH TO SUPPER FIND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE SIMPLE INVITATION OF GOD TO COME JUST AS WE ARE AND BE SAVED FREELY. (ILLUSTRATE THIS PRINCIPLE WITH THE MAN WHO CAME TO PRAYER MEETING ON WEDNESDAY EVENING-BILL MAYER.) THE CALL OF OUR BLESSED LORD TO SALVATION IS ILLUSTRATED IN MATTHEW 22:1-14.

(Dr. Stearns Story of a Eagle.)

II. THE COMPARISON OF HUMAN AND DIVINE IDEAS ABOUT SALVATION - (VERSES 6-9)

Forl Portant TARDON

THE PROBLEM WITH THE SIMPLE PLAN OF SALVATION IS THAT MEN COMPLICATE IT AND REFUSE TO ACCEPT GOD'S WORD ON THE SUBJECT. MAN FOREVER BELIEVES THAT SALVATION IS

BY WORKS AND PERSONAL MERIT AND GOD CLEARLY SPECIFIES THAT SALVATION IS BY GRACE. ACCORDING TO VERSE 6, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT SALVATION TODAY FOR THE TIME WILL COME WHEN GOD'S GRACE WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM MAN. (COMPARE THE GENESIS FLOOD) IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING, GOD IS NEAR TO US THROUGH THE PREACHING OF HIS WORD AND HIS DEALINGS WITH US. GOD BREAKS INTO OUR LIVES THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES, SICKNESS AND ARRESTS OUR ATTENTION TO HEAR HIS WORD. FOR THE MAN WHO WILL HEED GOD'S WORK IN HIS LIFE THERE IS THE PROMISE OF PARDON IN VERSE 7. THE HEBREW WORD, LITERALLY SAYS "MULTIPLY TO PARDON." THIS IS GOD'S WAY OF SPEAKING OF FORGIVENESS. MEN FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PARDON OTHERS AT ALL. WE SEEK REVENGE AND WE ARE SLOW TO FORGIVE INJURY. TO BE SURE, WE MIGHT FORGIVE A SLIGHT INJURY, BUT AN AGGRAVATED ONE WILL BRING SLOWNESS OF PARDON. THIS IS NOT TRUE OF GOD, FOR HE IS READY TO FORGIVE REGARDLESS OF THE AGGRAVATED SENSE OF SIN. (EVERY PARENT KNOWS WHAT IT IS TO HAVE A CHILD VIOLATE THE STANDARD OF CONDUCT ESTABLISHED IN A HOME. LET US SUPPOSE IT IS A BROTHER WHO STRIKES A SISTER UNUSUALLY HARD. HE SEEMS TO BE DRIVEN BY MISCHIEVOUS CONDUCT AND NO WORD OF COUNSEL FROM HIS PARENTS SEEMS TO REACH HIM. THE CHILD SENSES A TREMENDOUS WEIGHT OF GUILT WITHIN. AFTER THE MOMENT OF UNKINDNESS IS OVER, HE SEEKS TO MAKE RESTITUTION TO HIS MOTHER BY OFFERING TO DO THINGS FOR HER. HE OFFERS TO RUN ERRANDS, TO DO OTHER LITTLE SERVICES IN ORDER TO BE RESTORED. BUT SOMETHING IS NECESSARY FIRST. THE CHILD MUST ADMIT HIS WRONG AND SEEK HIS PARENT'S FORGIVENESS. WHEN THIS IS DONE THE MOTHER WILL PROBABLY ASK, "ARE YOU REALLY SORRY?" WHEN THIS HAS BEEN DETERMINED, THE MOTHER WILL WILLINGLY ACCEPT THE CHILD'S DESIRE TO HELP AND CAN THINK OF MANY THINGS WHICH NEED TO BE DONE.) HOWEVER, THERE MUST BE CONFESSION BEFORE THERE IS FORGIVENESS AND A SENSE OF WELL-BEING. THE SAME IS TRUE WITH GOD. BEFORE HE WILL PARDON, THERE MUST BE CONFESSION OF SIN AND A DESIRE TO BE FORGIVEN. WHEN THIS IS DONE, WE AS GOD'S WAYWARD ONES ARE RESTORED TO A PROPER PLACE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. (WE MOST COMMONLY ASSOCIATE THE TERM PARDON WITH THAT OF THE RELEASE OF A CONDEMNED CRIMINAL.)

III. THE CONFIDENCE OF GOD IN HIS WORD REGARDING SALVATION - VERSES 11-13 *TRACE*

WHEN JONAH UTTERED THE WORDS "SALVATION IS OF THE LORD" HE SUMMED UP THE TRUTH OF VERSE 11. SOMETIMES

PASTORS PREACH AND WONDER IF THE WORDS SPOKEN ARE EVEN HEARD LET ALONE IF THEY ACCOMPLISH A GREAT DEAL. MANY TIMES FOLK SIT FOR MONTHS AND YEARS AND DO NOT MOVE. WE NEED NOT FEAR FOR GOD'S WORD SPOKEN UNDER THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ACCOMPLISH GOD'S INTENDED WORK. GOD'S WILL AND HIS WORK ON EARTH AMONG MEN WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED, IT WILL NOT BE FRUSTRATED BY MEN. THERE ARE MANY VERSES WHICH SPEAK OF THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD, (JAMES 1:18, I PETER 1:23) NOT ONLY DOES GOD'S WORD ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE IN OUR LIVES BUT IT ALSO BRINGS PEACE. IN ONE OF HIS BOOKS, W. E. SANGSTER TOLD THE STORY ABOUT A BRITISH SCIENTIST WHO WENT TO INDIA YEARS AGO AND WAS GREATLY TROUBLED BY THE HINDU CUSTOM OF DRINKING WATER OUT OF THE SACRED GANGES RIVER. THE SCIENTIST KNEW THE WATER WAS FULL OF IMPURITIES AND HARMFUL TO THOSE WHO PERSISTED IN DRINKING IT. HE WONDERED WHAT HE COULD DO TO STOP THIS FOOLISH PRACTICE. HE ARRANGED TO MAKE A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT AND INVITED A LEADING HINDU PRIEST, A MAN WHO SEEMED TO BE OF SOME INTELLIGENCE, TO COME AND VIEW THE EXPERIMENT WHILE THE SCIENTIST TRIED TO SHOW THE FOUL DRINKING WATER WAS BRINGING DISEASE AND SICKNESS UPON THE PEOPLE. THE EXPERIMENT CONSISTED IN THE SCIENTIST TAKING A POWERFUL MAGNIFYING GLASS PLUS A DROP OF WATER AND THUS SHOWING UNDER THE POWERFUL GLASSES THAT THE SPECIMEN CONTAINED ALL KINDS OF HARMFUL GERMS. UPON BEING CONFRONTED WITH THIS EVIDENCE, THE HINDU PRIEST TOOK THE MICROSCOPE FROM THE BENCH AND DASHED IT TO THE FLOOR. THIS WAS HIS REACTION TO THE LIGHT OF TRUTH. HE COULD SMASH THE INSTRUMENT, REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE FACTS, BUT HE HAD NOT CLEANSSED THE WATER; THE PROBLEM REMAINED. GOD REMINDS US IN THIS CHAPTER THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO TURN HIS BACK UPON GOD WHEN GOD POINTS OUT THE NEED OF SALVATION. BUT IN TURNING AWAY FROM GOD, THE SINNER HAS NOT ACCOMPLISHED HIS GREATEST NEED, NAMELY, THAT OF HAVING A HEART CLEANSSED FROM SIN AND PEACE WITH GOD. HE HAS NOT SOLVED HIS NEED OF HAPPINESS AND JOY WHICH ALONE CAN COME FROM KNOWING JESUS CHRIST IN PARDON AND FORGIVENESS OF SIN. THE INVITATION OF GOD IS CLEAR AND SIMPLE. NOW YOU MUST MAKE A CHOICE.

- I. Come To the Water
- II. Compare Wages
- III. Consider the Word

FIVE THINGS GOD CANNOT DO

IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THERE IS ANYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE BEYOND GOD'S ABILITY. THE ONE WHO MADE THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS, WHO PILED UP THE MOUNTAINS, AND SCOOPED OUT THE RIVERBEDS, WHO MADE MAN IN ALL OF HIS AMAZING ABILITIES IS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING HE DESIRES. HOWEVER, THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF AT LEAST FIVE THINGS THE INFINITE GOD CANNOT DO. THREE OF THE FIVE ARE RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS.

I. GOD CANNOT SAVE A PERSON WHO REFUSES TO YIELD TO THE HOLY SPIRIT - HEBREWS 6:4-6

THIS PASSAGE IN THE WORD OF GOD HAS BEEN A THEOLOGICAL BATTLEFIELD FOR YEARS. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT IT REFERS ① TO PEOPLE WHO WERE SAVED AND ULTIMATELY LOST. IT IS THE VIEW OF ARMINIAN TEACHING WHICH BELIEVES THAT SALVATION CAN BE LOST AND GAINED MANY TIMES, BUT THE PROBLEM IN THIS PASSAGE IS THAT IT IS SPEAKING OF A CASE WHERE THERE IS NO HOPE OF RESTORATION. THE SECOND IDEA ② IS THAT IT REFERS TO PROFESSING BELIEVERS WHO WERE NEVER REALLY SAVED. THE THIRD ③ IDEA IS THAT IT REFERS TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE BACKSLIDEN. AND THE FOURTH AND PROBABLY THE NEAREST TO THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION ④ IS THAT IT REFERS TO A HYPOTHETICAL CASE. THE IDEA IS THAT PAUL IS SPEAKING OF A SUPPOSED CASE ASSUMING THAT A TRULY REGENERATED PERSON COULD FLEE TO JUDISM AFTER HAVING EMBRACED CHRIST. WHAT PAUL IS ARGUING IN THIS PASSAGE IS THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR EITHER GOD OR MAN TO ACCOMPLISH SALVATION APART FROM CHRIST AND THE LIFE CHANGING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. WESTCOTT SAYS OF THE HYPOTHETICAL CASE, "THERE IS NOTHING TO SHOW THAT THE CONDITIONS OF FATAL APOSTACY HAD BEEN FULFILLED, STILL LESS THAT THEY HAD BEEN FULFILLED IN THE CASE OF ANY OF THESE ADDRESSED. THOMAS SAYS, "THE PASSAGE IS APPARENTLY A SUPPOSED CASE TO CORRECT THEIR WRONG IDEAS, AND THE ARGUMENT SEEMS TO BE THAT IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF VERSES 4-6 TO FALL AWAY, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM UNLESS CHRIST DIED A SECOND TIME."

VERSE 9 ADDS WEIGHT TO THE HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION.

II. GOD CANNOT LIE - HEBREWS 6:18

*Pellengell
re
David*

IT MIGHT WELL BE SAID THAT YOU AND I CAN HARDLY HELP FROM LYING ON OCASSION, BUT THE BIBLE STATES THAT NOT ONLY GOD NOT CHOOSE TO LIE - EVER - BUT HE CANNOT LIE. THIS VERSE SHOULD PUT TO REST THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS OF SITUATION ETHICS. IN THE CONTEXT OF CHAPTER 6, THE WRITER IS SHOWING THAT OUR SALVATION IS BASED UPON THE PROMISE OF GOD WHO NOT ONLY WILL NOT LIE BUT CANNOT LIE. THE POINT OF THE PASSAGE IS THAT GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM STANDS BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON HIS CHARACTER. GOD DOES NOT CHANGE THE RULES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME. HIS PROMISES CONCERNING SALVATION ARE AS TRUE FOR US AS THEY WERE FOR ABRAHAM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. GOD DOES NOT CHANGE HIS WORD EVERY HUNDRED OR TWO HUNDRED YEARS BUT REMAINS ONCE AND FOR ALL THE UNCHANGEABLE GOD. OUR SALVATION RESTS UPON HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS WORD. (QUOTE JOHN 1:12, 5:24, 6:37, AND SHOW HOW OUR ETERNAL DESTINY IS BOUND UP IN THE PROMISES OF GOD. IF GOD COULD LIE THESE PROMISES WOULD BE LITERALLY WORTHLESS. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THIS ASPECT OF GOD'S NATURE BECAUSE OUR SOCIETY FUNCTIONS IN LARGE MEASURE UPON FALSEHOOD! OUR POLITICIANS ARE IN LARGE MEASURE WHAT PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLIC IMAGE MAKES THEM. THIS IS NOT TRUE WITH REFERENCE TO GOD.

W. J. J. J.

III. GOD CANNOT SAVE MEN APART FROM FAITH - HEBREWS 11:6

THE DEFINITIONS OF FAITH ABOUND. "SAVING FAITH IS THE UNLIMITED WILLINGNESS TO LET GOD DO ALL THE SAVING." "SAVING FAITH IS MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S MESSAGE UNDER THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT." "SAVING FAITH IS THE HAND OF THE HEART." "SAVING FAITH IS THE SURRENDER OF SELF TO GOD, LEAVING OUR CASE COMPLETELY IN HIS HANDS, FOLLOWING HIS DIRECTIONS." "FAITH IS NOT SOME MYSTICAL QUALITY OF THE MIND, OR SOME STRANGE INTUITIVE POWER THAT ALLOWS ONE TO PEER INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD, BUT SIMPLY STATED, SAVING FAITH IS RELIANCE AND TRUST IN A TRUSTWORTHY GOD WHO PROMISES TO SAVE FROM SIN ALL WHO WILL TRUST HIM."

THIS IS A TRUST THAT ENABLES THE BELIEVER TO TREAT THE FUTURE AS PRESENT AND THE UNSEEN AS VISIBLE. IN THIS GREAT CHAPTER, GOD GIVES HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF MEN WHO WERE WILLING IN FAITH TO TRUST GOD IN ALMOST EVERY KIND OF SITUATION IN LIFE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WORLD WHERE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MEN WERE GREAT, NOT A SINGLE WORD IS MENTIONED IN THIS CHAPTER OF MAN'S CULTURAL OR POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS. THE ONE THING THAT PLEASES GOD IS FAITH IN HIS WORD. IF WE CHOOSE NOT TO BELIEVE GOD, THERE IS NO WAY FOR US TO BE SAVED - NO WAY! (ROMANS 10:17, EPHESIANS 2:8-9)

IV. GOD CANNOT ACT CONTRARY TO HIS OWN NATURE - GENESIS 6:6 - (Mal. 3:6) "I am the Lord... I ^{change} _{not}"

THE WORD REPENTED HAS SOMETIMES BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD AS APPLIED TO GOD. WHEN MEN REPENT IT MEANS THEY CHANGE THEIR MIND OR ATTITUDE ABOUT GOD. HOWEVER, WHEN GOD REPENTS IT DOES NOT MEAN A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE BUT RATHER HE CHANGES HIS MANNER OF DEALING WITH MEN IN ORDER THAT HE MIGHT REMAIN CHANGELESS IN CHARACTER. AS MAN GREW PROGRESSIVELY MORE WICKED, GOD HAD TO CHANGE HIS MANNER OF DEALING WITH MAN IN ORDER TO BE UNCHANGEABLE IN CHARACTER AND NATURE. FOR THAT REASON HE SENT A UNIVERSAL FLOOD TO DEAL WITH MAN'S DEPRAVITY. IF MODERN MANKIND WERE SETTING THE STANDARDS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, HE WOULD CHANGE THE STANDARD WITH EACH GENERATION TO CONFORM TO ITS OWN IDEAS OF RIGHT AND WRONG. GOD IS NOT THAT WAY. GOD WILL NOT ADAPT TO MAN'S SINFULNESS. MAN MUST ADAPT OR CHANGE TO GOD'S STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. (RELATE WHAT HAPPENS IN THE NEW BIRTH. WE CHANGE OUR BASIS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM MAN-MADE TO GOD-MADE)

V. GOD CANNOT HELP ANYONE WHO DIES WITHOUT CHRIST - LUKE 16:26

THERE IS A COMMON BELIEF THAT SOMEHOW, SOMEWAY, MAN WILL HAVE A SECOND CHANCE AFTER DEATH TO REPENT. THIS IS SATAN'S LIE TO DECEIVE MEN INTO POSTPONING A DECISION TO RECEIVE CHRIST. JESUS GAVE A CASE STUDY TO DISPROVE THIS ERROR.

THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMILIAR IN ALL OF THE BIBLE. HOWEVER, ONE INTERESTING NOTE IS THAT NOTHING IS SAID ABOUT THE IMMORAL QUALITY OF THIS MAN'S LIFE. HE DID NOT KICK LAZARUS AS HE MOVED ABOUT THE NORMAL ROUTINE OF LIFE. HIS PROBLEM WAS THAT HE SIMPLY PAID NO ATTENTION TO THE POOR, MISERABLE BEGGAR. DAY AFTER DAY HE DID NOTHING TO HELP. HIS SIN WAS THE SIN OF UNCONCERN AND NEGLECT TO THE POINT THAT HE SHUT HIS EYES TO THE NEEDS OF EVERYONE EXCEPT HIMSELF. HIS LIFE STYLE WAS TO EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY. IT MUST ALSO BE POINTED OUT THAT THE RICH MAN DID NOT GO TO HELL BECAUSE HE WAS RICH BUT RATHER BECAUSE HE WAS POOR TOWARD GOD. HE IS NOT PORTRAYED AS A VILE AND WICKED MAN BUT RATHER ONE WHO WAS NEGLIGENT. IN THIS PASSAGE WE LEARN SEVERAL THINGS ABOUT HELL. (SEE BIBLE MARGIN) THE POINT THAT NEEDS TO BE MADE HOWEVER, WITH REFERENCE TO THIS PASSAGE, IS THAT ONCE THE RICH MAN WAS IN HELL, THERE WAS NO RETURN. IT WOULD SEEM TO ME THAT THE MOST AGONIZING TORMENT WOULD BE THAT OF THE MORAL TORTURE OF A STRICKEN CONSCIENCE THAT COULD REMEMBER MISSPENT TIME AND PRIVILEGES AND WARNINGS THAT WERE REJECTED AND NOW IT WAS TOO LATE.

FIVE MEN AND FIVE TREES

THIS SUBJECT IS A CONTINUATION IN OUR SERIES OF FIVES. THE OUTLINE WAS GIVEN TO ME BY LEHMAN STRAUSS. IT IS HIS OUTLINE, MY MESSAGE! RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES. (RELATE TO LANDSCAPING OUR PRESENT CHURCH SITE.)

I. THE SINNING MAN AMONG THE TREES - GENESIS 3:8

ONE OF SATAN'S LIES IS THAT MAN IS AN ADVANCED FORM OF ANIMAL LIFE. MAN EVOLVED UP THROUGH THE OOZE AND SLIME OVER MILLIONS OR BILLIONS OF YEARS TO HIS PRESENT STATUS. IF A PERSON BELIEVES THIS LIE, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW MEN TODAY CAN TAKE THE LIFE OF ANOTHER MAN THOUGHTLESSLY. IN THE THINKING OF A WARPED MIND, MAN IS SIMPLY A HIGH FORM OF ANIMAL AND THEREFORE HUMAN LIFE IS NO MORE SACRED THAN THAT OF ANIMAL LIFE. THE BIBLE DECLARES THAT MAN BEARS THE MARKS OF HIS CREATOR. THE VERY BIBLE WORD FOR MAN INDICATES "THE UP LOOKING ONE." MAN ALONE HAS GOD CONSCIOUSNESS. (DOGS AND CATS FEEL NO SENSE OF NEED IN GOING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR PRAYER MEETING!) THE BIBLE DECLARES THAT THE FIRST MAN WAS CREATED BY GOD A MATURE, RATIONAL BEING PLACED IN A GARDEN PARADISE. (I REMEMBER HEARING ALLAN BLAIR TELL THE STORY OF SIR ISSAC NEWTON AND HIS MINIATURE UNIVERSE. AN ASSISTANT CAME IN AND ASKED HIM WHERE HE GOT IT. HIS ANSWER WAS IT JUST HAPPENED AND THE RESPONSE WAS "RIDICULOUS." THAT IS EXACTLY HOW THE BIBLE BELEIVING CHRISTIAN FEELS CONCERNING ORGANIC EVOLUTION.) THE FIRST TEST OF ADAM WAS CONCERNING GOD'S WORD. (GENESIS 2:15-17, 3:1) MAN'S TEST BEFORE GOD THEN AS NOW WAS WHETHER HE WOULD PERMIT GOD TO DIRECT HIS LIFE OR CLAIM THE RIGHT TO DO AS HE PLEASED. SATAN'S THREEFOLD APPROACH WAS: (1) DOUBT - 3:1 (2) DISTORT - 3:3 (3) DENY - 3:4

IN ADAM'S FAILURE WE SEE THE WHOLE RACE OF MANKIND INVOLVED. (ROMANS 5:12) ORIGINALLY MAN WAS CREATED WITH A HOLY NATURE, AN INNATE TENDENCY TO DO RIGHT. HOWEVER HE POSSESSED A WILL MAKING HIM CAPABLE OF CHOICE. GOD PERMITTED MAN TO BE TESTED IN ORDER THAT THROUGH MORAL EXPERIENCE HE MIGHT DEVELOP A HOLY CHARACTER. IN THIS TEST ADAM FAILED - HE SINNED. AS A RESULT OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION SIN IS THE UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE OF ALL MEN. (ISAIAH 53:6, ROMANS 3:10, 23) THE BIBLE ALSO TEACHES THAT MAN IS TOTALLY DEPRAVED. BY THIS WE DO NOT MEAN THAT THE UNSAVED MAN HAS NO DISPOSITION WHATEVER TO DO RIGHT, OR THAT HE NEVER DOES ANYTHING WORTHWHILE AT ALL, OR THAT THE UNSAVED MAN IS AS BAD AS HE COULD BE UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES. HOWEVER THE TERM DOES MEAN THAT ALL MEN HAVE A SINFUL NATURE AND UNDER FAVORABLE CONDITIONS ARE CAPABLE OF THE WORST SINS. THAT GOD'S GLORY IS NOT THE GOAL OF THE UNSAVED MAN'S LIFE AND THAT HE HAS NO MEANS OF RECOVERY FROM HIS SIN APART FROM THE GRACE OF GOD. THE RESULT OF ADAM'S SIN WAS THAT HE LOST HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, AND WHEN THIS HAPPENED, ADAM SOUGHT TO MAKE HIS ENVIRONMENT MORE COMFORTABLE AND TO COVER HIS OWN GUILT. IN THIS ACT LIES AN IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL LESSON. THERE WERE JUST TWO KINDS OF RELIGION IN THE WORLD. (1) THAT WHICH IS MAN-MADE, THE RESULT OF MAN'S EFFORT, THE PRODUCT OF HIS OWN DOING. (2) THE OTHER IS SALVATION BY SUBSTITUTION, HOLY OF GOD, PROVIDED BY HIM ACCORDING TO DIVINE SPECIFICATION. THIS IS THE ONLY KIND OF COVERING GOD WILL ACCEPT, NAMELY, THAT WHICH HE PROVIDES. (APPLY TO THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST) IT IS ALSO INTERESTING THAT WHEN MAN DISOBEYED GOD HIS FIRST INSTINCT WAS TO HIDE WHEN HE CAME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD. DISOBEDIENCE ALWAYS RESULTS IN GUILT AND HIDING. SIN STRIKES FEAR IN THE HEART OF MAN WHEN HE COMES INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

II. THE SINCERE MAN UNDER A TREE - JOHN 1:48

FOUR OBVIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF NATHANAEL APPEAR IN THE TEXT. (1) HE WAS SKEPTICAL - VERSE 46. NAZARETH WAS A REAL OLD VILLAGE IN THE HILLS. IT WAS BACK WOODS COUNTRY, AND THE GREAT EVENTS IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY DID NOT HAPPEN THERE BUT RATHER IN JERUSALEM OR SOME OTHER PROMINENT CITY.

Charlie Brown
"How can we love when we
are sinners?"

NATHANAEL HAD DOUBTS ABOUT MESSIAH'S COMING FROM SUCH AN OUT OF THE WAY PLACE. IN THIS REGARD HE REPRESENTS ALL MEN WHO BELIEVE THAT GOD MUST ACT IN A WAY AND IN THE PLACE THEY EXPECT. MANY MEN LIKE NATHANAEL AND NAAMAN WANT GOD TO SAVE THEM IN THE WAY THEY PRESCRIBE. IT IS MUCH LIKE A PATIENT TELLING THE DOCTOR HOW TO PRACTICE MEDICINE! (2) HE WAS SINCERE - VERSE 47. JESUS SAW IN NATHANAEL AN HONESTY OF MIND AS WELL AS A MAN OF HIGH MORAL CHARACTER. HIS DOUBTS WERE HONEST DOUBTS. HE HAD NOT CLOSED HIS MIND TO THE GOSPEL. HOWEVER, LET ME HASTEN TO SAY THAT SINCERITY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAVE A MAN. A PERSON MAY BE SINCERELY WRONG AND CLOSE HIS MIND TO ANY FURTHER LIGHT. (3) HE WAS SEARCHING - VERSE 48. APPARENTLY NATHANAEL WAS READING THE SCRIPTURES. THIS IS THE CURE FOR ANY MAN'S QUESTIONS. MANY CRITICS AND SKEPTICS ARE NOT SEEKING ANSWERS BUT RATHER PARROTING THE TIRED OLD CLIQUES OF UNBELIEF. (4) HE WAS SAVED - VERSE 49. THIS VERSE IS THE CONFESSION OF A MAN WHO HAS PLACED HIS FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

III. THE SEEKING MAN UP A TREE - LUKE 19:10

TAX MEN WERE NO MORE POPULAR DURING BIBLE TIMES THAN THEY ARE NOW. THEN IT WAS A JOB SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER AND FOR THAT REASON THE TAX COLLECTOR WAS A HATED MAN. THE WORD ZACCHAEUS MEANS "THE JUST," BUT LIKE MANY PEOPLE HE HAD NOT LIVED UP TO HIS NAME. THIS LITTLE MAN WAS A BIG SINNER AND LOST BEFORE HE FOUND JESUS OR RATHER JESUS FOUND HIM. LET US LOOK AT WHAT THE TEXT SAYS ABOUT HIS SINNERSHIP. (1) HE WAS A SINNER BY IMPLICATION - "JERICHO" JERICHO WAS A WICKED CITY THAT WAS RUNNING WILD. (2) HE WAS A SINNER BY VOCATION. HIS JOB WAS BY NATURE ONE OF QUESTIONABLE METHODS AND MOTIVES. WHAT HE DID MADE IT HARD FOR HIM TO BE A RESPECTABLE PERSON IN THE COMMUNITY. (3) HE WAS A SINNER BY REPUTATION. THE PEOPLE WHO LOOKED UPON ZACCHAEUS THOUGHT HE WAS A SINNER. BUT ACCORDING TO VERSE 9 HE WAS A SINNER WHO WAS SAVED BY GOING TO A PLACE WHERE JESUS WOULD PASS BY.

I BELIEVE THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE SAVED IF THEY WOULD JUST SIMPLY EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST.

IV. THE SAVED MAN LIKE A TREE - Psalm 1:3

THIS PSALM IS VERY INTERESTING BECAUSE IT CONTRASTS THE TWO DIFFERENT KIND OF MEN IN THE WORLD. SAVED AND LOST. THE BLESSED MAN IS ONE WHOSE SPIRITUAL LIFE IS LIKE A TREE. THAT IS, HE IS ROOTED IN THE WORD OF GOD, FRUITFUL IN HIS WORK, STEADFAST IN THE THINGS OF THE LORD. HERE IS A MAN WHO DEMONSTRATES IN HIS LIFE WHAT SALVATION MEANS TO HIM. HIS ENTIRE LIFE INDICATES HIS DEPENDENCE ON THE WORD OF GOD FOR STRENGTH.

V. THE SAVIOUR ON THE TREE - I Peter 2:24

OUR SALVATION COST US NOTHING, BUT IT COST HEAVEN ITS MOST PRECIOUS PERSON, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THREE TIMES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS THE WORD TREE IS USED WITH REFERENCE TO THE CROSS UPON WHICH JESUS DIED. (5:30, 10:39, 13:29) WHAT JESUS CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY IS THE BASIS ON WHICH YOU AND I MAY HAVE AN EXPERIENCE, FORGIVENESS, AND PARDON OF SIN.

(Judas)--in presence of light
walking in darkness.

discuss in a class. It means a life of obedience to Jesus Christ. Anything less than that is not true Christianity--it is a counterfeit. (Herb Ware's comment about people buying houses--no intention of paying for them. Some people make a quick profession with no intention of accepting the responsibility--this is not N.T. Christianity, it is something else.) The proof of our profession is our conduct.

II. THE FACT OF A CONSISTANT WALK--v.7

John says that one indication that a person is walking with God is his fellowship with other Christians. The man who is walking in the light of God's Word is the man who is living a cleansed life. The daily walk in fellowship with God will promote a love of the Lord's people and will make the believers sensitive to sin. (Psalm 51)

Guy King tells the story of a lighthouse on the coast. Years ago when lanterns were used. A glass pane broke. No glasses so substituted tin. That night a ship wrecked and the loss of several lives. The light had not been put out, it did not burn low--but part of it was dark. The Bible says that the believer is a living lighthouse to warn men of the dangers of life outside of Christ. (Phil. 2:15) Any part of the life that is not open to the light endangers those who need to see the light.

III. THE FACT OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN--v.8/10

There is something in every man that makes it easier to do wrong than to do right. Left to ourselves we tend to choose the broad and easy road to sin rather than the straight and narrow way.

Verse 8 teaches clearly that eradication of sin from the life is not possible. Every Christian has two natures and the Adamic or sinful nature in a Christian is just as deadly as it is in the worst sinner who ever lived. The old or Adamic nature may be educated not to kill, steal, lie but that does not make it good--there is nothing good about it. The old nature produces hatred, jealousy, bitterness, selfishness which for the believer leads to unhappiness. The new nature produces love, joy, peace etc. and happiness. The secret of Christian victory is surrender to the Lord and His control of the life.

John would have made a good psychologist. He gets to the heart of matters in a hurry. In a day when we tend to blame others for our sins, such as environment, physical condition, mental state, temperament--John says simply there are no excuses and we are each responsible!

There are people who do not think of themselves in terms of having sinned against God. And they resent being called sinners. They think of sins as that which makes the newspaper or is flagrant in its abuse of normally accepted standards. The problem is that of labels. We call our sins failures, shortcomings and mistakes. God calls them sins.

IV. THE FACT OF THE CONFESSION OF SINS--v.9

Remember this Biblical order--before there is cleansing there must be confession. Our confession of sins is to God and not to some human clergyman. If we are going to enjoy fellowship with the Lord this is the correct way. The verse does not say we must pray and plead with God for cleansing--to confess is to be cleansed. The word confess means to see our sins as God does and to say the same thing about them He does.

Jesus taught the difference between cleansing in the bath of regeneration and the rinsing that is necessary every day. (John 13:10) The bath of salvation never needs repeating. It is good for eternity. The cleansing from daily defilement of sins is a day-to-day necessity.

Why is confession so important?

Unconfessed sin is like a splinter in the hand. Unattended it festers and spreads its poison thru the entire body. One unconfessed sin brings others in its wake. As the problem mounts in the life unhappiness and discontentment follow until life loses its joy and blessing. The ministry of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit reveal the presence of sins in the life of the Christian. (**Remember the attitude of the prodigal son.)

V. THE FACT OF A CONTINUING ADVOCATE--2:1

When a believer sins, he does not lose his sonship, he loses fellowship. He is not cast out of the family but his joy is gone. A cloud comes between him and the Father until there is confession and then fellowship is restored. We get ourselves into sin but we cannot restore ourselves. Just as we have an Adversary to seek our downfall, so we have an Advocate who pleads our cause.

Many illustrations have been used to show the meaning of this verse. ***1. Sending us to school--the standard was no misconduct--even though sometimes we did! 2. Airplanes are designed to fly and not to crash--but water/safety jackets for the emergencies. 3. Boats--lifeboats 4. Auto--designed to be accident free but happen every day.

THE INESCAPABLE GODPSALM 139

THE WORDS OF REVELATION 6:15-17 MAKE THE BLOOD RUN COLD. "AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH AND THE GREAT MEN AND THE COMMANDERS AND THE RICH AND THE STRONG AND EVERY SLAVE AND FREE MAN, **HID THEMSELVES** IN THE CAVES AND AMONG THE ROCKS OF THE MOUNTAINS; AND THEY SAID TO THE MOUNTAINS AND TO THE ROCKS, "FALL ON US AND **HIDE US** FROM THE PRESENCE OF HIM WHO SITS ON THE THRONE, AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB; FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; AND WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?" WHEN **ADAM** SINNED AGAINST THE LORD HIS FIRST REACTION WAS TO **HIDE**: "AND ADAM AND HIS WIFE **HID THEMSELVES** FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD GOD AMONGST THE TREES OF THE GARDEN." (GENESIS 3:7-8)

(RELATE **GAMES** WHICH SMALL CHILDREN PLAY BY COVERING THE EYES WITH THE HANDS AND BELIEVE THAT THEY CANNOT BE SEEN BECAUSE THEY CANNOT SEE. **GROWN-UPS** PLAY THIS GAME TOO. THE FACT THAT THEY CANNOT SEE GOD LEADS THEM TO BELIEVE THAT HE DOES NOT SEE THEM.) (RELATE STORY CONCERNING "A LITTLE BIRD TOLD ME, AND MOTHERS.")

PSALM 139 IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR STANZAS OF SIX VERSES EACH. IN EACH STANZA, WE LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT OUR INESCAPABLE GOD.

I. THE INESCAPABLE GOD KNOWS ALL ABOUT US --VERSES 1-6

THE THEOLOGICAL TERM WHICH SPEAKS OF GOD'S ALL-KNOWING ABILITY IS CALLED OMNISCIENCE. GOD IS ALL KNOWING. IN THE TEXT, PLEASE NOTICE THE REPETITION OF THE WORD KNOW OR SIMILAR TERMS DENOTING KNOWLEDGE. YEARS AGO, A MAN TOLD OF HIS EXPERIENCE OF BEING SHUT UP IN A GLOOMY PRISON CELL FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME. IN THE DOOR OF HIS CELL WAS A SMALL HOLE. AT THAT HOLE, A SOLDIER WAS PLACED DAY AND NIGHT TO WATCH HIM.

1 ALL THE PRISONER COULD SEE WAS THE SOLDIER'S EYE, BUT THE EYE WAS ALWAYS THERE. DAY AND NIGHT, EVERY MOMENT WHEN HE LOOKED UP FROM HIS CELL HE SAW THAT ALL-SEEING EYE. THERE WAS NO ESCAPE, NO HIDING. THE WORD SEARCHED IN VERSE 1, SUGGESTS THE IDEA OF A MINING OPERATION OR THE EXPLORATION OF A COUNTRY. GOD HAS FULLY SCRUTINIZED OUR LIVES AND KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT US. WE HAVE NO SECRETS FROM GOD AND WE CAN NEVER GET AWAY FROM HIM. GOD KNOWS WHAT WE ARE DOING, THINKING AND SAYING. NOTHING IS MORE ROUTINE AND ORDINARY THAN SITTING DOWN AND STANDING UP. THE SIMPLEST ACTIVITIES OF LIFE ARE FULLY KNOWN TO GOD. OUR INTIMATE THOUGHTS, INCLUDING OUR EVERY WORD, DOES NOT ESCAPE HIS CAREFUL ATTENTION. THERE ARE NO LIMITS TO GOD'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT US, WHETHER IT BE MOVEMENT OF THE BODY OR ACTION OF THE MIND, HABITS OF LIFE, DESIRES FOR THE FUTURE, THESE ARE ALL KNOWN TO GOD. WE MAY SPEAK IN SUCH A WAY TO DECEIVE OUR FELLOW MAN, BUT NOTHING WE SAY OR DO CAN DECEIVE GOD. SUCH BIBLE TRUTH IS OVERPOWERING WHEN ONE REALIZES AND RECOGNIZES THAT HE SPENDS HIS ENTIRE LIFE IN THE SIGHT AND PRESENCE OF GOD FROM WHOM THERE IS NO ESCAPE. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF MODERN MAN HELPS US APPRECIATE THE EXTENT OF DIVINE OMNISCIENCE. I READ RECENTLY OF A COMPUTER THAT CAN ASSIMILATE AND STORE FIVE-MILLION WORDS PER SECOND. OUR BIBLE CONTAINS APPROXIMATELY 850,000 WORDS. THIS PARTICULAR MACHINE CAN ASSIMILATE SIX TIMES THE WORD VOLUME OF THE BIBLE IN A SINGLE SECOND. ALBERT EINSTEIN ONCE SAID: "WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE UNIVERSE AT ALL. OUR KNOWLEDGE IS BUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN. CONCERNING THE REAL NATURE OF THINGS -- WE SHALL NEVER KNOW, NEVER."

2 II. THE INESCAPABLE GOD IS EVERYWHERE PRESENT IN THE UNIVERSE -- VERSE 7-12

THE THEOLOGICAL TERM FOR THIS IDEA IS OMNIPRESENCE. A SEMINARY PROFESSOR OPENED HIS LECTURE ON GOD WITH THESE WORDS: "WE MAY BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT OUR FELLOW MAN BEHIND HIS BACK, BUT GOD IS EVERYWHERE, EVEN IN THIS CLASSROOM. THEREFORE,

IN ALL OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WE MUST BE AWARE OF HIS PRESENCE, AND TALK ABOUT HIM AS IF HE WERE LOOKING US IN THE FACE." THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE GOD WHOM WE WORSHIP AND SERVE IS SO GREAT THAT THE UNIVERSE CANNOT CONTAIN HIM, AND YET, HE HAS CONDESCENDED TO DWELL IN THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER. JUST AS THE SUN HAS A WAY OF ADAPTING ITSELF TO REFLECTION, SO GOD HAS ADAPTED HIMSELF TO HUMAN NEED. IF ONE SHOULD STAND ON THE DECK OF A SHIP IN MID-OCEAN, THE SUN WOULD BE REFLECTED FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN. ONE MIGHT ALSO SEE THE SAME SUN REFLECTED IN A SINGLE DROP OF MORNING DEW. QUESTION: WHERE COULD A PERSON GO IN ORDER TO GET AWAY FROM GOD? IS THERE A GOD-FORSAKEN PLACE IN THE WORLD? IN THIS PASSAGE, DAVID THINKS OF THE EXTREMITIES OF THE UNIVERSE, SUCH AS HEAVEN AND HELL, OR SHEOL. HE THINKS OF THE PLACES WHERE THE MORNING SUN WOULD SHINE, THE OCEAN DEPTHS AND THE DARKNESS ACROSS THE WORLD. (BY THE WAY, I AM TOLD THAT THE DEEPEST PLACES IN THE OCEANS ARE CALLED TRENCHES. THE DEEPEST TRENCH DISCOVERED TO DATE IS IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND IS CALLED THE MARIANA TRENCH, WHICH IS ALMOST SEVEN MILES DEEP. THE ATLANTIC OCEAN'S DEEPEST TRENCH IS NOT QUITE SIX MILES DEEP AND IS LOCATED NEAR PUERTO RICO.) THOSE WHO DESCEND TO THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEANS SAY THAT THE BLACKNESS IS INCREDIBLE. (JONAH WAS A MAN WHO THOUGHT HE COULD HIDE FROM GOD ON THE SURFACE OF THE SEA, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THERE IS NO HIDING PLACE FOR THE DISOBEDIENT SERVANT. CONCERNING DARKNESS AND LIGHT, MAN SEEKS TO HIDE HIS SINS UNDER THE CLOAK OF DARKNESS. MOST MODERN CITIES ARE AWARE THAT THE ERECTION OF STREET LIGHTS CUTS DOWN THE CRIME RATE. WHEN WE LIVED IN DETROIT, CERTAIN AREAS OF THE CITY WERE SELECTED AS PRIMARY TARGETS AND THE CRIME REDUCTION WAS UP TO 55% IN SOME OF THESE AREAS. IN A TEN-YEAR MASTER PLAN, THE CITY CALLED FOR THE INSTALLATION OF 36,000 NEW LIGHTS IN DETROIT AT THE COST THEN OF \$1-MILLION EACH YEAR. QUESTION: WHO WOULD WANT TO HIDE FROM GOD? SIN MAKES MEN AFRAID OF AND UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. (COMPARE WADE MCCLURE AND HIS FALSE CLAIM.)

Church

MEN TODAY, JUST AS ADAM IN EDEN, SEEK TO HIDE FROM GOD. SOME PEOPLE TRY TO HIDE IN A BOTTLE, WHETHER IT BE PILLS OR DRINK, OTHERS TRY PLEASURE, ACTIVITIES, EVEN WORK; BUT ALWAYS UNSUCCESSFULLY TO AVOID GOD. SOME MISGUIDED PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT SUICIDE IS THE ULTIMATE ANSWER TO ESCAPE FROM GOD, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT EVEN IN DEATH THEY CANNOT HIDE FROM HIM. (RELATE TO BRAZIL AND BRIDGE IN SAO PAULO) EVERY DAY AN AVERAGE OF 60 AMERICANS CHOOSE TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIVES. SUICIDE IS THE TENTH LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN OUR COUNTRY. SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 20 AND 30-THOUSAND AMERICANS EACH YEAR, AND 500-THOUSAND PEOPLE WORLDWIDE, SEEK THIS RELEASE FROM THE PERILS OF LIFE AND THEIR FLIGHT FROM GOD.

III. THE INESCAPABLE GOD CAN DO THINGS IN THIS WORLD -- VERSES 13-18

THE THEOLOGICAL TERM FOR GOD'S ABILITY TO DO IS CALLED OMNIPOTENCE. A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER WAS TEACHING A SERIES OF LESSONS ON GOD AND ASKED HER CLASS: "IS THERE ANYTHING GOD CAN'T DO?" AFTER A PERIOD OF SILENCE, ONE STUDENT RAISED HIS HAND AND REPLIED: "HE CAN'T PLEASE EVERYBODY." OF COURSE, THE BIBLE SAYS HE CANNOT LIE, OR DO SOMETHING CONTRARY TO HIS OWN NATURE. THE WORD "WORKS" IN VERSE 14, SUGGESTS THE IDEA THAT THERE ARE MANY WAYS IN WHICH THE POWER OF GOD COULD BE DEMONSTRATED IN HUMAN HISTORY. THE CREATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD ARE ALL MENTIONED AS VITAL PARTS OF GOD'S WORKS. THE NATION OF ISRAEL IS ANOTHER. HOWEVER, THE PSALMIST IN THIS PORTION OF SCRIPTURE FOCUSES ON THE SUPREME WORK OF GOD'S HAND, NAMELY, MAN. (IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, THEY HAVE JUST COME THROUGH A LENGTHY COURT SESSION CONCERNING ORIGINS AND ESPECIALLY THAT OF MAN. I AM REMINDED OF THE STORY OF THE TOAD AND THE LIZZARD IN TEXAS WHO WATCHES AN EXPRESS TRAIN TRAVELING ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE TOAD SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THERE WERE FOOLS WHO BELIEVED SOMEBODY MADE THE TRAIN. NONSENSE, SAID THE LIZZARD, IT ALL JUST HAPPENED. THERE ARE SOME FOOLS WHO SAY THAT THAT LOCOMOTIVE IS RUN BY A PERSON CALLED AN ENGINEER. HOW SILLY, IT RUNS ITSELF.

A FLEA OVERHEARD THE CONVERSATION, CLIMBED UP ON A RAILROAD SPIKE, AND SAID IF THERE IS A PRESIDENT OR HEAD OF THIS RAILROAD, I DEFY HIM TO STRIKE ME DEAD! THE FACT THAT MEN CANNOT SEE GOD MAKES THEM SUSPICIOUS OF HIS EXISTENCE. EVERYTHING ABOUT THE NATURAL MAN BLINDS HIS EYES TO THE FOOTPRINTS OF GOD ETCHED IN HUMAN HISTORY AND THE UNIVERSE ITSELF. WHEN THE PSALMIST SPOKE OF THE HUMAN BODY IN VERSE 14, IT WAS WITH AWE AND WONDER. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE HUMAN BODY IS STAGGERING. IF ONE TOOK THE MATERIAL WORTH OF MAN IN CHEMICAL COMPONENTS, HE WOULD BE WORTH LESS THAN \$5, BUT WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE WONDERS OF THE HUMAN BODY IT IS ABSOLUTELY ASTOUNDING. U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RECENTLY PUBLISHED A VOLUME ENTITLED THE HUMAN BODY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE HUMAN EYE CAN DISTINGUISH NEARLY 8-MILLION DIFFERENCES IN COLOR. NO CAMERA CAN COME NEAR ITS DELICATE INTRICACIES. WHEN THE EYE LOOKS AT SOMETHING, THE IMAGE OF THE OBJECT IS REFLECTED ON THE EYE'S RETINA UPSIDE-DOWN AND REVERSED. HOW DOES THE BRAIN DEVELOP THE PICTURE SO WE SEE THE OBJECT RIGHT-SIDE-UP? THE EXACT PROCESS REMAINS A MYSTERY TO SCIENTISTS EVEN TODAY. THE HEART IS A SMALL MUSCLE ABOUT THE SIZE OF OUR FIST. IT PUMPS MORE THAN 5-QUARTS OF BLOOD EVERY MINUTE, OR ABOUT 2,000-GALLONS A DAY. THE HEART IS SO CONSTRUCTED THAT IT CAN REST WITHOUT STOPPING BECAUSE OF A CERTAIN LAW OF RHYTHM ON WHICH IT OPERATES. IN A LIFE TIME, THE HEART SPENDS NEARLY 40 OF THE 70 YEARS OF AN AVERAGE LIFE-SPAN, RESTING. THE HUMAN BODY PRODUCES 1-BILLION RED BLOOD CELLS EVERYDAY. THE SURFACE AREA OF OUR LUNGS IS 1,000-SQUARE FEET, OR 20 TIMES GREATER THAN THE SURFACE AREA OF YOUR SKIN. THERE ARE 1,300 NERVE ENDINGS PER SQUARE INCH IN THE FINGERTIP. THE ONLY PARTS OF THE BODY MORE SENSITIVE TO TOUCH ARE THE LIPS, TONGUE AND THE TIP OF THE NOSE. THE AVERAGE SQUARE CENTIMETER OF SKIN HOUSES 100 SWEAT GLANDS, 12-FEET OF NERVES, HUNDREDS OF NERVE ENDINGS, AND 3-FEET OF BLOOD VESSELS. THE SKIN CONTAINS MORE THAN 2-MILLION PORES TO RID THE BODY OF WATER, SALT AND WASTE PRODUCTS. THE ABILITY OF THE HUMAN BRAIN TO FUNCTION MAKES EVEN THE MOST SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER LOOK LIKE A CHILD'S TOY.

IT IS NO WONDER THAT DAVID EXCLAIMED THAT MAN IS FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.

IV. THE INESCAPABLE GOD WILL NOT LET THE WICKED GET BY -- VERSES 19-24

SOME ONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT THIS ASPECT OF GOD'S NATURE SHOULD BE CALLED HIS ~~OMNIRIGHTEOUSNESS~~. WHEN DAVID SAW A WORLD FILLED WITH ~~VIOLENT AND WICKED MEN~~, HE WAS ASSURED OF THE FACT THAT A ~~RIGHTEOUS GOD~~ WILL BRING HUMAN HISTORY TO A PROPER CONCLUSION. AT LEAST TWO ASPECTS OF GOD'S DIVINE CHARACTER ARE ~~LOVE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS~~. GOD LOVES MEN AND HAS DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WITHIN HIS OWN CHARACTER TO REACH MEN WITH THE GOSPEL. HOWEVER, ~~RETRIBUTION IS INESCAPABLE IN A MORAL UNIVERSE~~. ~~GOD WILL SEE TO IT THAT EVERY MAN, SOONER OR LATER, RECEIVES EXACTLY WHAT HE DESERVES.~~ THIS IS A FACT IN THE ~~HERE AND HEREAFTER~~. AS A MATTER OF FACT, DEEP IN THE HEART OF MAN, HE KNOWS THAT SOMEWHERE IN THE ~~MORAL UNIVERSE IS A GOD WHO MUST DO WHAT IS RIGHT~~. ~~THE CHARACTER OF GOD GUARANTEES THAT ALL WRONGS MUST BE RIGHTED SOMEDAY~~. A GOD WHO DID NOT CARE ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ~~RIGHT AND WRONG~~ WOULD BE A GOD NOT WORTHY OF MAN'S WORSHIP. A GOD WHO PUT NO ~~DISTINCTIONS~~ BETWEEN THE ~~BESTIAL CHARACTER OF HITLER~~ AND OTHERS LIKE HIM AND HIS OWN SAINTS WOULD BE ~~LESS THAN GOD~~. THE BIBLE STRESSES THAT ~~MAN IS ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD~~ AND JUSTICE IS INEVITABLE AS MEN MUST ONE DAY STAND BEFORE ~~GOD AS JUDGE~~. IT IS ~~UNTHINKABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE~~ THAT THE PRESENT CONFLICT BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL WILL ~~LAST FOREVER~~. THERE MUST BE A ~~FINAL DAY OF ACCOUNTABILITY~~ WHEN GOD IN AN ~~AUTHORITATIVE AND DECISIVE~~ FASHION DOES WHAT JUSTICE CALLS FOR IN A MORAL UNIVERSE. ~~GOD IS FAIR~~. HE ~~LOVES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATES INIQUITY~~ AND IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE PSALMIST, SO SHOULD WE. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS GREAT FACT ABOUT GOD, LIFE BECOMES AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE, WHEN ONE REALIZES THAT EVERY ~~MOMENT, MOVEMENT AND MUTTER~~ OF OUR LIPS IS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD. (A COLLEGE STUDENT WAS WALKING WITH HIS PROFESSOR WHO WAS A CHRISTIAN AND INQUIRED: "I DO NOT SEE HOW GOD CAN BE BOTH A GOD OF ~~LOVE AND A GOD OF WRATH~~. HOW DO YOU RECONCILE THE TWO?" AS THEY

WALKED ALONG IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY ALONG THE GARDEN PATH, SOMEONE HAD TORN A LOVELY FLOWER AND LEFT IT ON THE PATH TO DIE. THE PROFESSOR POINTED TO THE FLOWER AND REMINDED HIS STUDENT OF ITS WITHERED CONDITION. WHAT CAUSED IT TO DO THIS? THE SUN WAS THE REPLY. THE PROFESSOR POINTED OUT THAT THE SAME SUN THAT FEEDS AND NOURISHES PLANTS ON THE ONE HAND ALSO CAUSES THEM TO WITHER AND DIE ON THE OTHER. AS LONG AS THE FLOWER WAS IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO THE SUN IT WAS NOURISHED, BUT WHEN IT WAS BROKEN OFF IT BEGAN TO DIE. SO IT IS WITH GOD. SO LONG AS MAN IS RIGHTLY RELATED TO GOD AND HIS LOVE, HIS LIFE WILL FLOURISH. BUT, WHEN HE REFUSES THE LOVE OF GOD, IN CHRIST, AND SHUTS HIMSELF AWAY FROM THE GRACE OF GOD, SO HE FALLS UNDER THE JUDGMENT AND WITHERING POWER OF GOD AND IS DESTINED TO PERISH UNTIL HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD IS CORRECTED. DAVID BEGINS AND ENDS THE 139TH PSALM ON THE SAME THEME AND THAT IS SEARCHING. HIS SECOND SEARCH WAS AN INVITATION FOR GOD TO PROBE, POINT OUT ANYTHING THAT WAS NOT RIGHT, AND LEAD HIM IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO. IN THE WORDS OF HOWARD HENDRICKS, "WE ARE GOD'S SUIT OF CLOTHING TO BE DEALT WITH BY HIM AND LED BY HIM IN WHATEVER WAY GOD DESIRES."

A.M.
JUNE 1, 1975"EVER IN THY PRESENCE"

PSALM 139

SMALL CHILDREN PLAY A GAME IN WHICH THEY COVER THE EYES WITH THEIR HANDS AND BELIEVE YOU CAN- NOT SEE THEM BECAUSE THEY CANNOT SEE YOU. GROWN-UPS PLAY THIS GAME TOO. THE FACT THAT THEY CAN- NOT SEE GOD LEADS THEM TO BELIEVE THAT HE DOES NOT SEE THEM. PSALM 139 DESTROYS THAT ILLUSION. ADAM WAS THE FIRST MAN WHO ATTEMPTED TO HIDE FROM GOD ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT SUCH ACTION WAS NOT POSSIBLE. (RELATE STORY OF CHUCK SENNIFF) THE PSALM BEFORE US SETS FORTH SOME OF THE GREAT ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

I. GOD IS OMNISCIENT - HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT US -V.1-6

THE WORD OMNISCIENT IS A THEOLOGICAL TERM WHICH SIMPLY MEANS "ALL KNOWLEDGE" OR THAT GOD IS ALL KNOWING. NOTICE THE EMPHASES IN THE FIRST SIX VERSES ON THE WORD KNOW OR KNOWN. IN THE VERY FIRST VERSE THE WORD "SEARCHED" AND "KNOWN" CARRYS SOME INTERESTING IDEAS. THE IDEA OF A MINING OPERATION OR EXPLORING A COUNTRY IS SUGGESTED BY THE WORD SEARCH. GOD HAS EXAMINED OUR LIVES AND KNOWS ALL ABOUT US - EVERYTHING! IN VERSE TWO THE TERM DOWNSITTING AND UPRISING SUGGESTS THAT GOD KNOWS EVEN THE SIMPLEST ACTIVITIES OF LIFE. HE SEES THE USUAL ORDINARY THINGS WE DO AND IS FULLY AWARE OF THESE. GOD ALSO KNOWS OUR MOST INTIMATE THOUGHTS. WE HAVE NO SECRETS FROM GOD. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE TERM "AFAR OFF" SUGGESTS THAT GOD KNOWS OUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS AND WHILE THEY ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING FORMED. (COMPARE HEB. 4:13) ACCORDING TO VERSE FOUR GOD KNOWS WHAT I AM GOING TO SAY EVEN BEFORE I SAY IT! SCIENTISTS HAS SPOKEN OF THE FACT THAT NO SOUND IS EVER LOST. ONCE IT IS UTTERED IT REMAINS FOREVER IN THE UNIVERSE SOMEWHERE. IF WE HAVE THE ABILITY OR PROPER INSTRUMENTS WE COULD RECAPTURE ANY SOUND THAT IS EVER BEEN UTTERED. GOD HAS THAT ABILITY. IN JUDGMENT, NO MAN WILL BE ABLE TO DENY WORDS HE HAS SPOKEN. NO MAN WILL BE ABLE TO SAY AS SOME DO NOW IN A COURT OF LAW "I DIDN'T SAY THAT." GOD CAN REPRODUCE THE ORIGINAL. THIS

Better than tapes!

IS A FRIGHTENING THOUGHT TO SOME AND A COMFORT TO OTHERS WHO UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD DOES WHEN HE FORGIVES THE PENALTY OF SINS. IN THESE VERSES, DAVID SAID GOD KNOWS ALL ABOUT US, OUR ASPIRATIONS, CIRCUMSTANCES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, FAILINGS, NEEDS, DISAPPOINTMENTS AND EVERY SINGLE MINUTE DETAIL OF LIFE. HIS CONCLUSION IN VERSE SIX TO THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD COULD BEST BE SUMMED UP IN A COMMON EXPRESSION USED BY YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY - "IT BLOWS MY MIND!"

II. GOD IS OMNIPRESENT - HE IS EVERYWHERE PRESENT
AND WE CANNOT HIDE FROM HIM - Vs. 7-12

IN THESE VERSES THE WORD "THERE" EMPHASIZES THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD, THAT IS GOD IS EVERYWHERE PRESENT IN HIS UNIVERSE. DAVID TEACHES THAT THERE IS NO SUCH PLACE AS A "GOD FORSAKEN PLACE." THE ATHEIST WROTE: "GOD IS NOWHERE." BUT HIS DAUGHTER IN READING THE STATEMENT PUT DIFFERENT SPACING BETWEEN THE WORDS AND READ "GOD IS NOWHERE." DAVID THINKS OF THE EXTREMITIES OF THE UNIVERSE HEAVEN AND SHEOL, THE PLACE OF THE DEAD. IN VERSE NINE HE SPEAKS OF THE "UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA." "SOME MEN HAVE DESCENDED SEVERAL MILES BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE SEA IN A STEEL DIVING BOAT CALLED A BATHYSCAPHE. AT THAT DISTANCE THE BLACKNESS OF THE OCEAN IS ABSOLUTE. IT IS BROKEN OCCASIONALLY BY NUMEROUS TINY PHOSPHORSCENT FLICKERS. THOSE WHO HAVE DESCENDED TO THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN SAY THAT THE BLACKNESS IS INCREDIBLE AND THERE IS LITTLE TO SEE EVEN WITH THE SEARCH LIGHTS. IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO DESCEND TO THE DEPTHS OF THE OCEAN IT WOULD BE NO PLACE TO HIDE FROM GOD. JONAH A MAN WHO THOUGHT HE COULD HIDE FROM GOD ON THE SURFACE OF THE SEA! HE DISCOVERED THE LENGTHS TO WHICH GOD WILL GO TO DEAL WITH A DISOBEDIENT SON! TODAY MEN ALSO TRY TO HIDE FROM GOD BUT THEY TRY OTHER METHODS. SOME TRY DRINK, PLEASURE, WORK, DRUGS ENDLESS ACTIVITIES BUT ALWAYS UNSUCCESSFULLY. SOME MISGUIDED PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT SUICIDE IS THE ANSWER TO ESCAPE ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT EVEN IN DEATH THEY CANNOT HIDE FROM GOD. AFTER SPEAKING OF THE MATTER OF DISTANCE NOW THE PSALMIST SPEAKS OF DARKNESS. CRIMINALS ATTEMPT TO HIDE THEIR CRIMES UNDER THE CLOAK OF DARKNESS. THE PERCENTAGE OF CRIME IS HIGHER AT NIGHT THAN

Brazil
(Bridge)

Keith - Boulderslight

IN THE DAY. ALTHOUGH THIS SEEMS TO BE CHANGING. (RELATE ARTICLE IN U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT CONCERNING KINDNESS DAY IN WASHINGTON AND ROVING BANDS OF BLACKS.) LARGE CITIES HAVE LEARNED THAT ONE WAY TO CUT THE CRIME RATE IS TO INCREASE LIGHTING. SEVERAL YEARS AGO THE CITY OF DETROIT SELECTED CERTAIN AREAS OF HIGH CRIME AND **INCREASED THE LIGHTING**. IN ONE AREA CRIME DECLINED 18% AND IN ANOTHER AREA 55%. THE CITY THEN ADOPTED A TEN YEAR MASTER PLAN CALLING FOR THE INSTALLATION OF 36 THOUSAND NEW LIGHTS IN DETROIT AT A COST OF A MILLION DOLLARS EACH YEAR. THE DARKNESS DOES NOT BOTHER GOD FOR THE NIGHT IS AS BRIGHT AS DAY AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED.

III. GOD IS OMNIPOTENT - HE CAN DO THINGS - Vs 13-18

NOTICE IN THIS SECTION THE EMPHASES ON THE WORD "WORKS" MEN OFTEN QUESTION NOT ONLY THE EXISTENCE BUT THE POWER OF GOD SIMPLY BECAUSE HE DOES NOT ACT AS THEY DESIRE. DR. CRISWELL TELLS AN INTERESTING STORY ABOUT A TOAD AND LIZARD WATCHING A EXPRESS TRAIN TRAVELING ACROSS WEST TEXAS. THE TOAD SAID "THERE ARE FOOLS WHO BELIEVE SOMEBODY MADE THAT TRAIN. NONSENSE! IT JUST HAPPENED OF ITSELF." THE LIZARD REPLIED: "AND THERE ARE FOOLS WHO SAY THE THING IS RUN BY A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER. SUCH STUPIDITY! IT RUNS BY ITSELF." A FLEA OVERHEARD THE LEARNED DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO, CLIMBED UPON ONE CORNER OF A RAILROAD SPIKE AND SAID: "SOME FOOLS SAY THAT THERE IS A MAN CALLED PRESIDENT WHOSE AT THE HEAD OF THIS RAILROAD. SUCH GROSS CREDULITY! IF THERE IS A PRESIDENT OF THIS RAILROAD, I DEFEY HIM TO COME AND STRIKE ME DEAD!" THERE ARE MANY WAYS IN WHICH THE POWER OF GOD HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED IN HUMAN HISTORY. THE CREATION AND PRESERVATION OF THIS WORLD ARE VITAL BUT THE PSALMIST SPEAKS OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE HUMAN BODY AS AN INDICATION OF GOD'S POWER TO DO THINGS. THE COMPLEXITY OF THE HUMAN BODY IS STAGGERING. THE CHEMICAL COMPONENTS IN DOLLARS AND CENTS WOULD BE WORTH SOMETHING LESS THAN FIVE DOLLARS. SCIENTISTS TELL US THAT IN OUR COMPUTER AGE THE HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM AND HUMAN BRAIN MAKE THE MOST ADVANCED COMPUTER LOOK LIKE AN ERECTOR SET! LOOK AT THE HUMAN BODY FOR A MOMENT - THE HAND

See Files Time Series

103,070

WE EAT, WRITE, WORK AND DO AN ALMOST INFINITE NUMBER OF TASKS WITH AN AMAZING INSTRUMENT CALLED THE HAND. THE EYE - NO CAMERA CAN COME NEAR IT IN DELICATE INTRICACYS. THE HEART - A SMALL MUSCLE ABOUT THE SIZE OF A MANS FIST. IT PUMPS BLOOD AT THE RATE OF ABOUT 5000 GALLONS IN A TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PERIOD. IF A PERSON LIVED TO THE AGE OF SEVENTY, THIS SMALL ORGAN WEIGHING ABOUT ONE-HALF POUND WOULD HAVE PUMPED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 150 MILLION GALLONS OF BLOOD. THE AMAZING THING IS THAT THE HEART IS SO CONSTRUCTED THAT IT CAN REST WITHOUT STOPPING BECAUSE OF A CERTAIN LAW OF RHYTHM IN WHICH IT OPERATES. IN A LIFE TIME, THE HEART SPENDS NEARLY FORTY OF THOSE SEVENTY YEARS RESTING. AN AVERAGE SIZE PERSONS HEART BEATS OVER ONE HUNDRED THREE THOUSAND TIMES A DAY, YOU BREATHE OVER TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND TIMES AND INHALE 438 CUBIC FEET OF AIR, EAT THREE TO FOUR POUNDS OF FOOD, DRINK THREE QUARTS LIQUID, PERSPIRE ABOUT 2 PINTS THROUGH THE SKIN, THE BODY MAINTAINS A STEADY TEMPERATURE 98.6 DEGREES UNDER ALL WEATHER CONDITIONS. THE BODY GENERATES 450 FOOT TONS OF ENERGY, SPEAKS ABOUT 4800 HUNDRED WORDS, MOVES AND USES ABOUT 700 MUSCLES, USES 7 MILLION BRAIN CELLS AND WALKS UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS 7 MILES IN A DAY. IT IS NO WONDER THAT DAVID EXCLAIMS THAT HE IS FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE!

23,000

IV. GOD IS OMNIRIGHTEOUS - HE WILL DEAL WITH THE UNGODLY - Vs. 19-22

DAVID SAW THE WORLD FILLED WITH VIOLENT AND WICKED MEN. HE WAS ASSURED THAT GOD WOULD DEAL WITH SUCH MEN BECAUSE HE IS RIGHTEOUS. THERE ARE SOME FOLK WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW GOD CAN BE BOTH LOVING AND RIGHTEOUS AT THE SAME TIME. THIS PROBLEM WAS IN THE MIND OF A YOUNG COLLEGE STUDENT WHO WAS WALKING WITH HIS PROFESSOR WHO WAS A CHRISTIAN. "I DO NOT SEE HOW GOD CAN BE BOTH A GOD OF LOVE AND A GOD OF WRATH. HOW DO YOU RECONCILE THE TWO." THE DAY WAS HOT AND AS THEY WALKED ALONG A GARDEN PATH SOMEONE HAD TORN OFF A LOVELY FLOWER AND LAID IT ON THE PATH TO WILT AND DIE. THE PROFESSOR POINTED TO

IT AND SAID TO HIS YOUNG FRIEND "LOOK AT THIS FLOWER ALL WITHERED AND DYING. WHAT CAUSED IT TO DO THIS?" "THE SUN" CAME THE REPLY. "SO THE SAME SUN THAT FEEDS AND NOURISHES PLANTS ON THE ONE HAND ALSO WITHERS AND BURNS THEM ON THE OTHER. IT IS THAT WAY WITH GOD. AS LONG AS THE FLOWER WAS IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO THE SUN IT WAS NOURISHED BUT WHEN IT WAS BROKEN OFF IT BEGAN TO DIE. SO IT IS WHEN MEN RIGHTLY RELATED TO GOD HIS LOVE IS UPON THEM AND IN THEIR LIVES AND THEY FLOURISH. BUT WHEN THEY REFUSE HIS LOVE IN CHRIST AND SHUT THEMSELVES AWAY FROM HIS WORK IN THEIR LIVES THEY FALL UNDER THE WITHERING POWER OF HIS JUDGMENT AND PERISH. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS REQUIRED FOR MEN TO STAND BEFORE GOD. WHAT HE REQUIRES OF MEN ON THE ONE HAND, HE OFFERS WITH THE OTHER. (II CORN. 5:21) IN VERSE 22 DAVID IS SO CAUGHT-UP IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT HE EXCLAIMS THAT GOD ENEMIES WERE HIS ENEMIES TOO! DAVID WAS SAYING THAT HE WAS OPPOSED TO THOSE WHO WERE OPPOSED TO GOD. DAVID CONCLUDES THE PSALM WITH A PRAYER. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THERE BE NO WAY OF GRIEF IN HIS LIFE THAT WOULD BRING SORROW TO THE HEART OF GOD.

RKS

Revised
Feb. 1989

BCC/AM

12/8/74

"THE MAN IN CHRIST"

2 Cor. 5:17

(FAMILIAR TEXT
SERIES.)

IN SOME PARTS OF OUR CITY, IT IS DIFFICULT TO LOCATE ADDRESSES. A FRIEND SAID RECENTLY THAT HE HAD LIVED IN CHARLESTON FOR TWENTY YEARS BUT STILL GETS LOST IN SOUTH HILLS! (COMMENT REGARDING A FRIEND AND HIS APPRAISAL OF WINSTON-SALEM AND A CALF, RELATE THIS TO CHARLESTON AND A GOAT.) THE THURSDAY EVENING VISITATION PROGRAM VERIFIES THIS STATEMENT. OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS CAN NOT LOCATE OUR HOUSE, WE HAVE TO MEET THEM ON ONE OF THE MAJOR ROADS, ESCORT THEM TO OUR HOME. ONE FAMILY, YEARS AGO, SPENT TWO HOURS TRYING TO LOCATE OUR HOUSE -- UNSUCCESSFULLY!

EVERY MAN HAS A GEOGRAPHICAL ADDRESS, THAT IS, STREET, CITY, AND COUNTRY. THE BIBLE SUGGESTS THAT EVERY PERSON ALSO HAS A SPIRITUAL ADDRESS WHICH REFLECTS HIS SPIRITUAL CONDITION. EVERY PERSON IS EITHER "IN ADAM" OR "IN CHRIST". "IN ADAM" REFERS TO WHAT WE ARE BY VIRTUE OF OUR PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP TO ADAM. "IN CHRIST" SPEAKS OF THE BELIEVER'S POSITION BEFORE GOD. THIS IS A SPECIAL TECHNICAL TERM WHICH PAUL DELIGHTED TO USE IN HIS WRITINGS SOME 164 TIMES. NOTHING CAN BE ADDED TO THE BELIEVER'S STANDING OR POSITION IN CHRIST. IN THIS RESPECT, HE IS ACCEPTED BEFORE GOD AND THIS IS A PERMANENT AND UNCHANGEABLE RELATIONSHIP. GOD SEES THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST. EVERYTHING IN THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE IS VIEWED IN TERMS OF CHRIST. JUST AS A BIRD DEPENDS UPON THE AIR FOR FLIGHT, A FISH UPON WATER FOR SURVIVAL, A TREE IN THE SOIL, SO THE BELIEVER'S SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE AND ENVIRONMENT IS JESUS CHRIST. THEREFORE, PAUL TALKS ABOUT THE BELIEVER WHO IS IN CHRIST. WHAT KIND OF MAN IS HE? (Eph. 1:1-6; 1 Thess. 4:16)

I. THE MAN IN CHRIST IS A CHANGED MAN - VS. 17

"FOR IF A MAN IS IN CHRIST, HE BECOMES A NEW PERSON ALTOGETHER, THE PAST IS FINISHED AND GONE, EVERYTHING HAS BECOME FRESH AND NEW". (PHILLIPS TRANS.) I KNOW OF NO OTHER VERSE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH SPEAKS MORE OF THE COMPLETE CHANGE A PERSON UNDERGOES WHEN HE RECEIVES CHRIST AS SAVIOUR. GOD DOES NOT

Demos = IN
Rep = OUT"IN
group"Our position
by a
proposition"IN"
disciples
"with"
(meta)

Union

Demos

"IN PAUL VI"
"IN WESLEY, CALVIN, LUTHER!"

THE MAN IN CHRIST

- ① OLD things - "use to be"
old world - old serpent
② Past Away - "disappeared from my life"
③ New - "a fresh start"

MEND OR IMPROVE THE OLD MAN RATHER MAKES SOMETHING NEW! THE PHRASE **OLD THINGS** POINTS BACK IN TIME TO A FORMER PERIOD, THAT IS, WHAT WE **USED TO BE**. IT IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF THE PROPHETS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE **OLD WORLD** (2 PETER 2:5), AND SATAN WHO IS CALLED THAT **OLD SERPENT** (REV. 12:9, 20:2). THE PHRASE **PAST AWAY** IS IN A PARTICULAR TENSE THAT INDICATES THAT OUR OLD LIFE HAS PASSED BY OR PASSED ALONG, IT HAS **DISAPPEARED**. THE WORD **NEW** REFERS TO A **FRESH START**. PAUL HAS IN MIND THE PICTURE OF A **SPIRITUAL DEAD MAN** (EPHESIANS 2:1). PICTURE A CORPSE IN A GRAVE AND FROM THAT GRAVE A NEW MAN ARISES JUST AS IF HE WERE **FRESHLY CREATED** FROM THE HAND OF GOD. THAT MAN HAS **NEW LIFE**, AND **NEW STANDARDS**, HE NO LONGER LIVES BY THE **VALUES OF THE OLD LIFE**. THE BIBLE ABOUNDS WITH **ILLUSTRATIONS** OF PEOPLE LIKE THIS. ① SAUL OF TARSUS ② JAMES AND JOHN, AND THE ③ SAMARITAN WOMAN OF JOHN 4. ④ OUR OWN CITY PRODUCED TWO MEN WHOSE LIFE WAS DRASTICALLY CHANGED BY CONVERSION. (RELATE THE CONVERSION OF PAT WITHROW WHO SAID, FEELING OR NO FEELING, I AM FOR GOD. RELATE THE STORY OF PAPPY REVEL, DAD.) **OUR OWN CHURCH** IS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO AT ONE TIME WERE ON THE VERGE OF **DIVORCE**, **HOPELESSLY ADDICTED TO ALCOHOL**, **CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE**, **TERRIBLY DISILLUSIONED** AND **UNHAPPY** WITH LIFE UNTIL CHRIST CHANGED ALL OF THAT. THE STORY IS TOLD CONCERNING **C.T. STUDD** THAT HIS LIFE WAS SO DRASTICALLY CHANGED THAT HIS FRIENDS COULD HARDLY BELIEVE IT. THEY ASKED A CERTAIN MAN WHO WAS CLOSE TO STUDD ABOUT HIS CONVERSION. "ALL I CAN SAY, HE REPLIED, IS THAT THOUGH THERE IS THE SAME SKIN, THERE IS A NEW MAN INSIDE." IF YOU KNOW CHRIST, THE SAME SKIN MAY COVER YOUR FRAME, BUT INSIDE THERE IS A NEW MAN! IF THIS IS NOT YOUR CASE, MAYBE YOU HAVE ACCEPTED A SUBSTITUTE INSTEAD OF LIFE IN CHRIST.

II. THE MAN IN CHRIST IS A CONCERNED MAN - VS. 11

THE WORD **TERROR** IS A JARRING TERM. THE WORD IN THE TEXT IS THE WORD **FEAR**. (**PHOBOS**) IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEMA JUDGMENT, PAUL REFLECTS A **HOLY CONCERN** FOR MEN WHO DO NOT KNOW JESUS CHRIST. HE FEELS A **SACRED DUTY** TO **BE BUSY PERSUADING MEN** TO RECEIVE CHRIST. THE **FEAR** MENTIONED BY PAUL IN THIS VERSE, IS NOT THE FEAR OF A **BEATEN ANIMAL** OR A **CHILD** WHO HAS BEEN ABUSED BY AN **OVER-BEARING ADULT** BUT RATHER IT IS A

Ray Maran - comment re her church -
use to ... NOT NOW.

REVERENTIAL FEAR OF GOD WHICH MEN HAVE FORGOTTEN IN MODERN THEOLOGY. (COMPARE HEBREWS 10:31) "BY THE FEAR OF THE LORD MEN DEPART FROM EVIL." (PROVERBS 16:6) TODAY, MEN ARE AFRAID OF THE WRONG THINGS! (RELATE RECENT COMMENTS CONCERNING THE ECONOMY. MEN ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH DOW JONES AVERAGES THAN WITH THEIR ETERNAL SOUL.) KNOWING THAT MEN ARE SINNERS AND MUST GIVE STRICT ACCOUNT TO GOD FOR THEIR SINFULNESS, PAUL WAS CONCERNED! ONLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE WORD OF GOD GET CONCERNED ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE. MODERN THEOLOGY HAS PAINTED AN INACCURATE PICTURE SINFUL MANKIND. ONLY PEOPLE WHO TAKE THE BIBLE SERIOUSLY UNDERSTAND THE PLIGHT OF THE SINNER. "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT JUDGED: BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD." (JOHN 3:18) THIS VERSE SAYS MEN ARE LOST NOW. SAVED PEOPLE SEE UNSAVED MEN IN DEADLY PERIL. ONE BREATH OR HEARTBEAT AWAY FROM ETERNITY. (WHAT WOULD YOUR REACTION BE TO YOUR NEIGHBORS HOUSE BEING ON FIRE AND YOU HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO WARN HIM? WOULD YOU SIT CASUALLY BY AND WATCH HIM PERISH IN THE FLAMES? AN INFINITELY GREATER ISSUE IS AT STAKE REGARDING THE LOST CONDITION OF MEN OUTSIDE OF CHRIST.) Livingston - smoke of love v. 11
CT. STAFF - chapel bell - rescue ship a yr. from hell.

III. THE MAN IN CHRIST IS A CONSTRAINED MAN - VS. 14

"Constrains" = (press upon)
Hold - shut up to -
COUPLED WITH THE MOTIVE OF REVERENTIAL FEAR, PAUL LINKS THE LOVE OF CHRIST. IT IS CHRIST'S LOVE FOR US WHICH PROMPTS OUR LOVE FOR HIM. THE WORD "CONSTRAINS" MEANS TO HOLD TOGETHER, TO BE PRESSED UPON, OR TO BE SHUT UP TO. WHEN MARTIN LUTHER SAID, "HERE I STAND: I CAN DO NO OTHER," HE WAS REFLECTING THE CONSTRAINING POWER OF CHRIST IN HIS LIFE. THE LOVE OF CHRIST SENT LIVINGSTON TO AFRICA, TAYLOR TO CHINA, JUDSON TO BURMA, CAREY TO INDIA, OLSEN TO BANGLADESH. THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR MISSIONS EVERYWHERE. IT IS OUR MOTIVATION TO ENLARGE OUR FACILITIES AT ENORMOUS COST. IT IS THE MOTIVATION FOR BUS MINISTRY, VISITATION, SUNDAY SCHOOL AND EVERY PROGRAM INTERESTED IN REACHING THE LOST FOR CHRIST. IF THIS IS NOT THE MOTIVATION, FAILURE AND NOT SUCCESS WILL BE THE OUTCOME. IF YOU ARE A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER AND LOVE IS THE MOTIVATION OF YOUR MINISTRY, YOUR CLASS

Mexico

Haiti (Roads) at lunch...
Poverty

THE MAN IN CHRIST

I changed
II concerned
III constrained

4.

^{NOT} WILL GROW. WITHOUT IT, ALL EFFORT, REGARDLESS OF HOW EXTENSIVE, WILL ULTIMATELY FAIL!

IV. THE MAN IN CHRIST IS A COMMITTED MAN - VS. 18-20

✓
✓
THE WORD COMMITTED LITERALLY MEANS TO "PLACE IN OUR HANDS OR DEPOSIT IN OUR CHARGE." (RELATE THE STORY OF JESUS REGARDING THE DISCIPLES AND THEIR FAILURE TO WHICH HE HAD NO OTHER PLAN.) THE WORD RECONCILIATION IS A DIFFICULT ONE. IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST, GOD CHANGED THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE WORLD TO HIMSELF MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL MEN TO BE SAVED. IN THE RECONCILING WORK OF CHRIST, HE DID NOT SAVE THE WORLD AS THE UNIVERSALISTS TEACH BUT HE MADE SALVATION AVAILABLE TO ALL MEN. IT IS AS IF GOD'S FACE IS TOWARD THE WORLD INVITING MEN TO COME TO HIM TO BE SAVED. IT IS THAT MESSAGE OF DIVINE INVITATION THAT PAUL SAYS HAS BEEN COMMITTED TO US. WE STAND TODAY AS GOD'S MESSENGERS INVITING MEN TO CHRIST. THOUGH THE WAY HAS BEEN OPENED FOR MEN TO BE SAVED, IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE EFFECTIVE, MEN MUST ACCEPT THE WORK OF CHRIST INDIVIDUALLY. WE USE THE WORD RECONCILE WITH REFERENCE TO OUR BANK STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE MONTH. WE PUT INTO BALANCE OUR BANK BOOK AND MAKE IT CONFORM TO THE STATEMENT OF THE BANK. IN ONE SENSE OF THE WORD THE WORLD IS OUT OF BALANCE WITH GOD, BUT IN CHRIST MEN CONFORM TO THAT DIVINE STANDARD WHEN THEY RECEIVE HIM AS SAVIOUR. THE MESSENGERS OF THIS RECONCILING MESSAGE ARE CALLED AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST. THIS TERM WAS ONE WHICH THE CORINTHIANS UNDERSTOOD. WHEN THE ROMAN EMPIRE DEFEATED ANOTHER COUNTRY IN BATTLE, THEY SENT TO THE PROVINCE AN ENVOY TO ARRANGE TERMS OF PEACE WITH THE CONQUERED PEOPLE. THIS PERSON WOULD DETERMINE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NEW COUNTRY AND DRAW UP A PROPER CONSTITUTION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT. THESE ENVOYS WERE MEN WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING MEN INTO THE ROMAN EMPIRE. IT IS THE SAME TERM TRANSLATED AMBASSADORS IN THE TEXT. PAUL SEES HIMSELF AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF GOD EXPLAINING THE CONDITIONS AND OFFER OF GOD TO MEN CONCERNING MEMBERSHIP IN HIS FAMILY. THINK OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN AMBASSADOR: (1) HE HAS NO MESSAGE OF HIS OWN, ONLY THAT OF HIS COUNTRY. (2) HONOR OF HIS COUNTRY IS IN HIS HANDS. HIS COUNTRY IS JUDGED BY HIS BEHAVIOR. THE HONOR OF CHRIST IS IN OUR HANDS. (3) HE IS A

STRANGER, IN A FOREIGN LAND SPEAKING A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE. THE CHRISTIAN IS AN ALIEN IN THIS WORLD, A CITIZEN OF HEAVEN, DIFFERENT IN EVERY WAY. (4) AN AMBASSADOR IS RECALLED IN TIME OF WAR. THE CHURCH WHEN THE RAPTURE TAKES PLACE. PAUL USES THIS TERM IN EPHESIANS 6:20 WHERE HE SAYS "I AM AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS." EVEN IN JAIL, PAUL CONSIDERED HIMSELF A SPOKESMAN AND REPRESENTATIVE FOR GOD. EVEN IN JAIL, HE WON MEN TO CHRIST.

V. THE MAN IN CHRIST IS A CONFIDENT MAN - VS. 6-8

THE WORD "CONFIDENT" IN VERSE 6 AND VERSE 8 LITERALLY MEANS "OF GOOD CHEER OR COURAGE." IN THE FIRST 8 VERSES OF THE CHAPTER, PAUL PICTURES HIMSELF AS A BUILDING OR HOUSE. HIS BODY IS A TEMPORARY HOUSE AND AS LONG AS HE IS AT HOME IN THIS BODY OR HOUSE, HE IS AWAY FROM THE LORD. HOWEVER, HE ENVISIONS A DAY WHEN DEATH WILL EVICT HIM FROM HIS PRESENT HOUSE OR BODY. THAT DAY WILL NOT BE A MOMENT OF SORROW OR DESPAIR, BUT AT THAT MOMENT HE WILL SIMPLY GO HOME TO BE WITH THE LORD. IN PHILIPPIANS 1:21-22 HE LOOKS UPON DEATH AS "GAIN". TO BE WITH CHRIST IS "FAR BETTER". THIS CHAPTER ESTABLISHES THE FACT THAT WHEN A CHRISTIAN DIES HE IS PRESENT OR "AT HOME WITH" THE LORD. QUESTION: WHERE IS JESUS TODAY? STEPHEN SAW HIM AFTER HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION "AND JESUS STANDING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." "WHEN HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS, SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH." (HEBREWS 1:3) FOR THE CHRISTIAN, DEATH IS NOT DESPAIR BUT RATHER DEPARTURE TO BE WITH THE LORD. (SEVERAL YEARS AGO, DR. CHARLES STEVENS TOLD ME THE STORY OF HIS EXPERIENCE AT AGE 17 LEAVING THE STATE OF ALABAMA TO GO TO WASHINGTON TO SEE A SISTER AND TWO BROTHERS WHO LIVED THERE. HE HAD HEARD HIS BROTHERS AND SISTER SPEAK OF THE BEAUTY OF THE CITY, AND HE HAD SAVED FOR MONTHS IN ORDER TO GET ENOUGH TO RIDE THE TRAIN. AS THEY NEARED THE CITY, HE COULD SEE THE LIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE AND SUDDENLY ALL WAS DARK AS THE TRAIN ROARED INTO A TUNNEL. AT THE STATION HE COULD SEE THE FACES OF HIS TWO BROTHERS AWAITING HIM. HE TELLS THE STORY OF TEN GLORIOUS DAYS WITH HIS LOVED ONES, SEEING THE SIGHTS OF THE CITY. LATER ON IN LIFE HE WAS MADE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE TO REACH THE NATION'S CAPITOL BY PLANE. DR. STEVENS ASSOCIATES THIS EX-

PERIENCE WITH THE TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO WILL MEET THE LORD IN THE RAPTURE. SOME WILL ARRIVE IN GLORY "BY AIR"; OTHERS WILL ARRIVE BY VIRTUE OF THE TUNNEL OF DEATH.) BUT THE POINT IS THAT THE ARRIVAL WILL SIGNAL REUNION WITH LOVED ONES AND ESPECIALLY WITH JESUS CHRIST. FOR SOME BELIEVERS, DEATH MAY BE A MATTER GREATLY FEARED. YOU MAY BE LIKE THE PATIENT WHO SAID TO HER COUNTRY DOCTOR "I'M AFRAID TO DIE BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH." THE DOCTOR RELATED THE PATIENT THE STORY OF HIS DOG ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR WHO, WHEN THE DOOR WAS OPENED, BOUNDED INTO THE ROOM SHOWING GREAT DELIGHT. THE DOG HAD NEVER BEEN IN THE ROOM BEFORE; HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE INSIDE. HE ONLY KNEW HIS MASTER WAS THERE AND WHEN THE DOOR WAS OPENED, HE CAME THROUGH WITHOUT FEAR. I OFTEN THINK OF THE STORY THEY TOLD OF AN OLD WELSH PREACHER, WHO ON HIS DEATH BED, RAISED HIS ARM IN FAREWELL AND SAID TRIUMPHANTLY "DRIVE ON, DRIVE ON." AS IF SEEING HEAVENLY CHARIOTS TO ESCORT HIM TO GLORY.

(Lecture 25th ann.
Exp. to GreenBriar Hill)

THE EXCEPTIONS OF JESUS

THE WORD "EXCEPT" IS USED IN THE BIBLE AS A SYNONYM FOR "UNLESS." IT OFTEN SUGGESTS A CONDITION WHICH MUST BE MET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CERTAIN BENEFITS OR BLESSINGS FROM GOD. FOR EXAMPLE, PAUL USED THIS WORD TO WARN HIS FELLOW PASSENGERS CONCERNING THEIR FATE DURING THAT EVENTFUL VOYAGE TO ROME. (ACTS 27: 31) BY THE WAY, THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT VERSES IN THE BIBLE CONCERNING MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MATTER OF PERSONAL SALVATION. SALVATION IS ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN AND NOT MAN'S, YET PAUL ENCOURAGED HUMAN EFFORT AS THE MEANS WHEREBY GOD WOULD ACCOMPLISH HIS SOVEREIGN PURPOSE.

I. THE EXCEPT OF CONVERSION' - MATT. 18:3-5

EVEN THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS WERE NOT IMMUNE FROM POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND ASPIRATIONS. THEY LIVED IN A TIME WHEN ROMAN POLITICIANS WERE AMBITIOUS FOR OFFICE TO A POINT THAT THESE POLITICIANS SOUGHT THE FAVOR OF THE PEOPLE AND WOULD TAKE WHATEVER POSITION WAS NECESSARY TO GAIN THEIR FAVOR. WHETHER A SITUATION WAS RIGHT OR WRONG HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR DESIRES. THEY SOUGHT GREATNESS ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE AND IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE DISCIPLES HAD BEEN AFFLICTED WITH THE SAME SPIRIT. THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR POSITION IN THE MESSIAH'S COMING KINGDOM. JESUS REMINDED HIS DISCIPLES THAT MEN BEGIN IN HIS KINGDOM JUST AS CHILDREN BEGIN LIFE IN THIS WORLD. IT REQUIRES BIRTH. THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT GREATNESS WHEN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT GOODNESS. IN ORDER TO HAVE A PROMINENT POSITION IN HIS KINGDOM THEY MUST TAKE THE PLACE OF A CHILD, ADOPTING NOT AN ATTITUDE OF SELF IMPORTANCE AND A DESIRE FOR INFLUENCE, BUT ONE OF HUMBLE SUBMISSION TO THE KING AND A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS. ACCORDING TO V. 3, THE WORD CONVERTED IS NOT THE USUAL TERM FOR CONVERT. IT SIMPLY MEANS TO TURN OR TURN BACK. THE DISCIPLES WERE TRAVELING THE WRONG ROAD IN PURSUIT OF GREATNESS. THE WAY OF GREATNESS BEFORE MEN IS NOT THE WAY OF GREATNESS BEFORE GOD. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MESSIAH'S KINGDOM WERE SPIRITUAL

Peter had walked on water

" watched on Mt.

and taxer - fishy him!

Questions!

③ Are you prepared for your exit with God
④ When will it "now"?

WHO STARTED TO PRAY THIS PRAYER, "LORD, MAKE ME GOOD, BUT NOT TOO GOOD, JUST GOOD ENOUGH SO I WON'T GET A WHIPPING." PAUL'S SERMON BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT OF ATHENS CARRIES A DEVASTATING STATEMENT ABOUT REPENTANCE. "AND THE TIMES OF THIS IGNORANCE GOD WINKED AT; BUT NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT; BECAUSE HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY IN THE WHICH HE WILL JUDGE THE WORD IN RIGHTEOUSNESS BY THAT MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED; WHEREOF HE HATH GIVEN ASSURANCE TO ALL MEN IN THAT HE HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD."

ⓧ (ACTS 17:30-31) (1) are you a person (man)? a must!
(2) Have you repented? a must!

III. THE EXCEPT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - MATT. 5:20

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES BELIEVED THAT A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP BEFORE GOD WAS DEPENDENT UPON THEIR OWN LEGAL WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. FOR THAT REASON, THEY DEVOTED THEIR LIVES TO A LEGALISTIC FORM OF WORKS DEVOID OF COMPASSION AND WITHOUT DIVINE APPROVAL. THE WORD EXCEED IN THE TEXT MEANS MORE, BETTER, OVER AND ABOVE. IN THE PHILIPPIAN LETTER PAUL SPEAKS OF TWO KINDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. "MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS" AND "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD BY FAITH." (PHIL 3:9) (WHAT KIND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS DO YOU HAVE? IF IT IS YOUR OWN, THE WORKS OF THE FLESH, IT IS CHARACTERIZED IN THE O.T. AS "FILTHY RAGS." (IS. 64:6) IN THIS VERY CHAPTER, MATT. 6:33, THE REFERENCE IS TO HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, YOU AND I WOULD NEVER BE CONSCIOUS OF OUR OWN SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY IN THE MATTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WERE IT NOT FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. "AND WHEN HE IS COME, HE WILL REPROVE THE WORLD OF SIN, AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OF JUDGMENT." (JOHN 16:8) THE BELIEVING SINNER RECEIVES CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIS BEHALF. CHRIST WAS NOT A GUILTY SINNER, HE WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN, AND WHEN THE BELIEVING SINNER COMES TO CHRIST, HE RECEIVES IN THE DIVINE RECORDS IN GLORY, CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED TO HIS ACCOUNT. (11 COR. 5:21) PAUL DEVOTES CONSIDERABLE SPACE IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS TO SHOW THAT HUMAN RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT SUFFICIENT AS A MATTER OF STANDING BEFORE GOD. (CF. ROMANS 3:21-26) IN THE 4TH CHAPTER OF ROMANS, RIGHTEOUSNESS IS MENTIONED 8 TIMES TO SHOW THAT ABRAHAM, DAVID, AND OTHERS IN THE O.T. WERE JUSTIFIED BEFORE GOD, NOT BY DEEDS OF THEIR OWN FLESH, BUT BY RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS THROUGH FAITH. OUR STANDING BEFORE GOD MUST BE IN CHRIST AND CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NOT OUR OWN.

all is of I + III

AND NOT POLITICAL AND MATERIAL. JESUS USED THE WORD EXCEPT IN JOHN 3:3 TO EMPHASIZE THE OTHER ASPECT OF BEING SAVED. "JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD." IN MATT., THE EMPHASIS IS UPON THE HUMAN SIDE OF SALVATION NAMELY, CONVERSION. THE JOHN PASSAGE IS REFERRING TO THE GODWARD SIDE OF SALVATION, NAMELY, REGENERATION. IN THESE PASSAGES, THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES THAT ALL MEN WITHOUT EXCEPTION NEED TO BE CHANGED SPIRITUALLY. THE MAN OUTSIDE OF CHRIST IS LIVING IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS AND NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT INTO SPIRITUAL LIGHT AND LIFE THROUGH THE DIVINE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLED REGENERATION. THIS EXPERIENCE IS SO IMPORTANT THAT SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID, BETTER NEVER HAVE BEEN BORN, THAN NOT TO BE BORN AGAIN. THESE PASSAGES TEACH THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO GO TO HEAVEN WHO HAS NOT BEEN BORN AGAIN!

II. THE EXCEPT OF REPENTANCE - LUKE 13:3-5 (meta voia)

IN THE CONTEXT, THE DISCUSSION HAD TO DO WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO WERE MURDERED BY PILATE AND ANOTHER GROUP, SOME 18 IN NUMBER, WHO WERE KILLED WHEN A STONE TOWER ACCIDENTLY FELL ON THEM AND KILLED THEM. THE QUESTION AROSE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THESE PEOPLE WHO DIED BY ACCIDENT WERE GREATER SINNERS THAN EVERYONE ELSE IN THE LAND. JESUS APPRAISAL OF THIS SITUATION IS THAT WHETHER DEATH WAS BY ACCIDENT OR OLD AGE THE DOOM IS THE SAME FOR THE SINNER WHO HAS NOT REPENTED. THE WORD USED TO DESCRIBE THAT DOOM IS THE WORD PERISH. THIS WORD IS USED IN LUKE 19:10 AND IS TRANSLATED LOST. THE SAME IS TRUE OF II CORIN. 4:3. IT ALSO OCCURS IN I COR. 1:18, JOHN 3:15-16, JOHN 10:28, II PETER 3:9. MANY PEOPLE THINK OF REPENTANCE AS A KIND OF EMOTIONAL STATE BROUGHT ON IN A RELIGIOUS SERVICE WHEREBY GREAT CRYING AND REMORSE IS SHOWN CONCERNING ONE'S SIN. TO BE SURE SOME OF THIS MAY BE INVOLVED IN REPENTANCE. HOWEVER, THE PRIMARY WORD FOR REPENTANCE IN THE N.T. MEANS "TO CHANGE THE MIND." AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO CRY AND WEEP OVER ONE'S CONDITION AND NEVER REPENT. A MIND THAT HAS BEEN CHANGED ABOUT THE CHRIST OF GOD IS ONE THAT MOVES AWAY FROM SIN AND TOWARD GOD. SOME PEOPLE ARE SORRY ABOUT THEIR CONDITION, BUT HAVE NEVER REPENTED. THEIR LIVES HAVE NEVER BEEN CHANGED. THEY ARE LIKE THE LITTLE GIRL

Emp. on how & where when we died
Emp. should be how we prepared?

THE SPIRIT OF THE TWELVESIX WRONG SPIRITS

LUKE 9:1, 55

"The Wrong Spirit"

THE MEN WHOM JESUS CALLED TO BE HIS DISCIPLES WERE DESTINED FOR GREATNESS. HOWEVER, WE MAKE A MISTAKE IF WE THINK THEY WERE PERFECT. THEY WERE NOT. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID, "THE BEST OF MEN ARE STILL MEN AT THEIR BEST". THE TWELVE DISCIPLES WERE NOT SUPERHUMAN BEINGS ENDOWED WITH SPECIAL MYSTICAL QUALITIES UNAVAILABLE OR UNATTAINABLE BY OTHER MEN. REALISTICALLY SPEAKING, MOST OF THEM WERE UNSOPHISTICATED GALILEAN WORKMEN, WHO KNEW NOTHING OF THE ADVANCED LEARNING OF THE RABBIS IN JERUSALEM. THEIR POWER DID NOT COME FROM EDUCATION OR CULTURE, BUT RATHER UPON THEIR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE ETERNAL GOD. JESUS CALLED THESE MEN IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT BE SENT TO DO HIS WORK. (COMPARE VERSE 1 AND VERSE 10--THE TWO TERMS DISCIPLES AND APOSTLES.) THEY, AS WE, WERE NOT CHOSEN IN ORDER TO FOLD THEIR ARMS AND SPEND THEIR LIVES CONGRATULATING THEMSELVES ON BEING SAVED. THEY WERE CALLED IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT HELP OTHERS AND EXTEND THE WORK OF JESUS CHRIST ON EARTH. I WOULD BE THE FIRST TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE SHOULD EXERCISE GREAT CARE IN OUR CRITICISM OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES. WE HAVE NOTHING TO BRAG ABOUT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE SAVIOUR. HOWEVER, IN THIS CHAPTER, AS IN NO OTHER, WE SEE THE FRAILTIES OF THE MEN WHOM JESUS CALLED TO BE TRAINED IN THE GREATEST SCHOOL THAT EVER EXISTED. THEY LIVED AND WORKED WITH THE GREATEST TEACHER WHO EVER LIVED. IN THIS CHAPTER, WE GET A KEEN INSIGHT INTO THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR WORK. IN THIS CHAPTER, THEY DEMONSTRATE AT LEAST SIX WRONG SPIRITS TOWARD THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL. WE WILL EXAMINE THESE SIX WRONG SPIRITS TODAY.

I. AN INCONSIDERATE SPIRIT -- vs. 10-12

ACCORDING TO MARK 6:31, THERE IS SOME INDICATION THAT ONE OF THE REASONS WHY JESUS SOUGHT THE DESERT PLACE WITH HIS DISCIPLES WAS IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT EAT AND REST UNMOLESTED BY THE CROWDS. THIS WAS TO BE A WEEKEND OF REST AWAY FROM THE PRESS OF THEIR WORK. IT SOON BECAME OBVIOUS THAT SUCH WOULD NOT BE THE CASE. BY GENERAL STANDARDS, ONE WOULD EXPECT JESUS

invasion

TO HAVE RESENTED THIS INVASION OF HIS PRIVACY, SURELY A WORD OF REBUKE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN ORDER. A SEARCH OF THESE VERSES INDICATE THAT HE "WELCOMED" --VERSE 11--THE NEEDY CROWDS. JESUS WAS NEVER TOO BUSY TO CONCERN HIMSELF WITH THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE. THE DISCIPLES BY CONTRAST, WERE WILLING TO SEND THE MULTITUDE AWAY BOTH HUNGRY AND WITHOUT HEALING. WHEN WE ARE WEARY, IT IS EASY TO BE SHORT-TEMPERED AND RESENT THOSE WHO INVADE OUR PRIVACY. THE DISCIPLES FORGOT THAT THE REASON THEY HAD COME TO THE DESERT WAS BECAUSE THEY WERE TIRED AND HUNGRY, BUT SO WERE THE CROWDS. THE LEISURE OF THE DISCIPLES MUST TAKE SECOND PLACE TO THE NEEDS OF SUFFERING HUMANITY. I DO NOT MINIMIZE THE NEED FOR A CHRISTIAN WORKER TO HAVE HIS DESERT PLACE. TIMES OF REST AND RECUPERATION BOTH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY ARE NECESSARY. HOWEVER, THERE IS A POINT TO BE MADE ON THIS PASSAGE. I HAVE TALKED WITH CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS AND MISSION PERSONNEL IN RECENT MONTHS, ALL OF WHOM EXPRESS CONCERN OVER THE SPIRIT OF THIS GENERATION OF CHRISTIAN WORKERS. THERE IS A PHILOSOPHY WITH MANY THAT THEY WILL SERVE IN CHRISTIAN WORK AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THEIR PRIVATE LIVES!! THEY BUILD FENCES AROUND THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND ARE UNWILLING TO SACRIFICE IN ANY WAY FOR THE SAKE OF CHRISTIAN WORK.

unlisted phone! *(Sharon Comm)*

Q. 1/2

* RELATE THE STORY OF A PERSON WHO EXPRESSED CONCERN WHEN HE CALLED FOR AN ASSISTANT PASTOR TO HELP IN TIME OF DISTRESS, BUT THE PASTOR HAD A GOLFING DATE AND COULD NOT BUSY HIMSELF WITH AIDING A DISTRESSED FAMILY. I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT THE CRANK CALLS AND THE PEOPLE WHO PESTER FOLK WITH TRIVIAL NONSENSE-- I AM TALKING ABOUT LEGITIMATE NEEDS!! (WHAT WOULD YOU THINK OF YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR IF YOU CALLED HIM IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, AND HE INFORMED YOU THAT HE HAD A GOLFING APPOINTMENT OR THAT IT WAS HIS DAY OFF!!) THERE IS A SIMPLE RULE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE WHETHER IT BE WITH THE DISCIPLES OR WITH US, SIMPLY STATED, IT MEANS IF WE DO NOT CONCERN OURSELVES WITH THE CARE OF GOD'S PEOPLE, WE WILL HAVE A WEAK AND INEFFECTIVE MINISTRY. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE DISCIPLES IN A MOMENT OF WEARINESS, FORGOT ABOUT THE CROWDS AND WERE THINKING ABOUT THEMSELVES. IT WAS AT THIS MOMENT THAT JESUS PERFORMED THE ONLY MIRACLE RECORDED IN ALL FOUR GOSPELS.

II. AN IMPULSIVE SPIRIT - vs. 27-33

THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION IS ONE OF THE ASTONISHING EXPERIENCES OF CHRIST WHILE ON EARTH. IT WAS AT THIS MOMENT THAT THE GLORY OF HIS GODHEAD POSITION BROKE THROUGH HUMAN FLESH. BOTH PETER AND JOHN REMEMBER THIS EXPERIENCE AS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THEIR EARTHLY MINISTRY. COMPARE JN. 1:14 AND II PET. 1:16 "...BUT WERE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY, FOR HE RECEIVED FROM GOD THE FATHER HONOUR AND GLORY, WHEN THERE CAME SUCH A VOICE TO HIM FROM THE EXCELLENT GLORY, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED." IT DOES APPEAR AS IF EARTH WAS UNAWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S COMING DEATH. HOWEVER, IN HEAVEN, THERE WAS INTENSE INTEREST OF THIS COMING EVENT, AND TWO OF THE GREATEST PERSONS IN THE O.T. WERE DISPATCHED TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHRIST CONCERNING HIS "EXODUS", SOON TO BE FULFILLED IN JERUSALEM. THE O.T. SAINTS WERE KEENLY INTERESTED IN CHRIST'S DEATH, AND FOR GOOD REASON!!! WITH REFERENCE TO THE APOSTLES, VERSE 33 INDICATES PETER'S IMPETUOUS RESPONSE TO WHAT HE HAD JUST WITNESSED. REMEMBER HE HAS BEEN ASLEEP AND IS SUDDENLY AWAKENED BY THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF GOD. LUKE REMINDS US THAT PETER WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE. THERE ARE MANY OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE LIKE PETER WHO SPEAK IMPULSIVELY REGARDING WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN CHRISTIAN WORK. CHURCHES ARE FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE OPINIONS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE. THE THINGS OF GOD REQUIRE SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, NOT GENERALIZED OPINION. AT THIS MOMENT OF SPIRITUAL CRISIS, PETER WAS THINKING ABOUT A BUILDING PROGRAM. HE PROBABLY HAD IN MIND THE UPCOMING FEAST OF TABERNACLES WHICH WAS THE GENERAL HARVEST FESTIVAL, AN ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS. PETER WAS THINKING ABOUT A HOLIDAY IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY AND THE JOY THEY HAD EXPERIENCED FROM THE MOUNTAINTOP. PETER WAS CONCERNED WITH THE TYPES AND SHADOWS OF THE O.T. WHEN THE REALITY EXISTED BEFORE HIM IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MOMENT WAS LOST TO PETER. HOW MANY OF US HAVE MISSED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GOD'S WORK IN OUR LIVES BECAUSE OF OUR IMPULSIVE, RESTLESS ENERGY WHICH DID NOT LET US SPEND TIME IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE UNTIL WE UNDERSTOOD HIS WILL AND DIRECTION IN OUR LIVES. TOO OFTEN, LIKE PETER, WE PRESS AHEAD WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE.

III. AN IMPOTENT SPIRIT - vs 37-40

THE POINT OF THIS STORY IS THAT HERE WAS A SITUATION WHICH JESUS EASILY DEALT WITH BUT HIS NINE DISCIPLES FAILED. IT WAS A SITUATION OUT OF HAND WHERE HELPLESS, POWERLESS DISCIPLES HAD CREATED, TO THE DISTRESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT OF AN UPSET FATHER. JESUS CHRIST TURNED THIS CHAOTIC SITUATION INTO A CONTROLLED ONE THROUGH HIS POWER. THE DISCIPLES WERE TO LEARN THAT THEIR POWER IN THE WORK OF CHRIST WAS A DELEGATED POWER, IT WAS NOT IN THEMSELVES. JN. 15 STATES A SIMPLE PRINCIPLE, "FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING". THE DISCIPLES WERE TO LEARN THAT GOD TAKES OUR WEAKNESS AND USES IT FOR HIS OWN GLORY. GOD IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON OUR GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS TO DO HIS WORK. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HIS GREATEST WORK IS DONE WITH A BACKDROP OF HUMAN WEAKNESS DISPLAY. SOME OF THE GREAT LEADERS IN THE CHURCH WERE MEN WHO TURNED THEIR HUMAN WEAKNESS OVER TO GOD FOR HIS USAGE. COMPARE JACOB AND PAUL AS EXAMPLES. D. L. MOODY HAD LITTLE FORMAL EDUCATION. HIS LETTERS WERE FILLED WITH GRAMMATICAL ERRORS. HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, I AM TOLD, WAS NOT IMPRESSIVE. HIS VOICE WAS HIGH PITCHED WITH A NASAL SOUND. YET, GOD USED MOODY AS FEW MEN HAVE EVER BEEN USED IN THIS COUNTRY. GIDEON LEARNED THIS LESSON. THE FLESH DOES NOT LIKE THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD USING WEAKNESS. THE DISCIPLES HAVE NO POWER UNTIL THEY GET IN TOUCH WITH CHRIST. POWER OF THE CHURCH IS THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (ACTS 1:8). F. B. MEYER SAID OF HIMSELF, "I AM ONLY AN ORDINARY MAN. I HAVE NO SPECIAL GIFTS. I AM NO ORATOR, NO SCHOLAR, NO PROFOUND THINKER. IF I HAVE DONE ANYTHING FOR CHRIST IN MY GENERATION, IT IS BECAUSE I HAVE GIVEN MYSELF ENTIRELY TO CHRIST JESUS AND THEN TRIED TO DO WHATEVER HE WANTED ME TO DO." JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE WITHOUT POWER WHENEVER THEY UNDERTAKE TO DO HIS WORK WITHOUT HIM.

IV. AN IMMATURE SPIRIT - vs. 46

CAN YOU IMAGINE GROWN MEN ARGUING OVER WHO IS THE GREATEST AMONG THEM? OF ALL THE PLACES WHERE STATUS AND JEALOUSY SHOULD NOT BE MANIFESTED, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN AMONG THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS. SURELY, THE COST OF THEIR DISCIPLESHIP SHOULD HAVE LEFT THE DESIRE FOR WORLDLY PRESTIGE FAR BEHIND. HOWEVER, THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. THEY WANTED TO BE GREAT IN GOVERNMENTAL POWER AND AUTHORITY. JESUS REMINDED THEM THAT

GREATNESS IN HIS KINGDOM WAS GREATNESS OF SERVICE
 AND NOT GREATNESS OF STATUS. SAD PICTURE, MEN
 WANTING THE PLACES OF PROMINENCE IN CHRISTIAN WORK.
 THE DISCIPLES WERE EXHIBITING THE WRONG MOTIVE FOR
 SERVICE. CONDITIONS HAVE NOT CHANGED A GREAT DEAL
 IN 2,000 YEARS. POSITIONS IN THE CHURCH WHICH GET
 WORDS OF PRaise AND THANKS ALWAYS HAVE WORKERS.
 HOWEVER, THE MINISTRY OF REACHING CHILDREN, FOR
 EXAMPLE, THE BUS MINISTRY, IS THE LEAST DESIRED IN
 A LOCAL CHURCH. EVERYBODY WANTS A SUNDAY SCHOOL
CLASS, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS IN A PLACE OF PROMINENCE.
 NOT MANY WANT TO WORK IN INCONSPICUOUS PLACES. EVERY
 CHURCH HAS ITS IMMATURE DISCIPLES WHOSE DESIRE FOR
"GREATNESS" NOT ONLY HINDERS THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH
 BUT RESTRICTS THE ONGOING OF THE WORK OF CHRIST.
 THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A GREAT SILENCE WHEN JESUS PUT
 A LITTLE CHILD IN THE MIDST OF THE DISCIPLES AS AN
 OBJECT LESSON FOR SERVICE.

V. AN INTOLERANT SPIRIT - vs. 49-50

IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW A SITUATION SUCH
 AS THIS COULD EXIST. IT WOULD SEEM LIKELY THAT ANY-
ONE WORKING IN JESUS' NAME WOULD BE ONE OF HIS
IMMEDIATE DISCIPLES, BUT APPARENTLY THIS WAS NOT
 THE CASE. BECAUSE THESE PEOPLE WERE NOT IN THE
IMMEDIATE GROUP OF THE TWELVE, THEY WERE HINDERED
 BY THE DISCIPLES. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS
 MAN WAS DOING THE LORD'S WORK, IN HIS NAME AND BY
 HIS POWER, BUT HE WAS NOT WITH THE ORIGINAL TWELVE.
 THE PARTISAN NARROWNESS AND SECTARIANISM OF THE
 DISCIPLES WAS REFLECTED IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS
 MAN. FROM THIS POINT, JESUS ATTEMPTED TO TEACH HIS
 DISCIPLES A LESSON IN TOLERANCE OF OTHER PEOPLE.
 NOTICE, WE ARE NOT TO BE TOLERANT OF ERROR, BUT WE
 ARE TO BE TOLERANT IN METHODS. THERE ARE SOME
 PLACES WHERE THE PATH OF TRUTH IS VERY NARROW, ES-
 PECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION
 AND THE SCRIPTURES. HOWEVER, THE LORD WOULD REMIND
 US THAT WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL OF LABELING OTHER PEOPLE
 SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT IN OUR IMMEDIATE "GROUP".
 OUR TEST OF OTHER PEOPLE HAS TO DO WITH THEIR FOL-
LOWING THE SHEPHERD. (I MAKE NO APOLOGY FOR BEING
 A FUNDAMENTALIST. I HAVE NO SYMPATHY FOR THOSE WHO
MAKE FUN OF EITHER THE TERM OR THE PEOPLE WHO RE-
 PRESENT THE TERM. HOWEVER, WE MUST BE QUICK TO
 RECOGNIZE THAT EVEN OTHER PEOPLE NOT IN OUR FRAME OF
THINKING LOVE THE SAVIOUR AND ARE WORKING FOR HIM.

THE SPIRIT OF THE TWELVE (CONT.)

Scene in Heaven -
"They think they
are the only ones
up here." 16

I WILL LOVE THEM FOR CHRIST'S SAKE EVEN THOUGH I MAY NOT WANT TO JOIN THEIR PARTICULAR SPOT IN THE VINEYARD!! THE BIBLE REMINDS US THAT ULTIMATELY THERE WILL BE ONE FLOCK AND ONE SHEPHERD. IT IS NOT EASY TO BE TOLERANT OF OTHER PEOPLE. WE HAVE A RIGHT TO DO THE LORD'S WORK AS BEST WE UNDERSTAND HIS LEADING FROM THE WORD OF GOD. LET US BE TOLERANT WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHO MAY WANT TO DO THAT SAME WORK IN A MANNER WITH WHICH WE MAY NOT FULLY AGREE. THE IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND IS THE WORK AND THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST.

VI. AN IMPATIENT SPIRIT - vs. 51-56

WHEN JESUS WAS INSULTED BY THE SAMARITANS, THE SONS OF THUNDER WERE READY TO SOLVE THIS RACE PROBLEM WITH VIOLENCE. FIRE WAS NOT THE ANSWER TO THIS SPIRITUAL PROBLEM. SOME SAMARITANS WOULD BE SAVED. THIS HATED RACE GOT NO SYMPATHY FROM JAMES AND JOHN, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY INSULTED JESUS. IT DOES SEEM THAT THEIR PRESCRIPTION FOR THE PENALTY OF THEIR OFFENSE WAS A BIT RASH. HASTY JUDGMENTS ARE USUALLY THAT WAY. THEIR UNKIND ATTITUDE TOWARD UNSAVED MEN WAS REBUKED BY JESUS. (I HAVE HEARD SOME PREACHERS WHO SOUNDED AS IF THEY WERE GLAD SINNERS WERE GOING TO BE PUNISHED IF HELL!!) JESUS REMINDED HIS DISCIPLES THAT HIS MINISTRY DURING THE FIRST ADVENT WAS NOT TO PUNISH BUT TO SAVE MEN. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST IS TO SAVE MEN FROM THEMSELVES AND FROM SIN. UNTIL HIS DISCIPLES LEARNED THIS VALUABLE LESSON, THEY COULD NOT BE OF MUCH HELP, EITHER TO CHRIST OR TO NEEDY MANKIND. WITH THIS IN MIND, LET US INVITE YOU NOT TO ADOPT THE WRONG SPIRITS OF THE APOSTLES, BUT TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOUR.

Suppose
he had
said -
so that

SIX WRONG SPIRITS
LUKE 9:55See Pm.
May 1988

THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS WERE NOT SUPERHUMAN BEINGS ENDOWED WITH SPECIAL MYSTICAL QUALITIES UNAVAILABLE TO OTHER MEN. THEY WERE NOT PERFECT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, MOST OF THEM WERE UNSOPHISTICATED, UN-EDUCATED GALILEAN WORKMEN WHO KNEW NOTHING OF THE ADVANCED LEARNING WHICH THE RABBIS IN JERUSALEM HAD RECEIVED. THEIR POWER DID NOT COME FROM ADVANCED TRAINING OR CULTURAL BENEFITS, BUT RATHER UPON THEIR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP TO THE ETERNAL GOD. THESE MEN WERE CALLED TO BE WITH JESUS AND TO GO FORTH INTO THE WORLD WITH HIS MESSAGE. IN THIS CHAPTER, SOME OF THEIR FRAILTIES MAY BE SEEN. EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE TRAINED IN THE GREATEST SCHOOL, WITH THE GREATEST TEACHER WHO EVER LIVED, THEIR ATTITUDES WERE NOT ALWAYS EXACTLY WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN. IN THIS CHAPTER, WE WILL CONSIDER AT LEAST 6 WRONG SPIRITS OR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WORK OF OUR LORD ON EARTH.

I. AN INCONSIDERATE SPIRIT - VERSES 10-12*"Send the multitude away..."*

MARK 6:31 SUGGESTS THAT ONE OF THE REASONS WHY JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES SOUGHT A DESERT PLACE WAS IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT EAT AND REST WITHOUT INTERFERENCE BY THE CROWDS. THIS WAS THE WEEKEND SET ASIDE TO GET AWAY FROM THE PRESS OF DAILY MINISTRY. IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT SUCH WOULD NOT BE THE CASE. ONE MIGHT EXPECT JESUS TO BE PROTECTIVE AND DEFENSIVE, EVEN RESENTFUL, CONCERNING THIS INTRUSION OR INVASION OF HIS PRIVACY. (WHEN IT COMES TO LEISURE TIME, MANY PEOPLE ARE VERY PROTECTIVE AND INCONSIDERATE OF OTHER PEOPLE.) THE TEXT WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE DISCIPLES, PROBABLY WEARY AND A BIT SHORT-TEMPERED, WERE WILLING TO SEND THE MULTITUDES AWAY BOTH HUNGRY AND WITHOUT HEALING. THE DISCIPLES HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A TOUR OF MINISTRY, AND THERE WAS PROBABLY NEVER A MORE NEEDED TIME FOR THEM AND JESUS TO BE ALONE TO REST AND RECUPERATE FOR THE STRENUOUS SCHEDULE AHEAD. WHEN THE CROWD FOLLOWED JESUS INTO THE DESERT, THE TEXT SAYS HE "WELCOMED" THEM. BARCLAY SUGGESTS: "MOST PEOPLE WOULD HAVE RESENTED THE INVASION OF THEIR HARD-WON PRIVACY. HOW WOULD WE FEEL IF WE HAD SOUGHT OUT SOME LONELY PLACE TO BE WITH OUR MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS, AND SUDDENLY A CLAMOROUS MOB OF PEOPLE TURNED UP WITH THEIR INSISTENT DEMANDS?" FOR MOST OF US, THERE ARE TIMES

WHEN WE ARE TOO BUSY TO BE DISTURBED, BUT NEVER DID JESUS CONVEY SUCH AN ATTITUDE. OUR LORD LOOKED UPON HUMAN NEED AS PRIMARY IN HIS LIFE. THE DISCIPLES, EVEN THOUGH WEARY, STILL MANIFESTED A KIND OF SELFISHNESS WHEN IT CAME TO THE PRESSING MULTITUDE. THEY DID NOT SHARE THE GENUINE LOVE AND CONCERN OF JESUS FOR THE MASSES. (PLEASE DO NOT MISUNDERSTAND; I AM AWARE OF THE FACT THAT LEISURE AND REST ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IN ORDER TO DO EFFECTIVE WORK. HOWEVER, THERE SEEMS TO BE AN OVEREMPHASIS ON PERSONAL LEISURE AND AN UNDER-EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL SERVICE.) THE QUESTION ARISES: "HOW ARE WE LIKE THE DISCIPLES IN THIS RESPECT?"

BY THE WAY, THIS IS THE ONLY MIRACLE RECORDED IN ALL FOUR GOSPELS, AND IT TOOK PLACE IN A CONTEXT WHEN THE DISCIPLES WANTED TO SEND THE MULTITUDE AWAY. WE ARE MORE LIKE THE DISCIPLES THAN MOST OF US REALIZE. LET ME SUGGEST A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION. IT IS EASY TO BE INCONSIDERATE, EVEN IN CHURCH. (RELATE COMING TO CHURCH AND PARKING SPACE, SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM, AND FACILITIES, PEW AND ASSOCIATIONS.) OUR WEARY BODIES, FRAYED NERVES, AND PRESSING SCHEDULES ARE NO BASIS FOR BEING SHORT-TEMPERED, ABRUPT, DISCOURTEOUS, AND UNKIND TOWARD OUR FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES.

II. AN IMPULSIVE SPIRIT - VERSES 27-33

THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION WAS ONE OF THE AMAZING EXPERIENCES OF CHRIST DURING THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH. IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THAT THE GLORY OF OUR BLESSED LORD SHONE THROUGH HUMAN FLESH. BOTH PETER AND JOHN REMEMBER THE EXPERIENCE AS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THEIR EARTHLY MINISTRY. (JOHN 1:14, II PETER 1:16) THE TEXT INDICATES THAT, WHEN ALL OF THIS BEGAN TO HAPPEN, PETER AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES WERE SOUND ASLEEP! AWAKENED FROM SLEEP, STARTLED BY THE SPLENDOR OF THE MOMENT, PETER BEGAN TO SPEAK IMPULSIVELY CONCERNING THEIR MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCE. HE WANTED TO BEGIN A BUILDING PROGRAM. AND LUKE ADDS VERY POINTEDLY, "NOT KNOWING WHAT HE SAID." MANY OF US ARE JUST LIKE PETER, FILLED WITH OPINIONS UNSUPPORTED BY SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING. HE PROBABLY HAD IN MIND THE UPCOMING FEAST OF TABERNACLES, WHICH WAS THE GENERAL HARVEST FESTIVAL, AN ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS. PETER WAS THINKING ABOUT A HOLIDAY IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY AND THE JOY THAT THEY HAD EXPERIENCED ON THE MOUNTAINTOP. THE TRUE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOMENT PETER MISSED. PETER'S SUGGESTION WAS A SPUR OF THE MOMENT, EMOTIONAL REACTION TO WHAT HE HAD WITNESSED,

INSTEAD OF A CAREFUL, STUDIED CONSIDERATION OF THE IMPACT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOMENT. MOSES AND ELIJAH UNDERSTOOD THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' FORTH-COMING DEATH, BUT THE DISCIPLES FAILED TO UNDERSTAND ITS SIGNIFICANCE. WITH HIS EYES AND MIND HEAVY WITH SLEEP, PETER BLUNDERED IN AND BLURTED OUT SUGGESTIONS THAT WERE TOTALLY IRRELEVANT AND UNNECESSARY FOR THE MOMENT. EVERYWHERE IN THE WORD OF GOD WE ARE INSTRUCTED NOT TO BE IMPULSIVE REGARDING CHRISTIAN LIVING AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, PLANNING, PRAYER, AND PHYSICAL RESPONSIBILITY ARE REQUIRED IN DOING THE LORD'S WORK. (SOMETIMES, WE HAVE BEEN IMPULSIVE IN THE AREA OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND CHURCH SPLITTING AND DIVISION. OFTEN, THESE THINGS ARISE, NOT BASED UPON THE CALL OF GOD AND THE CONVICTION OF ONE'S SOUL, BUT RATHER ARE REACTIONARY, MOMENTARY, AND WITHOUT GOOD SPIRITUAL BASIS.)

III. AN IMPOTENT SPIRIT - VERSES 37-40

WHEN THEY RETURNED FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNT, A MAN MET JESUS AND ASKED FOR HIS HELP. A FATHER'S ONLY SON, DEMON-POSSESSED, WAS CAUSING GREAT UNREST, DISORDER, AND FEAR. THE FATHER WAS OBVIOUSLY UPSET AND HELPLESS. BUT THE POINT OF THE PASSAGE IS THAT THE DISCIPLES WERE ABSOLUTELY POWERLESS TO HELP. THE SITUATION IN WHICH THE DISCIPLES WERE ABSOLUTELY HELPLESS WAS ONE IN WHICH OUR LORD WAS ABSOLUTELY CALM AND AT EASE. JESUS TURNED THAT CHAOTIC SITUATION INTO ONE OF ABSOLUTE CALM AND CONTROL. THE DISCIPLES WERE TO LEARN THAT THEIR POWER TO WORK FOR CHRIST WAS A DELEGATED POWER AND NOT INHERENT IN THEMSELVES. THE PRINCIPLE OF JOHN 15:5 STATES SIMPLY THAT WITHOUT HIM WE CAN DO NOTHING. THE LORD IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON OUR GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS TO DO HIS WORK. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HIS GREATEST WORK IS OFTEN DONE WITH A BACK-DROP OF HUMAN WEAKNESS ON DISPLAY. SOME OF THE GREAT CHURCH LEADERS HAVE TURNED HUMAN WEAKNESS OVER TO GOD FOR HIS USAGE. JACOB IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND PAUL IN THE NEW WERE BOTH PHYSICALLY WEAK. YET, GOD SAW FIT TO USE THEM BOTH. F.B. MEYER SAID OF HIMSELF: "I AM ONLY AN ORDINARY MAN. I HAVE NO SPECIAL GIFTS. I AM NO ORATOR, SCHOLAR, NO PROFOUND THINKER. IF I HAVE DONE ANYTHING FOR CHRIST IN MY GENERATION, IT IS BECAUSE I HAVE GIVEN MYSELF ENTIRELY TO CHRIST JESUS AND THEN TRIED TO DO WHATEVER HE WANTED ME TO DO." THE DISCIPLES WERE TO LEARN THAT THEY HAD NO POWER TO DO CHRIST'S WORK. ONLY CHRIST CAN DEAL WITH CERTAIN SITUATIONS AND BRING THEM UNDER CONTROL. (EVERY CHRISTIAN

WORKER KNOWS THE FEELING OF HELPLESSNESS AND POWERLESSNESS TO DEAL WITH SITUATIONS WHICH ARE BEYOND HIS GRASP. COMMENT REGARDING DR. McMILLEN AND HIS SENSE OF INABILITY AND FAILURE IN THE REALM OF MEDICINE.

IV. AN IMMATURE SPIRIT - verse 46

THE WORD REASONING IS THE GREEK WORD DIALOGISMOS. IT MEANS TO DEBATE OR DISPUTE. THE DISCIPLES WERE ARGUING AND QUARRELING OVER WHO WAS GOING TO HAVE THE PLACE OF STATUS IN JESUS' COMING KINGDOM. KEEP IN MIND THAT THESE WERE GROWN MEN ARGUING OVER WHO WAS THE GREATEST AMONG THEM! ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT THESE WERE THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS AND NOT GRADE SCHOOL CHILDREN! THE DESIRE FOR POSITION, PRESTIGE, AND PROMINENCE WAS NOT UNIQUE TO THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS. IN THE LORD'S WORK, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING TO SERVE AND BE GENEROUS SO LONG AS THAT SERVICE AND GENEROSITY IS KNOWN, SEEN, AND PRAISED BY MEN. OUR LORD STARTLED HIS DISCIPLES BY TEACHING THEM THAT GREATNESS IN HIS KINGDOM WAS GREATNESS OF SERVICE AND NOT GREATNESS OF STATUS. POSITIONS IN THE CHURCH WHICH GET WORDS OF PRAISE AND THANKS WILL ALWAYS HAVE WORKERS. THE MINISTRY OF WORKING IN THE NURSERY, REACHING CHILDREN, WORKING THE BUS ROUTES, WILL ALWAYS BE WITHOUT HELP. EVERY CHURCH HAS ITS IMMATURE DISCIPLES WHO DESIRE "GREATNESS" AND, IN FACT, HINDER THE WORK OF CHRIST ON EARTH BECAUSE OF THIS IMMATURE SPIRIT. CHRISTIAN MATURITY WILL FIND REASONABLE, PEACEFUL WAYS TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES. MATURE BELIEVERS ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT GOODNESS THAN GREATNESS. THE DISCIPLES' DESIRE TO BE NUMBER ONE IS A DOMINANT DESIRE OF THE FLESH, NO MATTER WHAT DISPENSATION. CHRISTIAN MATURITY IS NOT EASILY OR QUICKLY ACHIEVED. THE DESIRE TO GROW IN GRACE AND MATURE IN OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH IS ONE REASON WE GATHER IN CHURCH ON THE LORD'S DAY. THE CHURCH IS NOT A THEATER IN WHICH WE ARE ENTERTAINED EACH SUNDAY; IT IS A HOSPITAL WHERE WE COME TO MEND OUR SOULS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD TO LEAVE HELPED, RESTORED, AND READY TO HELP OTHERS IN A WORLD THAT IS HOSTILE TO GRACE.

V. AN INTOLERANT SPIRIT - verses 49-50

THE SITUATION IN QUESTION IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE. ONE WOULD THINK THAT PEOPLE ENGAGED IN CASTING OUT DEMONS WOULD BE IN THE IMMEDIATE COUNSEL AND ASSOCIATION OF JESUS HIMSELF. THE DISCIPLES' REACTION TO WHAT WAS BEING DONE WAS SIMPLY THAT THOSE PEOPLE

WHO WERE NOT INVOLVED IN THEIR IMMEDIATE GROUP, THAT IS, THE TWELVE, WERE NOT DOING THE WORK OF GOD. THE PERSON CASTING OUT DEMONS WAS DOING IT IN JESUS' NAME, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT IMMEDIATELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TWELVE. FROM THIS EXPERIENCE, JESUS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES THAT PARTISAN SECTARIANISM IS WRONG. JESUS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES A LESSON IN TOLERANCE OF OTHER PEOPLE. PLEASE NOTICE THAT IT WAS NOT A TOLERATION OF ERROR AND HERESY, BUT A TOLERANCE IN METHODS. WHEN IT COMES TO CERTAIN BASIC DOCTRINES OF THE WORD OF GOD, THE PATH OF TRUTH IS VERY NARROW, AND WE SHOULD ADHERE WITHOUT COMPROMISE TO THESE CARDINAL DOCTRINES. HOWEVER, OUR LORD WAS REMINDING HIS DISCIPLES THAT WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL ABOUT LABELING OTHER PEOPLE AND REJECTING THEM SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT OF OUR PARTICULAR GROUP. THE TEST FOR OTHER PEOPLE OF OTHER GROUPS HAS TO DO WITH WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE FOLLOWING THE SHEPHERD. WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN THERE IS GREAT SPLINTERING AMONG THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE SAME BASIC DOCTRINES. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE IN THE LORD'S FAMILY WITH WHOM I WOULD NOT BE PERSONALLY COMFORTABLE CONCERNING THEIR METHODS OF EVANGELISM, EXPENDITURE AND USAGE OF MONEY, KINDS OF CHURCH MUSIC, AND THINGS OF THIS NATURE. I MAY NOT WANT TO JOIN THEM IN THEIR MODE OF OPERATION IN THEIR PARTICULAR SPOT IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD, BUT MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE IS COMING A DAY WHEN THERE WILL BE ONE FLOCK AND ONE SHEPHERD. WE HAVE A RIGHT TO DO THE LORD'S WORK AS BEST WE UNDERSTAND IT, ACCORDING TO THE LEADING OF HIS WORD AND HOLY SPIRIT. HOWEVER, THE WORD OF GOD WOULD ENCOURAGE US TO BE TOLERANT WITH OTHER PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE DIFFER IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THE LORD'S WORK SHOULD BE DONE. THE IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND IS THAT IT IS HIS WORK AND FOR HIS GLORY. SPURGEON WAS GREAT IN THIS AREA. IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED LECTURES TO MY STUDENTS SPURGEON SAYS THAT WE SHOULD ACT TOWARD THOSE WHO DISAGREE WITH US IN METHODOLOGY WITH COURTESY AND FRIENDLINESS, AND NOT TREAT GOOD MEN AS IF THEY WERE OUR OPPONENTS IN THE GOSPEL. HE SUGGESTS THAT WE SHOULD TREAT THESE FOLK WHO DIFFER IN METHODS OF OPERATION AS FRIENDS OF OUR LORD, IF NOT OUR FRIENDS. PAUL HAD SIMILAR FEELINGS IN PHILIPPIANS 1:15-18. HE SAID TO THE PHILIPPIANS THAT HE KNEW SOME PEOPLE WERE PREACHING CHRIST OUT OF JEALOUSY IN ORDER TO AGGRAVATE OR ANNOY HIM. THESE PREACH CHRIST WITH QUESTIONABLE MOTIVATION, HOPING TO AGGRAVATE AND BURDEN PAUL WHILE HE WAS IN JAIL. PAUL SAID WHATEVER THEIR MOTIVATION, THE FACT REMAINS THAT CHRIST IS BEING PREACHED; WHETHER SINCERELY OR INSINCERELY IS NOT UP TO HIM. THE FACT THAT CHRIST WAS BEING

Shaven:
why think
and I was
up here

*
PREACHED WAS THE THING THAT BROUGHT BLESSING TO HIS HEART. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE TENACIOUS IN DOCTRINE AND TOLERANT IN SPIRIT. JOHN WESLEY SAID: "I HAVE NO MORE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO A MAN HOLDING A DIFFERENT OPINION FROM MINE THAN I HAVE TO DIFFER WITH A MAN WHO WEARS A WIG AND I WEAR MY OWN HAIR." GOD GIVE US GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT WHICH WILL LET US BE COURAGEOUS IN DOCTRINE, FIRM IN OUR BELIEFS, YET TOLERANT TOWARD OTHER PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT SEE THE LORD'S WORK FROM OUR PARTICULAR VANTAGE POINT, AND WITH WHOM WE MIGHT NOT FULLY AGREE; BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE WORK IN MIND AND THE GLORY OF JESUS CHRIST AS OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE.

VI. AN IMPATIENT SPIRIT - VERSES 51-56

THE SAMARITANS INSULTED JESUS. THEY RESENTED PEOPLE GOING SOUTH THROUGH THEIR COUNTRY TOWARD JERUSALEM, AND APPARENTLY WERE VERY DISCOURTEOUS TO JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES AS THEY PASSED THROUGH THEIR COUNTRY. IN ONE SENSE OF THE WORD, IT WAS A RACIAL PROBLEM, AND JAMES AND JOHN, THE FORMER SONS OF THUNDER, SOUGHT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH VIOLENCE. SOMEONE HAS MADE AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION: WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF JESUS HAD TOLD THEM TO GO AHEAD? THE HATED SAMARITANS GOT NO SYMPATHY FROM JAMES AND JOHN, ESPECIALLY FOR THEIR LACK OF GOOD MANNERS. WHAT THEY WERE SUGGESTING SEEMED A HARSH PENALTY, AND HASTY IN JUDGMENT. THEIR UNKIND ATTITUDE TOWARD UNSAVED MEN WAS REBUKED BY OUR LORD. MANY OF US HAVE THE FIRE-EATING, FLAME-THROWING SYNDROME! ONE GETS THE FEELING FROM TIME TO TIME THAT CHRISTIANS LIKE TO HURT PEOPLE! JESUS REMINDED HIS DISCIPLES THAT HIS MINISTRY WAS NOT TO PUNISH MEN BUT TO SAVE THEM. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST WAS TO SAVE MEN FROM THEMSELVES AND FROM SIN, AND UNTIL THE DISCIPLES LEARNED THAT VALUABLE LESSON, THEY WOULD NOT BE MUCH HELP, EITHER TO CHRIST OR NEEDY MANKIND. MANY OF US ARE IMPATIENT BY NATURE; WE HAVE A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN IF WE MISS THE TURN IN A REVOLVING DOOR. SOMETIMES WE GET IMPATIENT EVEN IN CHURCH - COMMENT REGARDING EXIT AT INVITATION TIME. LET US BE PATIENT EVEN IN THE FACE OF INSULT. IT HAS NOT BEEN OUR PURPOSE TO BE UNDULY CRITICAL OF THE WEAKNESSES AND FAILURES OF THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS. OUR PURPOSE IS TO REMIND ALL OF US THAT, LIKE THE APOSTLES, WE MAY DEVELOP A WRONG SPIRIT ABOUT THE LORD'S WORK AND ONE ANOTHER.

SKA
2/27

THE PREEMINENT CHRIST(COL. 1:15-22)He ^{Requires} ^{the} ^{Place}

CHRIST DOES NOT WANT A PLACE, EVEN A PLACE OF PROMINENCE IN OUR LIVES BUT PREEMINENCE ~~IN OUR LIVES~~. "MAKE MUCH OF JESUS AND HE WILL MAKE MUCH OF YOU" IS AN OFT QUOTED SAYING. IN THE COLOSSIAN LETTER, PAUL MAKES MUCH OF JESUS. RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE PRONE TO MAKE MUCH OF LEADERS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS BUT NOT OF CHRIST. HERESY HAD CREPT INTO THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH. IT WAS CALLED Gnosticism. IT REFERS TO "THOSE WHO KNOW." GNOSTICS WERE UNHAPPY WITH THE SIMPLICITY OF CHRISTIANITY. THEY WANTED TO TURN CHRISTIANITY INTO A PHILOSOPHY THAT FIT COMFORTABLY WITH OTHER PHILOSOPHIES OF THE TIMES. GNOSTICS BELIEVED THAT ALL MATTER WAS EVIL SO GOD COULD NOT BE THE AGENT IN CREATION. CREATION CAME FROM A SERIES OF EMINATIONS. JESUS WAS ONE OF MANY EMINATIONS - ONE AMONG THE MANY. THE GNOSTICS USED SECRET PASS-WORDS IN THEIR GATHERINGS. SALVATION WAS NOT FOR ALL MEN BUT ONLY FOR THOSE WHO WERE INTELLECTUAL ENOUGH TO GRASP IT. IN THEIR OPINION, SALVATION WAS BEYOND THE MENTAL ABILITY OF ORDINARY PEOPLE AND BELONGED, RATHER, TO AN INTELLECTUAL ELITE - NAMELY THEMSELVES! PAUL'S METHOD OF DEALING WITH THIS ERROR WAS TO MAKE THE SUBJECT OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST CRYSTAL CLEAR. THE KEY VERSE OF COLOSSIANS IS 1:18 AND STATES THAT CHRIST IS PREEMINENT IN THREE SPECIFIC AREAS MENTIONED IN THIS PASSAGE. I IN CREATION, AT THE CROSS, IN THE CHURCH. BY THE WAY, COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS ARE SIMILAR IN THEIR APPROACH TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH. IN COLOSSIANS, CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY THAT IS CALLED THE CHURCH. IN EPHESIANS, THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE CHURCH AS THE BODY.

"Salvation
for the
Smart"

First
Foremost
in
everyday

I. CHRIST PREEMINENT IN CREATION - 1:15-17

UNBIBLICAL IDEAS ABOUT CREATION ARE NOT NEW TO THE CHURCH. THAT BATTLE IS STILL BEING FOUGHT EVEN TODAY. LET US EXAMINE THE SIGNIFICANT PHRASES RELATED TO CHRIST REFLECTED IN THIS PASSAGE. "THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD." THE WORD IMAGE OR EIKON MEANS THE EXACT REPRODUCTION. IT IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TO DESCRIBE CHARACTER. (IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY - ICONOCLASM HAD TO DO WITH IMAGE WORSHIP!) THIS WORD WAS USED IN ANCIENT TIMES TO VERBALLY DESCRIBE TWO PERSONS DRAWING UP A LEGAL DOCUMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, IT WAS A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION REFERRING TO THEIR PERSONAL FEATURES AND ANY DISTINGUISHING MARKS SO THERE WOULD BE NO MISTAKE CONCERNING THE TWO PEOPLE MAKING THE AGREEMENT. IT WAS THEREFORE A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OR WORD PORTRAIT OF TWO PARTICIPANTS IN A LEGAL TRANSACTION. IN DESCRIBING JESUS CHRIST, PAUL STATES THAT HE IS THE EXACT DUPLICATION OF THE FATHER WHEN IT COMES TO ESSENCE, CHARACTER, BEING. JESUS PERFECTLY REPRESENTS AND MANIFESTS GOD TO MEN. HE IS THE VISIBLE EXPRESSION OF THE INVISIBLE GOD. (SOMEWHERE ON THE POWER LINES OUTSIDE OUR CHURCH THERE IS AN ELECTRICAL PIECE OF EQUIPMENT CALLED A TRANSFORMER. I CANNOT SPEAK TO THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ^{power} MOVES ALONG THE LINES THROUGH THAT TRANSFORMER, BUT IN LAYMEN'S TERMS IT SEEMS THAT THE SAME CURRENT THAT COMES THROUGH THE LINE IS SOMEHOW STEPPED DOWN IN POWER AND FORCE SO IT MAY BE USED SAFELY IN THE HOUSE WITHOUT DESTROYING IT. QUESTION: HOW CAN SOMEONE WHO IS INVISIBLE HAVE AN IMAGE? THE WORD IMAGE MAY REFER TO MORE THAN A PHYSICAL IMAGE. IT MAY REFER TO

The Son perfectly
mirrors the Father
... stamped
with the same nature

MORAL IMAGE. FOR EXAMPLE, ADAM AND EVE WERE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD BUT THIS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT A PHYSICAL IMAGE! THIS VERSE IS SAYING THAT JESUS IS LIKE GOD - THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THEIR MORAL ATTRIBUTES. WHAT RESIDES IN THE FATHER ALSO RESIDES IN THE SON! (HEB. 1:3) "THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE." THE WORD FIRSTBORN IN THE BIBLE DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN ONE WHO WAS BORN FIRST. RATHER IT REFERS TO THE ONE WHO HAS THE FIRST PLACE IN THE FAMILY. IT IS A TECHNICAL TERM THAT REFERS TO THE PLACE OF AUTHORITY IN THE FAMILY. FOR EXAMPLE, IN PSALM 89:27, DAVID IS CALLED THE FIRSTBORN YET SCRIPTURE MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT HE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF THE SONS OF JESSE! SO IT REFERS TO THE POSITION OF HONOR, DIGNITY AND PRIORITY WHICH DAVID HELD AS THE FIRSTBORN IN THE FAMILY. JESUS CHRIST HOLDS THE POSITION OF PRIORITY IN CREATION - HE IS THE LORD OF CREATION. CREATION IS THE WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD. ACCORDING TO VERSE 16, CHRIST AS CREATOR GOES BEYOND THOSE THINGS WHICH MAY BE SEEN WITH THE EYES SUCH AS SUN, MOON, STARS AND EARTH, TO INVISIBLE THINGS SUCH AS ANGELS AND SOLAR SYSTEMS BEYOND OUR RANGE OF VISION. DURING THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, HE MANIFESTED THIS ABILITY IN HIS VERY FIRST PUBLIC MIRACLE, JOHN 2. THE WORD CONSIST IN VERSE 17 MEANS TO HOLD TOGETHER. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH ALL MATTER IS COMPOSED OF RAPIDLY MOVING PARTICLES. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NO SCIENTIST UNDERSTANDS FULLY WHAT HOLDS THESE TOGETHER. WE REFER TO THE LAWS OF NATURE WHICH HOLD OUR UNIVERSE IN AN ORDERLY WAY AS SCIENTIFIC LAWS. EVERY LAW OF SCIENCE IS IN FACT AN EXPRESSION OF DIVINE LAW OR THE WORK OF GOD IN HIS UNIVERSE. WE MIGHT SAY THE LAWS OF NATURE

"Creator to Carpenter"
(Jimmy Carter)

ARE MAN'S WAY OF TALKING ABOUT THE WAYS OF GOD. NOT ONLY DID CHRIST CREATE BUT HE ALSO PRESERVES AND UPHOLDS HIS CREATION.

II. CHRIST PREEMINENT AT THE CROSS - V. 20-21

MANY OF THE WORDS DEALING WITH THE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS SUCH AS BLOOD, PEACE, ETC. ARE TERMS WE IDENTIFY AND DEFINE WITH FAMILIARITY. HOWEVER, THE WORD RECONCILE IS NOT AS EASY TO GRASP. WHEN ADAM SINNED A LOT OF THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE BECAME DIS-LOCATED AND DISORIENTED. MAN MISSED THE REAL PURPOSE OF HIS BEING WHEN HE SINNED. THE PURPOSE OF GOD FOR MAN IS TO FIND HIS FULFILLMENT AND PURPOSE FOR BEING IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD. WHEN ADAM SINNED IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, A BARRIER WAS PLACED BETWEEN GOD AND MAN AND THAT BARRIER IS CALLED SIN. WHEN CHRIST DIED ON THE CROSS, HIS WORK MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, THE BARRIER WAS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. NOTICE, THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH THAT THE DEATH OF CHRIST SAVED ALL MEN, IT STATES THAT IT MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ALL MEN TO BE SAVED OR TO PUT ALL MEN IN A SAVABLE POSITION. THE INVITATION OF THE BIBLE IS THAT ALL BARRIERS ARE DOWN AND GOD'S FACE IS TOWARD THE BELIEVING SINNER INVITING HIM TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD. (II COR. 5:19-21)

WE USE THE WORD RECONCILIATION TO DESCRIBE WHAT ONE DOES AT THE END OF THE MONTH WHEN HE RECEIVES HIS STATEMENT FROM THE BANK. IT HAS THE RECORD OF CHECKS WRITTEN AND DEPOSITS MADE. RECONCILIATION MEANS BRINGING INTO CONFORMITY MONTHLY STATEMENTS WITH ONE'S BALANCE IN HIS CHECKBOOK. THEY MUST AGREE. I AM TOLD THAT WHEN A PIANO TUNER TUNES A PIANO, HE USES AN INSTRUMENT CALLED

A TUNING FORK. A TUNING FORK IS DESIGNED SO THAT IT WILL PRODUCE A CONSTANT SOUND. ONE MAY PURCHASE TUNING FORKS ON VARIOUS PITCHES BUT FROM MY LIMITED KNOWLEDGE, THE STANDARD TUNING FORK IS THE NOTE A AND THE SAME AS THE A ON THE PIANO. IN OTHER WORDS, THE TUNING FORK WILL VIBRATE AT EXACTLY 440 CYCLES PER SECOND AND WHEN YOU STRIKE IT AGAINST ANY OBJECT, SUCH AS YOUR HAND, AND PLACE IT ON THE SOUNDING BOARD OF THE PIANO, IT WILL GIVE A CONSTANT SOUND - THE NOTE A. IT IS HIS JOB TO RECONCILE THE NOTES ON THE PIANO AND BRING THEM INTO CONFORMITY WITH THE SOUND OF THE TUNING FORK. THE WORD RECONCILE LITERALLY MEANS TO CHANGE. THE DEATH OF CHRIST CHANGED SOMETHING WITH REFERENCE TO GOD AND MAN. THAT CHANGE WE HAVE ALREADY DESCRIBED.

III. CHRIST PREEMINENT IN THE CHURCH - V. 18

WHEN MEN THINK OF ORGANIZATIONS AND THE LEADERSHIP OF ORGANIZATIONS, THEY THINK OF THE PERSONS WHO ARE CHAIRMEN, PRESIDENTS, POPES OR THOSE WHO HAVE SOME OTHER TITLE. A CORPORATION HAS A CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, A SCHOOL HAS A PRESIDENT. THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS HIS BODY AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH. THE BODY IS ON EARTH, THE HEAD IS IN HEAVEN. JESUS CHRIST IS TO THE ~~church~~ WHAT A HEAD IS TO THE BODY. THE BODY IS THE VEHICLE THROUGH WHICH THE EXPRESSION OF LIFE IS MANIFESTED ON EARTH. THERE IS A BIBLICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AS AN ORGANISM AND AN ORGANIZATION. FOR EXAMPLE, AN EYE IS AN ORGANISM, AN ELECTRIC EYE, IN A VERY LOOSE SENSE, COULD BE CALLED AN ORGANIZATION OF ELECTRICAL PARTS. ONE IS VITAL, THE OTHER IS FUNCTIONAL.

ALL REVERED FOUNDERS OF HISTORIC RELIGIONS ARE DEAD, CHRIST ALONE IS "THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD." THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS GUIDED BY AND CONTROLLED BY HIM. THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH IS TO DO THE WILL OF CHRIST. THE CHRIST WHO IS PREEMINENT IN THE CHURCH DESIRES TO BE PREEMINENT IN CHRISTIANS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, OUR LORD DEMANDS FIRST PLACE IN OUR LIFE. THE FIRST PART OF EVERY DAY AND THE FIRST PORTION OF OUR INCOME, THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, FIRST IN OUR HOMES AND PLACES OF WORK GOING BEYOND MERE LIP SERVICE. TO THE GENUINE BELIEVER, JESUS CHRIST IS MORE THAN AN EMERGENCY DOOR IN TIMES OF SICKNESS AND DEATH. ONE COMMENTATOR HAS SUGGESTED, WHETHER CORRECT OR NOT I CANNOT SAY, BUT THE SUGGESTION IS THAT IF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHAEA AND NICODEMUS HAD BEEN HALF AS DEVOTED TO CHRIST WHILE HE WAS LIVING AS THEY WERE AFTER HE DIED, THEY COULD HAVE HELPED AND CHEERED MORE PEOPLE. THIS IS TRUE OF MANY WHO HAVE TOO LITTLE AFFECTION TOO LATE IN LIFE. ACCORDING TO MATT. 16:18, THE CHURCH IS "MY CHURCH." IT IS THE OBJECT FOR WHICH HE WILL RETURN TO EARTH. ~~(ACTS 1:18)~~ QUESTION: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH TODAY? THAT PURPOSE AND FUNCTION HAS NOT CHANGED IN 2000 YEARS. QUESTION: IS CHRIST PREMINENT OR EVEN PROMINENT OR IS HE PUSHED OUT OF YOUR LIFE? (COMMENT ON LUKE 8:32)
