

"ISRAEL'S FUTURE: ON TIME AND ACCORDING TO GOD'S SCHEDULE"

ROMANS 11

D. Mac
Lundberg
(1-8)

WE ARE STILL IN THE DISPENSATIONAL PART OF THE BOOK AND ISRAEL IS THE SUBJECT, NOT THE CHURCH. IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, PAUL POINTED TO THE FACT THAT ISRAEL'S FAILURE WAS THEIR FAULT BUT IT IS NOT FINAL. GOD HAS A PLAN FOR ISRAEL AND THAT PLAN WILL BE CARRIED OUT. GOD HAS NOT JUNKED THE JEW. THEIR FAILURE IS TEMPORARY AND NOT PERMANENT. PAUL WAS LIVING PROOF POSITIVE THAT GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH THE JEWS. (1 COR. 15:8)

I. ISRAEL IS ON THE BENCH BUT NOT OUT OF THE GAME - vs. 1-6

LIKE ANY GOOD COACH, GOD ONLY HAS ONE TEAM ON THE PLAYING FIELD AT A TIME. THAT TEAM TODAY IS THE CHURCH. BY THE WAY, ISRAEL IS ON THE SIDE-TRACK OR THE SPUR WHILE THE CHURCH IS ON THE MAIN LINE. IN A FUTURE DAY, THAT WILL BE CHANGED. HOWEVER, GOD IS STILL AT WORK WITH JEWS EVEN THOUGH THEIR NATIONAL DESTINY HAS BEEN DELAYED. IN THIS PASSAGE PAUL POINTS TO THE FACT THAT GOD WORKS IN UNEXPECTED WAYS, USING SMALL THINGS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL. GOD IS AT WORK TODAY THROUGH WHAT THE TEXT CALLS A "REMNANT." (EXPLAIN REGARDING CLOTH THAT A REMNANT IS A SMALL PIECE AT THE END OF THE BOLT) ONE MIGHT CALL IT A LEFT OVER BUT "PIECES WITH A PURPOSE". FROM THE PROPHETS TO PAUL THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A TIME WHEN THE WHOLE NATION OF ISRAEL WAS TRUE TO GOD. HOWEVER, THIS DID NOT STOP OR THWART THE WORK OF GOD, HE CONTINUED TO WORK THROUGH A REMNANT. (COMPARE ELIJAH, ESTHER, EZRA, SIMEON, AND ANNA.) DURING THE CHURCH AGE, A REMNANT COMPOSED OF BELIEVING JEWS. AT THE END OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION A

1 Cor.
10:32

(2)

(3)

(4)

REMNANT OF JEWS WILL TURN TO THE MESSIAH. GOD'S PROMISES TO ISRAEL HAVE NOT BEEN DENIED OR DELEGATED TO THE CHURCH, BUT DELAYED UNTIL A FUTURE DAY. PAUL POINTS TO HIMSELF AS A SAVED ISRAELITE AND EVIDENCE OF THE ELECTION OF GOD ACCORDING TO GRACE.

II. ISRAEL HAS BEEN BLINDED FOR NOW BUT NOT FOREVER - vs. 7-11, vs. 25

ACCORDING TO THIS PASSAGE, ISRAEL HAD EYE, EAR, AND BACK PROBLEMS. THE WORD BLIND MEANS TO BE CALLUSED OR HARDENED. IT WAS A MEDICAL TERM. JUST AS CALLUSES GROW ON THE HAND, SO THEY ALSO GROW ON THE HEART. ISRAEL BECAME INSENSITIVE, UNFEELING AND CALLUSED TOWARD THE THINGS OF GOD. THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY THAT GOD ARBITRARILY HARDENED THEM AGAINST HIMSELF. WHAT HAPPENED IS THAT ISRAEL SET OUT ON A PATH OF DISOBEDIENCE INSTEAD OF A PATH OF OBEDIENCE AND EVENTUALLY WERE OVERTAKEN BY ERROR. THIS IS A PREVAILING PRINCIPLE IN THE BIBLE. PEOPLE WHO TAKE DETOURS IN THE WRONG DIRECTION MAY COME TO THE PLACE WHERE THEY CAN NO LONGER TURN BACK. IF A MAN SAYS "I WILL NOT" OFTEN ENOUGH, THERE MAY COME A TIME WHEN HE WILL SAY "I CAN NOT". (MCCLAIN) THE TEXT SPEAKS OF A SPIRIT OF STUPOR OR AN UNCARING ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF ISRAEL. IN PSALM 69, DAVID PICTURED A GROUP SITTING AT A BANQUET TABLE EATING IN EASE AND ENTERTAINMENT UNAWARE THAT THE ENEMY WAS NEAR. THEY WERE SO SATISFIED AND SECURE IN THEIR CONTENTMENT THAT THEY WERE SO EASILY SEIZED AND DEFEATED BY AN ENEMY. ISRAEL WAS THAT WAY. (COMPARE THE MINISTRY OF JESUS.)

III. ISRAEL WAS A BROKEN BRANCH BUT NOT FORSAKEN -vs. 11-24

(ABANDONED)

PAUL REACHED INTO THE WORLD OF HORTICULTURE TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT AND HOW GOD WAS DEALING WITH ISRAEL. THE OLIVE TREE IS ONE OF THE MOST

VALUED AND USEFUL TREES IN PALESTINE. IT HAS BEEN CALLED THE KING OF TREES. IT GROWS SLOWLY TO MATURITY AND FOR THAT FACT, BECAME AN EMBLEM OF PEACE. IT COULD REACH MATURITY WHEN NO INVADERS FROM THE OUTSIDE WERE OVER-RUNNING THE NATION OF ISRAEL. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TURKS USED AS FUEL FOR THEIR TRAINS MOST OF THE TREES IN ISRAEL. THAT IS WHY FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN TREE PLANTING PROGRAMS IN THE NATION. THE OLIVE TREE REFERS TO THE PLACE OF PRIVILEGE OR FAVOR BEFORE GOD. ISRAEL FAILED IN ITS MISSIONARY MINISTRY AS A SERVANT NATION. IN THE ILLUSTRATION ISRAEL IS REFERED TO BY NATURAL BRANCHES. THE GENTILES ARE DESIGNATED AS WILD OR *Grafted* IN BRANCHES. ISRAEL'S FALL AND FAILURE OPENED THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY TO THE GENTILE WORLD. THEIR EXCLUSION RESULTED IN THE INCLUSION OF THE GENTILES. THEY LOST THEIR PRIVILEGED POSITION BUT THROUGH THAT LOSS LIFE CAME TO THE GENTILES. ALL OF GOD'S MASTER PLAN RELATING TO MERCY! (vs. 32)

IV. ISRAEL'S BEST DAYS ARE NOT IN THE PAST BUT IN THE FUTURE -vs. 12, 26-32

A. THE WORD FULLNESS IS USED IN THIS PASSAGE WITH REFERENCE TO ISRAEL AND THE GENTILES. (REGARDING THE GENTILES - ACTS. 15:14, ROMANS 11:25) AS IT RELATES TO ISRAEL, ROMANS 11:12, 15. THE IMPLICATION IN OUR STUDY IS THAT GOD IS ABLE TO GRAB ISRAEL BACK INTO ITS FAVORED POSITION EVEN THOUGH IT IS BROKEN OFF NOW. VERSES 25-32 RELATE OR REFER TO A FUTURE FINAL SALVATION FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL. DEUT. 28:1, 13, 44 DEUT. 30:1-8, ZECHARIAH 12:10-14 - ISRAEL'S NATIONAL CONVERSION. EZEKIEL 37:1-3, 11-14, VS. 21, 22. THERE HAS BEEN A STIRRING OF ISRAEL IN OUR TIME WITH JEWS GOING BACK TO THEIR HOMELAND BUT THERE IS NO BREATH OR SPIRITUAL LIFE. THEY ARE GOING BACK UNCONVERTED

(36:24 ff)
7. In 3.

AND THEIR NATIONAL CONVERSION WILL BE LIFE FROM THE DEAD). GOD'S PLAN FOR THE NATION IS ON TRACK, ON TARGET, ON TIME. MAN IS A THINKER WHO LIKES TO FIGURE OUT, TO PONDER AND PROBE THE PATH OF HUMAN PROGRESS. HOWEVER, HE CAN NOT BY REASON FIGURE OUT WHAT GOD IS DOING OR WHERE GOD IS GOING. THIS COMES BY REVELATION NOT BY REASON. HISTORY IS - HIS STORY. ISRAEL IS PART OF THAT STORY. IN THE CLOSING VERSES, PAUL SINGS THE DOXOLOGY LAST. HE MOVES FROM THEOLOGY TO DOXOLOGY.

"ROMANS THE WILL OF GOD"

ROMANS 12:1,2

THIS IS THE FIFTH MAJOR DIVISION OF ROMANS - APPLICATION. WHAT IS LEARNED MUST NOW BE LIVED. DOCTRINE AND DEPORTMENT, BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR GO TOGETHER. THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES IS A CONFLICT OF WILLS. THERE WAS A TIME WHEN GOD'S WILL WAS BOTH DESIRED AND DONE BY EVERYONE EVERYWHERE. THAT CHANGED WHEN LUCIFER UTTERED TWO WORDS - "I WILL" (ISAIAH 14: 13-14) THESE WORDS SPELLED SPIRITUAL REBELLION AND REVOLT IN LUCIFER'S HEART AND CONTINUED WITH THE FALLEN ANGELS, ADAM AND EVE IN EDEN AND TO US. (ISAIAH 53:6) THE DISPOSITION OF THE SINNER IS MY WILL NOT THY WILL BE DONE. AN UNSAVED PERSON IS NOT INTERESTED IN DOING THE WILL OF GOD. THE WORLD DOES NOT KNOW ABOUT A GOD-PLANNED LIFE. THE UNSAVED PERSON IS MORE INTERESTED IN ASTROLOGY THAN THEOLOGY. EVEN SOME BELIEVERS ARE IGNORANT OF THIS BIBLE TRUTH. THEY MAKE WRONG CHOICES AND WRONG TURNS IN LIFE SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW OR ACCEPT THE IDEA.

GOD HAS A DIVINE BLUE PRINT FOR EVERY BELIEVER. JUST AS GOD HAD A PLAN FOR ABRAHAM, MOSES AND DAVID SO HE HAS A PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER. EVEN SOME UNBELIEVERS ACCEPT THIS PRINCIPLE REFERRING TO THEIR CAREER AS THEIR CALLING. THE GOD WHO KNOWS THE NUMBER OF HAIRS ON OUR HEAD HAS SOMETHING GOOD DESIGNED FOR EVERY BELIEVER. THIS TRUTH IS REFLECTED IN PROVERBS 3:5-6. IN THIS VERSE WE LEARN AT LEAST 2 BASIC TRUTHS ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND HIS GUIDANCE IN OUR LIFE. (1.) TRUST HIM. SOMEONE HAS SAID TRUST IN YOURSELF AND YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED. TRUST IN YOUR FRIENDS AND THEY WILL EITHER BETRAY OR DIE AND LEAVE YOU. TRUST IN MONEY AND IT WILL BE TAKEN AWAY. TRUST IN YOUR REPUTATION AND SOMEONE WILL SLANDER AND BLAST IT.

TRUST HIM AND NEVER BE CONFOUNDED IN TIME OR ETERNITY.

A LIFE OF TRUSTING GOD BASED ON HIS AND PUT INTO PRACTICE WILL BE A GOD ORDERED AND BLESSED LIFE.

(2). ACKNOWLEDGE HIM. CONFESSING CHRIST IS PART OF THE BASIC BELIEF OF A NEW BELIEVER. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS BASED UPON ACKNOWLEDGING CHRIST IN ALL ONE SAYS, WHEREVER ONE GOES, THE COMPANY ONE KEEPS - SAYING AND DOING THAT WHICH IS COMPATIBLE WITH CHRIST. THIS VERSE SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT THE PERSON WHO WOULD KNOW GOD'S LEADING IN HIS LIFE MUST PUT AWAY AMBITION FOR FAME AND FORTUNE FOR HIS OWN SAKE. THE BELIEVER MUST NOT LIVE FOR THE APPLAUSE OF MEN. HIS GOAL IN LIFE SHOULD BE TO LET HIS LIFE PLEASE GOD AND TO DO THE WORK GOD HAS ENTRUSTED TO HIM. SO TO SPEAK, LET THE BELIEVER PUT CHRIST BETWEEN HIMSELF AND EVERYTHING IN LIFE. LET US EXAMINE THE PASSAGE IN ROMANS TO LEARN 4 BASIC FACTS ABOUT KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD:

I. TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD A PERSON MUST BE SAVED - "BRETHREN"

THE WORD BRETHREN HAS TO DO WITH BIRTH. BRETHREN ARE THOSE WHO HAVE THE SAME SOURCE OF LIFE OR PARENTS. THE UNSAVED PERSON IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE WILL OF GOD. IT IS MY WILL, NOT THY WILL THAT IS HIS PRAYER. IN HIS LIFE, GOD IS A KIND OF "DIVINE 911". THAT IS TO SAY, SOME-ONE YOU CALL IN CASE OF EMERGENCY OR WHEN ONE NEEDS AN ESCAPE EXIT BUT NOT AS A WAY OF LIFE. BEFORE SALVATION, AN UNSAVED PERSON HAS LITTLE CONCERN OR CONSIDERATION FOR GOD.

THE WILL OF GOD FOR THE SAVED MAY NOT BE SMOOTH BUT IT WILL BE SATISFYING. (TESTIMONY)
WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE HIGH POINTS OF LIFE'S LONG ROAD, THE WILL OF GOD IS PRIMARY IN THESE CONSIDERATIONS.

- (1). SAVED - BY THE WILL OF GOD.
- (2) CALLED TO THE MINISTRY - BY THE WILL OF GOD.
- (3) SCHOOLING BY THE WILL OF GOD.
- (4) MARRIAGE - FAMILY - IN THE WILL OF GOD.
- (5) SERVICE - PASTORATE AS OPPOSED TO TEACHING - A CHANGE OF DIRECTION IN THE WILL OF GOD. THESE ARE THE MILESTONES ALONG THE ROAD OF LIFE CALLED THE WILL OF GOD. THERE ARE HOWEVER MANY MORE MINOR MOMENTS IN THE WILL OF GOD.

STEPPING
STONES

II. TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD A PERSON MUST BE SURRENDERED-"PRESENT YOUR BODIES"

DEAD SACRAFICES WERE PART OF OLD TESTAMENT RITUAL IN WORSHIP. THIS IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE TO GOD. THE BELIEVER BELONGS TO GOD AND WE ARE ASKED TO DEDICATE OUR BODIES TO GOD (1 COR. 6:19-20) THE WORD PRESENT MEANS TO "HAND OVER" BUT FOR MANY OUR LIVES WITH REFERENCE TO GOD SPELL "HANDS OFF." TO THE GREEKS, THE BODY WAS A BURDEN, THE PRISON OF THE PSYCHE." THE BIBLE SAYS OUR BODIES ARE THE HOLY PLACE OF GOD. THE BELIEVER MAY LIVE HIS LIFE AT ONE OF TWO LEVELS. (1). LOW LEVEL LIVING. THIS IS A LIFE CONTROLLED BY THE FLESH, INFLUENCED BY

Question:
Who is in control?
2 Thome - Someone sits....

THE MATERIAL, THE PHYSICAL, THE SENSES. ACCORDING TO I COR. 3 THIS IS CARNAL CHRISTIANITY.

(2) HIGH LEVEL LIVING - THIS IS THE LIFE CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. IN SUCH A LIFE GOD CALLS THE SHOTS - ALL OF THEM. HE CONTROLS. SUCH A LIFE IS BASED UPON UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER TO THE WILL OF GOD. NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH HAS DEDICATION OR SURRENDER BEEN PREACHED MORE BUT PRACTICED LESS. DEDICATION OR REDEDICATION IS A KIND OF "RERUN RITUAL" THAT MAY BECOME A SUBSTITUTE FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING. IT IS A "FAST FIX" TO PROP UP FOLKS THAT FOUL UP THEIR LIVES BUT ARE NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN CHANGING THE REASON FOR THE SPIRITUAL CRASH. SURRENDER IS BOTH ONCE AND DAILY. (F.B. MEYER DESCRIBES THE SURRENDER AND DEDICATED LIFE IN TERMS OF A HOUSE AND KEYS. HE SAID THERE WAS A TIME IN HIS LIFE WHEN HE FELT SPIRITUALLY UNFIT AND UNFRUITFUL. HE SAID IT WAS AS IF THE LORD CAME TO HIM AND ASKED FOR THE KEYS OF EVERY ROOM IN HIS LIFE. MEYER WAS WILLING TO SURRENDER ALL KEYS EXCEPT ONE SMALL ROOM ON THE TOP FLOOR WHICH BELONGED TO HIM. THE LORDS RESPONSE TO THIS ATTITUDE WAS UNLESS HE HAD THE KEYS TO EVERY ROOM HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE KEYS TO ANY ROOM. MEYER WAS SO OVERWHELMED WITH THIS EXPERIENCE THAT HE LITERALLY CRIED OUT: "COME BACK, LORD, AND TAKE THE KEYS TO ALL THE ROOMS OF MY LIFE".

III. TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD A PERSON MUST BE SEPARATED "CONFORMED...TRANSFORMED..."

SEPARATION IS AN AREA OF GREAT CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH. LET US LOOK AT A BROAD OVERVIEW. THE TERM MAY BE SEEN FIRST OF ALL CONCERNING

(1) ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION
ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION HAS TO DO WITH A

BELIEVER SEPARATING HIMSELF FROM AN APOSTATE RELIGIOUS GROUP. THAT IS TO SAY, THERE IS NO LONG RANGE SPIRITUAL VALUE IN BEING IDENTIFIED WITH OR A MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION THAT DENIES CARDINAL DOCTRINES ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS.

(2) PERSONAL SEPARATION- II Cor. 6:14-18

CHRISTIAN SEPARATION FROM EVIL IS NOT JUST FOLLOWING A LIST OF NEGATIVES. THE BELIEVER IS ADMONISHED TO LOVE NOT THE WORLD. WORLDLINESS IS THAT SELF INDULGENT ATTITUDE OF HEART OR MIND TOWARD LIFE THIS UNIVERSE AND ALL IT'S RELATIONSHIPS. WORLDLINESS IS WHAT WE ARE AS MUCH AS WHAT WE DO. IT IS AN ATTITUDE AS WELL AS AN ACT. IN THIS PASSAGE THE BELIEVER IS WARNED ABOUT UNHOLY ALLIANCES. THEY ARE DESCRIBED AS AN UNEQUAL YOKE. THE WORD

1 CONFORM WILL HELP US UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS. THE GREEK SCHEMA FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD SCHEME AND REFERS TO AN OUTWARD FORM THAT CHANGES. THE PHILOSOPHY OR SCHEME OF THIS WORLD IS ONE THAT EXCLUDES GOD FROM IT'S THOUGHTS AND PLANS. GOD IS LEFT OUT. THE BELIEVER IS ADMONISHED NOT TO ACCEPT THE PHILOSOPHY OF THIS WORLD THAT WILL DICTATE A COURSE OF LIFE AND CONDUCT, PUT PRESSURE ON US TO CONFORM TO ETHICAL MORAL STANDARDS THAT EXCLUDE GOD. THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION HAS AN INTERESTING WAY OF STATING THIS PRINCIPLE.

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, AN ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE GRIT PAPER CONCERNING A MAN WHO LIVED IN AMPSTERDAM WHO COULD SQUEEZE HIMSELF INTO A BOX 19 INCHES X 19 INCHES EVEN THOUGH HE WAS 6 FT. TALL AND WEIGHED 170 LBS. HE WAS KNOWN AS THE "CUBIC MAN". WHEN PHILLIPS SAY DON'T LET THE WORLD SQUEEZE YOU INTO IT'S OWN MOLD, IT IS A BIBLE WAY OF SAYING "STOP SAYING AMEN TO THE WORLD'S SERMON"! (ILLUSTRATION OF CONFORMITY. LOOK AT A ROCK CONCERT WHERE PEOPLE CONSIDER THEMSELVES "NON-CONFORMISTS" AND YOU WILL SEE MORE PEOPLE WHO LOOK ALIKE, TALK ALIKE AND THINK ALIKE THAN ANY OTHER PLACE IN THE WORLD. IT IS INDEED A CONFORMED CULTURE. IN SOME RESPECTS, A CULT.

THE WORD TRANSFORMED IS THE GREEK MORPHE. REFERS TO A CHANGE FROM WITHIN. IT IS THE WORD IN SCIENCE USED TO DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENS TO A TADPOLE WHEN IT BECOMES A FROG AND CATERPILLAR A BUTTERFLY.

IV. TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD A PERSON MUST BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED "RENEWING OF THE MIND"

THE MIND IS THE BATTLEGROUND WHERE SATANS BEGINS HIS CONFLICT. HE WOULD LIKE TO TURN IT IN HIS PLAYGROUND. THE RENEWING OF THE MIND BEGINS WITH THE NEW BIRTH THAT MAKES A NEW MAN WITH A NEW MIND. (TITUS 3:5) IT IS A WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN REGENERATION AND CONTINUES IN SANCTIFICATION. (II COR. 4:16, COL. 3:10) A RENEWED MIND IS ONE THAT RELATES TO AND IS REGULATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID "TRASH THE MIND AND YOU TRASH THE MAN". SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE PHRASE "YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE". THIS IS BETTER TRANSLATED AS "YOUR INTELLIGENT WORSHIP" SUGGESTING THAT DEDICATION IS AN ACT OF THE MIND AS WELL AS THE WILL AND THE MOTIONS. MUCH OF WHAT IS DONE IN THE AREA OF WORSHIP IS NOT WORSHIP AT ALL AND SEEMS TO SUGGEST THAT THE MIND HAS BEEN LEFT OUTSIDE THE CHURCH DOOR! SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS ALSO HAS TO DO WITH CHRISTIAN MATURITY AS IS REFLECTED IN THE WORD PERFECT. A GOOD GOAL IS IN VIEW. (ROM. 8:28) CONCLUSION: BELIEVERS ARE INTERESTED IN KNOWING ABOUT THE WILL OF GOD. LET ME CONCLUDE WITH 3 IDEAS PERTAINING TO THE WILL OF GOD AS IT RELATES TO THE BELIEVER. (1) DISCOVERY OF THE WILL AND DOING THE WILL OF GOD GO TOGETHER. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO DISCOVER THE WILL OF GOD AND IGNORE IT. IT MUST BE DONE.

(2) DIRECTION CONCERNING THE WILL OF GOD COMES FROM SEVERAL SOURCES - WORD OF GOD, PRAYER, COUNSEL, AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

(3) PEACE IS A BY-PRODUCT. (PHIL.4:7, Ps.119:165)
WHEN YOU DISCOVER A BELIEVER WHO HAS A PEACE OF MIND AND HEART ABOUT HIM ASK ABOUT THE WILL OF GOD. IF YOU DISCOVER A BELIEVER WHO IS RESTLESS AND UNHAPPY, THE ABSENCE OF THE WILL OF GOD WILL BE VERY OBVIOUS.

" GIFTS AND GRACES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING"ROMANS 12:3-21 *one gift!*

~~THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GIFTS AND GRACES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.~~ THERE IS ONE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT. (JOHN 14:16-17). "AND I WILL PRAY THE FATHER, AND HE SHALL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COMFORTER..." THERE ARE SEVERAL GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT AS RECORDED IN 1 COR. 12:1-4, EPH. 4:8-11. THE GRACES OF THE SPIRIT REFER TO THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT AS MANIFESTED IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT ARE GIVEN FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST AND NOT FOR PERSONAL USE OR BENEFIT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THESE GIFTS MAY BE EXERCISED APART FROM SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY. (THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY CERTAIN CHRISTIAN WORKERS INVOLVED IN MORAL WEAKNESSES AND INFRACTIONS CONTINUE TO PREACH AND GET PEOPLE SAVED - GOD HONORING THE GIFT EVEN WHEN THE GIFTED IS LESS THAN SPIRITUAL. IN THIS PASSAGE, CERTAIN GIFTS AND GRACES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ARE MENTIONED.

I. THE GIFTS - VS. 4-8

THE WORD "GIFTS" IN VERSE 6 IS THE GREEK WORD CHARISMATA. IT IS FROM THE SAME ROOT WORD AS THE TERM GRACE. A GIFT IS NOT ACQUIRED OR ATTAINED BY PERSONAL SKILLS BUT RATHER SOMETHING INATE FROM GOD. THE GIFTS MENTIONED ARE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE BODY. THE CHURCH IS SEEN AS A BODY MADE UP OF PARTS THAT DIFFER THOUGH CLOSELY RELATED. ONE PART IS HURT AND THE WHOLE BODY SUFFERS. (RELATE TO NECK NERVE, HURT ALL OVER.) WARREN WEAVER REMINDS HIS READERS THAT SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE TOOLS TO WORK WITH AND NOT TOYS TO PLAY WITH. IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A BELIEVER TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL GIFT AND NOT REALIZE OR UTILIZE THE GIFT. IN THIS PASSAGE, THERE ARE

SEVEN MENTIONED. WE WILL TOUCH UPON THEM SWIFTLY.

(1) PROPHECY - VERSE 6

THE WORD PROPHECY IS USED CONCERNING PEOPLE WHO SPOKE FOR GOD AND WHO ALSO WROTE FOR GOD - THAT IS, WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH IT IS TRUE THAT ALL PREACHERS OF THE WORD OF GOD ARE PROPHETS IN THE NON-TECHNICAL ASPECT OF THE WORD. THIS GIFT CEASED WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE CANON. (II PETER 1:19-20)

(2) MINISTRY - VERSE 7

THIS WORD IS RELATED TO THE TERM DEACON OR THOSE WHO ASSIST IN THE ASSEMBLY BY SERVING. THE REFERENCE MAY BE MORE TO PERSONAL NEED AND PERSONAL MINISTRY.

(3) TEACHING - VERSE 7

A TEACHER OR DIDASKALOS ARE THOSE WHO PROCLAIM AND EXPLAIN THE WORD OF GOD. THEY NOT ONLY UNWRAP THE MYSTERIES BUT MAKE THEM UNDERSTANDABLE. OUR LORD WAS ABOVE ELSE - A TEACHER. (JOHN 3:1)

(4) EXHORTATION - VERSE 8

THIS IS THE GIFT OF ENCOURAGING THE WEAK. BARNABAS HAD SUCH A GIFT. IT IS THE SAME GREEK TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER.

(5) GIVING

THE IDEA OF BEING GENEROUS OR SHARING RESOURCES. IT REFERS TO TIME, TALENT AND TREASURE. IN HIS COMMENTARY ON ROMANS, DR. BARNHOUSE HAS AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION ABOUT STEWARDSHIP.

HE POINTS OUT THAT EVERYTHING THE BELIEVER HAS BELONGS TO GOD AND SUGGESTS THAT THE IDEA THAT THE CHRISTIAN WILL PAY A TITHE OF HIS INCOME EITHER FREELY OR OTHERWISE. HE SUGGESTS THAT SUDDEN, UNFORESEEN MONETARY PROBLEMS SUCH AS BENT FENDERS, SUDDEN HIDDEN EXPENSES, FIRES IN A HOME AND VARIOUS UNEXPECTED AND UNEXPLAINED CIRCUMSTANCES COULD BE GOD EXTRACTING FROM HIS OWN THAT WHICH THEY HAVE FAILED TO GIVE BACK. HE USES THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY AS AN INDICATION OF THIS TRUTH. THEIR CAPTIVITY WAS PROVOKED BECAUSE OF THEIR GREED.

(6) RULING - VERSE 8

THE GREEK WORD MEANS TO "TAKE THE LEAD." FOR EXAMPLE, A DEACON IS ADMONISHED TO "RULE WELL HIS OWN HOUSE...." (1 TIM. 3:4-5) HEBREWS 13:17 SPEAKS OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE RULE OVER BELIEVERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH. THIS REFERS TO THE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP, OVERSIGHT AND AUTHORITY OF BISHOPS OR PASTORS. (TWO EXTREMES - DICTATOR - ONE WHO HAS ALL THE SAY IN A CHURCH TO DEMOCRACY - WHERE LEADERSHIP HAS NO SAY IN THE CHURCH. BOTH EXTREMES ARE WRONG.

(7) MERCY - VERSE 8

THOSE WHO CARE FOR THE POOR AND AGED. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTICE THAT THERE WERE NO HOSPITALS AS SUCH IN HUMAN HISTORY UNTIL THE CHURCH CAME INTO EXISTENCE. THE SICK WERE OFTEN SHUNNED AND LEFT TO DIE.

II. THE GRACES - VERSES 9-21

IN A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME AND DISCOURSE, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DEAL EXTENSIVELY WITH THIS VERY MEATY AND WEIGHTY PASSAGE ON A WORD BY WORD, PHRASE BY PHRASE, VERSE BY VERSE

CONSIDERATION. LET ME MENTION JUST FOUR PRIMARY GRACES IN THE TEXT AND FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THE FOUR AS THEY RELATE TO THE PASSAGE.

GRACE No. 1: LET LOVE RULE IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS - VERSES 9-10

OBVIOUSLY THIS IS EASIER TO SAY THAN TO START AND MOST OF ALL TO SUSTAIN. THE WORD DISSIMULATION IS NOT FAMILIAR. IF SOMEONE SAID: "THE CHURCH IS FULL OF DISSIMULATORS" IT WOULDN'T CARRY MUCH WEIGHT. THE TERM MEANS HYPOCRISY OR "FAKE FAITH." A HYPOCRITE IS BASICALLY AN ACTOR, ONE WHO IS ACTING OUT A RELIGIOUS PART. HE WEARS A MASK OR FACADE OF RELIGION BUT INSIDE THERE IS NO REALITY. THE HYPOCRITE IS BOTH A BACK-SLAPPER AND A BACK-STABBER. NO SIN IS MORE STRONGLY CONDEMNED OR DETESTED IN SCRIPTURE. THE PERSON WHO LOVES GOD WILL ABHOR NOT ADORE EVIL! HE WILL GLUE HIMSELF TO GOOD! "THERE IS A TENDENCY OF LIFE TO ALLOW THE GOOD TO SLIP AWAY." (BARNHOUSE) ALONG THE SHADOWY STREETS OF EVIL THERE ARE MANY WHO PURSUE THAT COURSE WITH HIGH ENERGY. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED AND ADMONISHED TO FOLLOW THE HIGH ROAD OF GOODNESS TO GLORY. LOVE IS MANIFESTED NOT ONLY IN THE WAY WE WALK BUT THE WAY WE TREAT PEOPLE. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO TREAT HIS CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WARMLY, NOT COLDLY. CHURCHES SOMETIMES BECOME "RELIGIOUS REFRIGERATORS" TO FOLK WHO COME THERE. MANY WHO PROFESS TO KNOW THE LORD GROW OLDER AND COLDER AND NOT BOLDER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. THE PHRASE "PREFERRING ONE ANOTHER" IS ANOTHER WAY TO SHOW LOVE. PHILLIPS TRANSLATES THIS PHRASE, "LET ANOTHER HAVE THE CREDIT." IT IS INTERESTING THAT BLAME IS READILY SHARED AND ALMOST TOTALLY GIVEN AWAY TO OTHERS. CREDIT, HOWEVER, IS SHARED SPARINGLY AND GRUDGINGLY. SOMEONE HAS

— NOT AT ALL.

SUGGESTED THERE IS NO TELLING WHAT GOD COULD AND WOULD DO IF BELIEVERS WERE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT WHO GETS THE CREDIT. (SEVERAL YEARS AGO A PASTOR WAS TALKING WITH A VERY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MAN ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHIES THAT HAD MADE HIS BUSINESS RUN SO WELL. ONE PARTICULAR INCIDENCE WAS MENTIONED WHERE ANOTHER LARGE COMPANY GOT THE CREDIT FOR A DISCOVERY THAT THIS COMPANY HAD THE PATENT ON. THE PRESIDENT OF THIS COMPANY SAID, "WE DON'T CARE WHO GETS THE CREDIT AS LONG AS WE GET THE CONTRACT." THIS PARTICULAR PRODUCT, THE PRESIDENT SAID, WAS MORE IMPORTANT FOR HUMAN NEEDS THAN HIS OR HIS COMPANY'S EGO NEEDS. A GOOD PHILOSOPHY.)

GRACE No. 2: SERVE THE LORD WITH ENTHUSIASM -
VERSES 11-12

THE WORD "SLOTHFUL" IS USED TO DESCRIBE A CERTAIN SERVANT WHO WAS CARELESS AND LAZY. (MATT. 25:26) THIS IS THE BIBLE TERM USED TO DESCRIBE MODERN PHRASES SUCH AS: "DON'T GET TOO INVOLVED, TAKE IT EASY, DO NOTHING, DON'T CARE, GOOF OFF." THE WORD BUSINESS IS NOT NECESSARILY REFERRING TO A PLACE OF BUSINESS BUT RATHER TO A BUSINESS-LIKE WAY OF DOING THINGS. THAT IS, A LIFE THAT IS HIGHLY MOTIVATED, WELL ORGANIZED AND ENTHUSIASTIC IN ITS APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN WORK. GOD HELP THE BELIEVER OR CHURCH THAT HAS LOST ITS ENTHUSIASM. IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE THE TERM, "I AM EXCITED," AND NEVER GET EXCITED!

ATHLETES, SALESPERSONS, LEADERSHIP IN ANY AREA OF LIFE KNOW THAT NOTHING MUCH IS EVER DONE WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM. (A BUSINESS MAN TELLS OF WALKING INTO THE COFFEE SHOP OF A CERTAIN HOTEL IN LOS ANGELES. THE RESTAURANT WAS BEAUTIFULLY DECORATED AND EVERYTHING VERY APPEALING TO THE EYE. THE WAITRESS WAS NEATLY AND WELL DRESSED. AS SHE APPROACHED THE TABLE, HER

Shoneya
Mgt. - Now
Pizza - #1
Lignon!
#7

SPIRIT MATCHED THE APPEARANCE. "GOOD MORNING; GENTLEMEN. WE HAVE A DELICIOUS BREAKFAST FOR THIS WONDERFUL DAY, LET ME BRING YOU SOMETHING NICE. YOU WILL CERTAINLY ENJOY OUR.... IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO SERVE YOU THIS MORNING." THIS MAN LEFT THE COFFEE SHOP REFRESHED AND READY FOR A BUSY BUSINESS DAY.) IT IS ONLY IN CHRISTIAN WORK THAT PEOPLE BELIEVE ENTHUSIASM IS A SIN! SOMEHOW SOBER, SAD AND SOMBER ARE ALL RELATED TO SPIRITUAL!

GRACE No. 3: TAKE PERSONAL INTEREST IN OTHERS - VERSES 13-16

THE WORDS GIVE, BLESS AND REJOICE SUMMARIZE INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. ONE COMMENTATOR SAID: "THE AVERAGE PERSON IS FAR MORE DISTRESSED OVER MINOR MISHAPS TO HIMSELF THAN MAJOR CALAMITIES TO OTHERS. HE IS MORE TORN UP ABOUT BREAKING A NAIL ON HIS FINGER THAN A NEIGHBOR WHO BREAKS HIS NECK IN AN ACCIDENT." THE WORD GIVE IN THE TEXT MEANS TO ACTIVELY PURSUE. BE AGGRESSIVE IN GIVING TO OTHERS KNOWING FULL WELL THAT ONE OF THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHIES OF CHRISTIAN LIVING IS WHAT WE KEEP WE LOST AND WHAT WE GIVE AWAY, WE RETAIN. THE WORD BLESS IN THE TEXT MEANS TO SPEAK WELL OF THOSE WHO MAKE YOUR LIFE MISERABLE! THE WORD EULOGIZE COMES FROM THIS WORD. JESUS AND STEPHEN BOTH PRACTICED THIS ACT OF CHRISTIAN LOVE. THE WORD REJOICE PRESENTS A GREAT CHALLENGE. IT IS RELATIVELY EASY TO WEEP WITH THOSE WHO ARE IN SORROW. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO SHARE IN THE JOY OF SOMEONE'S SUCCESS. YET, THIS IS THE KEY TO JOYFUL AND MEANING CHRISTIAN SERVICE. DALE CARNEGIE SAYS THAT A PERSON CAN MAKE MORE FRIENDS IN TWO MONTHS BY BEING INTERESTED IN OTHER PEOPLE THAN ONE CAN MAKE IN TWO YEARS TRYING TO GET OTHER PEOPLE INTERESTED IN YOU.

THE REASON IS MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN YOU, THEY ARE INTERESTED IN THEMSELVES, MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT. IF YOU DOUBT THAT, JUST NOTICE HOW MANY TIMES WE ALL USE THE LITTLE WORD I. CARNEGIE GOES ON TO SAY: "IF YOU THINK PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN YOU, ANSWER THIS QUESTION: IF YOU DIED TONIGHT, HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD COME TO YOUR FUNERAL? THE TENDENCY IS TO WRAP OURSELVES UP IN OURSELVES EVER MORE TIGHTLY WITH MORE AND MORE BOWS AND TRAPPINGS. THE SECRET TO CHRISTIAN LIVING IS TO UNWRAP OURSELVES AND SHARE OURSELVES WITH OTHER PEOPLE. (COMMENT ON DR. MENNINGER'S STATEMENT ABOUT NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.)

(Spoon
& Story)

GRACE No. 4: THERE IS NO PLACE FOR REVENGE IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER - VERSES 17-21

EVEN AMONG PROFESSING CHRISTIANS, GETTING HURT AT THE HAND OF SOMEONE ELSE MEANS GETTING EVEN ON OUR PART. THIS PASSAGE SUGGESTS THAT WE DON'T GET MAD AND WE DON'T GET EVEN EITHER. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A BELIEVER TO BE A PEACEMAKER AND NOT A TROUBLEMAKER. IN ALL AREAS OF REPAYING FOR EVIL OR EXTRACTING VENGEANCE FOR PERSONAL HURT OR INJURY, THAT IS NOT AN OPTION FOR THE BELIEVER. LEAVE THAT TO GOD. IT IS HIS BUSINESS, HE KNOWS HOW TO DO IT AND HE WILL DO IT BECAUSE THE BIBLE SAYS HE WILL. "IN 1963, I DISCOVERED A BOOK ENTITLED, "NONE OF THESE DISEASES" BY DR. S. I. McMILLEN. AT THAT TIME IT COST 60¢ - IT HAS TO BE 10 OR 20 TIMES MORE THAN THAT NOW. HOWEVER, CHAPTER 11 IS ENTITLED THE HIGH COST OF GETTING EVEN. HE TELLS OF A TRIP TO YELLOWSTONE PARK WHERE GRIZZLYS FED. NO OTHER ANIMAL DARED EAT WITH THE GRIZZLY EXCEPT THE SKUNK. THE COMMENT WAS THAT THE GRIZZLY COULD HAVE WON A FIGHT WITH THE SKUNK BUT THE COST OF

WINNING WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO HIGH. SMART GRIZZLY. COULD IT BE THAT BEARS ARE SMARTER THAN PEOPLE? McMILLEN TALKS OF WEARY DAYS, SLEEPLESS NIGHTS, BROODING OVER RESENTMENTS THAT CREATE IN OUR BODIES SUCH THINGS AS TOXIC GOITERS AND FATAL HEART ATTACKS. (2) A MAN WALKED INTO HIS DOCTOR'S OFFICE WITH HIS YOUNG SON ASKING THE NURSE IF HE COULD GET SOME PILLS FOR HIS WIFE'S COLITIS. THE BOY SAID: "DAD, WHO IS MOM COLLIDING WITH NOW?" IN THE ARTICLE HE ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THE MOST COMMON WAY PEOPLE GET EVEN WITH OTHERS IS BY TALKING ABOUT THEM. RUNNING PEOPLE DOWN DOES NOT FREE THE TALKER FROM ALL OF THE STRESSES OF HIS BODY. HE SUGGESTS THAT THE MOMENT ONE PERSON STARTS HATING ANOTHER MAN AND FIGURING OUT HOW TO GET EVEN, HE BECOMES THAT MAN'S SLAVE. HE CANNOT ENJOY LIFE BECAUSE THE MAN HE HATES CONTROLS HIS THOUGHTS. THE MAN HE HATES HOUNDS HIM WHEREVER HE GOES. HE CANNOT ESCAPE THE TYRANNICAL GRASP HIS ENEMY HAS ON HIS MIND. A SPIRIT OF REVENGE WILL RUIN A LIFE AS QUICKLY AS ANY OTHER NEGATIVE ATTITUDE. THIS PASSAGE IS STATING THAT ALL EVIL IS ULTIMATELY AGAINST GOD - LEAVE REPAYMENT FOR THAT EVIL UP TO HIM. ALL OF OUR EFFORTS ARE UNFAIR AND PARTIAL. ALMOST A DECADE AGO, THE READERS DIGEST CONTAINED AN ARTICLE THAT SUMS UP WHAT THIS PASSAGE IS SAYING IN PRINCIPLE. THE ARTICLE WAS ENTITLED ANYWAY. PEOPLE ARE UNREASONABLE, ILLOGICAL AND SELF-CENTERED. LOVE THEM ANYWAY. IF YOU DO GOOD, PEOPLE WILL ACCUSE YOU OF SELFISH ULTERIOR MOTIVES. DO GOOD ANYWAY. IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL, YOU WILL WIN FALSE FRIENDS AND TRUE ENEMIES. SUCCEED ANYWAY. HONESTY AND FRANKNESS MAKE YOU VULNERABLE. BE HONEST AND FRANK ANYWAY. THE GOOD YOU DO TODAY WILL BE FORGOTTEN TOMORROW. DO GOOD ANYWAY. THE BIGGEST PEOPLE WITH THE

BIGGEST IDEAS CAN BE SHOT DOWN BY THE
SMALLEST PEOPLE WITH THE SMALLEST MINDS.
THINK BIG ANYWAY. PEOPLE FAVOR UNDERDOGS BUT
FOLLOW ONLY TOPDOGS. FIGHT FOR SOME UNDERDOG
ANYWAY. WHAT YOU SPEND YEARS BUILDING MAY BE
DESTROYED OVERNIGHT. BUILD ANYWAY. GIVE (THE
WORLD) THE BEST YOU HAVE AND YOU WILL GET KICKED
IN THE TEETH. GIVE (THE WORLD) THE BEST YOU HAVE
ANYWAY.

"CIVIL AUTHORITY AND CIVIL BEHAVIOR"

ROMANS 13:1-14

IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED AGAINST THE NIGHT CHUCK COLSON REMINDS HIS READERS OF THE THREE GOD ORDAINED INSTITUTIONS ON EARTH:

(1). THE FAMILY - FOR THE PROPAGATION OF LIFE.

(2). THE STATE - FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE.

(3). THE CHURCH - FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

THESE ARE NOT JUST CASUAL SOCIAL GROUPS BUT SOURCES OF AUTHORITY FOR RESTRAINING AND ^{ON CIVIL} THE RENEWING OF SOCIETY. ALL THREE ARE UNDER SATANIC ASSAULT. AT THE HEIGHT OF IT'S POWER, ROME WAS A VERY STABLE SOCIETY BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS ZEALOTS WHO REBELLED AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY. UNLESS CHRISTIANITY BE TARRED WITH THE ACCUSATION OF TRYING TO DISRUPT AND DESTROY CIVIL AUTHORITY PAUL MADE THE BELIEVERS RESPONSIBILITIES CRYSTAL CLEAR REGARDING GOVERNMENT. (*Intellectuals - Marx*)

I. THE POWERS THAT BE ARE THERE FOR YOU AND ME

Vs. 1-5

GOVERNMENT IS ORDAINED BY GOD. IT'S AUTHORITY TO GOVERN IS NOT DETERMINED BY THE MORAL CHARACTER BUT THE GOVERNOR OR THE GOVERNED. CHRISTIANS ARE TO RECOGNIZE THAT ALL AUTHORITY IS FROM GOD AND A SPIRIT OF LAWLESSNESS THAT DESPISES AUTHORITY CAN NOT BE PART OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT. EVEN A POOR, BAD GOVERNMENT IS BETTER THAN NO GOVERNMENT OR ANARCHY. I TIM. 2:1-2 INSTRUCTS BELIEVERS TO PRAY FOR ALL MEN, FOR KINGS AND FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY. I PETER 2:13-17 TEACHES SIMILAR TRUTHS. "HIGHER POWERS" A REFERENCE TO CIVIL OR STATE AUTHORITIES. IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF THE BELIEVER TO OBEY CIVIL LAW. THERE WAS NO GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY EXCEPT

(4:17, 25, 32, 35)
-2-

THAT WHICH EXISTS BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT. ALL POWER, GOVERNMENTAL AND OTHERWISE, EXISTS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF GOD. THE PERSON WHO RESISTS SUCH IS RESISTING A DIVINE INSTITUTION. (DANIEL 4:17, JOHN 19:10) A BELIEVER SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO A GOVERNMENT THAT MAINTAINS ORDER. HOWEVER, THE BELIEVER IS NOT REQUIRED TO FOLLOW GOVERNMENT ON A PATH OF MORAL WRONG. HE MAY REFUSE TO DO WRONG, ~~ACCEPT THE GOVERNMENTS PENALTY FOR DISOBEDIENCE WITHOUT RESISTING THE POWER.~~ PAUL KNEW THAT GOVERNMENT CAN DO ON A BROAD SCALE WHAT THE INDIVIDUAL CANNOT. MATTERS SUCH AS UTILITIES, TRANSPORTATION, DEFENSE ARE ALL ITEMS WHICH GOVERNMENT CAN DO ON A COLLECTIVE BASIS BETTER AND MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN ON AN INDIVIDUAL EFFORT. IN VERSE 2 THE TERM JUDGEMENT UNDERSCORES THE FACT THAT THE INDIVIDUAL DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHAT LAWS HE WILL OBEY. IF CERTAIN LAWS ARE UNJUST, HE MAY TRY TO IMPROVE OR CHANGE THEM BUT LAWLESSNESS IS OUT. THERE IS ONE AREA THAT GOVERNMENT HAS NO RIGHT TO INTRUDE- THE WORSHIP OF GOD. NO GOVERNMENT HAS THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE A CHRISTIAN TO DO AN UNCHRISTIAN ACT. A GOVERNMENT MAY PUT ~~ON~~ LIMITATIONS ON THE THE DISSEMINATION OF THE GOSPEL BUT HE CAN NOT STOP THAT DISSEMINATION. FOR EXAMPLE, A BELIEVER MAY PREACH THE GOSPEL. IT IS HIS RIGHT REGARDING FREEDOM OF SPEECH BUT HE CAN NOT PREACH THE GOSPEL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET AT THE HEIGHT OF THE TRAFFIC RUSH HOUR. HIS RIGHT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN THAT CONTEXT INTERFERES WITH THE RIGHT OF OTHERS TO USE THE ROAD! THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD OBEY ORDINANCES WITH REFERENCE TO TIME AND PLACE OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE GOSPEL. "AFRAID OF THE POWER?" VS. 3. THE HONEST CITIZEN NORMALLY HAS NO REASON TO FEAR IF HE OBEYS THE LAW. A GENERAL RULE OF GOVERNMENT IS THAT THEY REWARD GOOD AND PUNISH EVIL. A PERSON DEDICATED

TO DOING GOOD HAVE NO FEAR OF GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY. ONE OF THE SUBJECTS MOST OFTEN ASKED HAS TO DO WITH CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION. THIS IS AN AREA WHICH IS DIFFICULT TO BE DOGMATIC. IT IS MY OPINION THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO SERVE HIS GOVERNMENT EVEN IN THE AREA OF THE MILITARY. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME NON-COMBATIVE ASPECTS OF MILITARY LIFE TO WHICH SOME CHRISTIANS HAVE FELT COMPELLED TO COMPLY. THIS IS NOT REFUSING TO SERVE - IT IS REFUSING TO KILL. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. THIS IS A MATTER ULTIMATELY LEFT TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND GOD. GOOD MEN STAND ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS ISSUE. "MINISTER....SWORD vs. 4. THERE ARE 2 WORDS IN THIS PASSAGE FOR THE WORD MINISTER. THE FIRST IS THE WORD FROM WHICH WE GET OUR ENGLISH WORD DEACON. THE SECOND IS THE WORD FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD LITURGY. (Vs. 4-vs.6) THE WORD LITURGY COMES FROM A 2 GREEK WORDS WHICH MEAN "PUBLIC WORKS". THE SECOND TERM REFERS TO A PERSON WHO PERFORMS A PUBLIC SERVICE OR DUTY FOR THE STATE. THERE IS ULTIMATELY A SENSE IN WHICH ALL PUBLIC SERVICE IS UNTO GOD AND BEFORE GOD MEN ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE USE OR ABUSE OF THAT SERVICE! THE TERM SWORD IS A SYMBOL OF GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY AND ABILITY TO PUNISH EVIL. THIS VERSE GIVES CREDENCE TO THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. WHEN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PUNISH EVIL DOERS IT IS FAILING IN ONE OF ITS BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES AS GOVERNMENT. GEN. 9:6 CLEARLY STATES THE PRINCIPLE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IN THIS PRINCIPLE BUT SOME DESCRIBE IT AS UNFAIR, BARBARIC AND PRIMITIVE. ONE OF THE OUTCRIES HAS TO DO WITH THE IDEA THAT UNDER SUCH A SYSTEM THE POOR SUFFER AND THE WEALTHY GO UNPUNISHED FOR SIMILAR CRIMES. HOWEVER, IT IS THE PRINCIPLE THAT IS IN QUESTION NOT THE PERVERSION OR ABUSES TO THE PRINCIPLE. THE FACT

THAT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT HAS BEEN ABUSED IN OUR SYSTEM OF JURISPRUDENCE DOES NOT NULLIFY FACT THAT THE PRINCIPLE IS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE. TO THROW OUT THE PRINCIPLE BECAUSE OF ABUSES WOULD BE LIKE THROWING OUT THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE BECAUSE OF SOME PEOPLE ABUSE THEIR MARRIAGE VOWS! EVEN POORLY ENFORCED MARRIAGE LAWS ARE BETTER THAN NONE AT ALL. SOCIETY SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT CORRECTING THE ABUSES OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT THAN ABOLISHING THE PRINCIPLE. IN THE CONTEXT OF GEN. 9:6 GOD PUT GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY INTO THE HANDS OF MEN. THE MAXIMUM PENALTY OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE IS TO PUNISH WRONG DOERS ABSOLUTELY THAT IS IN A CAPITAL NATURE. (THE WORD CAPITAL IS USED TO REFER TO THE HEAD, A REFERENCE TO THE FORFEITURE OF THE HEAD OR LIFE AS PUNISHMENT FOR A CRIME). WITHOUT THIS AUTHORITY, THE ABILITY OF GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT LIFE IS INADEQUATE AND WEAK. BEFORE THE FLOOD, THERE WAS NO DIVINE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE INSTITUTION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT. AFTER THE FLOOD GOD ESTABLISHED THE INSTITUTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF LIFE. GOD KNEW THAT EVIL MEN NEED CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS AND THESE RESTRICTIONS ARE TO BE EXECUTED IN THE FEAR OF GOVERNMENTAL PUNISHMENT. IN THIS VERSE, GEN. 9:6, GOD ESTABLISHED THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE AND ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE. SOME HAVE SUGGESTED THAT ONE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FORBIDS THE TAKING OF LIFE. HOWEVER, THE COMMANDMENT "THOU SHALT NOT KILL" HAS TO DO WITH MURDER AND PERSONAL VENGEANCE AND DOES NOT REFER TO MEN IN THE COLLECTIVE OR GOVERNMENTAL SENSE. ONE REASON WHY CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IS VALID IS BECAUSE MAN IS MADE IN THE MORAL IMAGE OF GOD. THE MAN WHO TAKES ANOTHER MAN'S LIFE HAS COMMITTED A CRIME AGAINST MAN-KIND BUT ULTIMATELY AGAINST GOD. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN MY OPINION IS A PILLAR OF SAFETY THAT GOD PUTS INTO SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION

AND WELFARE FOR MANKIND. THE PRINCIPLE SET FORTH IN GEN. 9:6 RECOGNIZES THAT FALLEN MAN AT HIS BEST HAS WITHIN HIS HEART UNMEASURED POTENTIALITY FOR EVIL AND THAT EVIL MUST BE CURBED BY GOVERNMENT. THE MORAL JUSTIFICATION FOR HUMAN GOVERNMENT ALSO GIVES JUSTIFICATION FOR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT. HUMAN LIFE IS SO SACRED IN THE SIGHT OF GOD THAT GOD DECREED FROM THE BEGINNING THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING SACREDNESS OF LIFE. THERE IS A VERY PRACTICAL SIDE OF THIS SUBJECT AND IT COMES FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WHO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN SOCIETY AND FULLY SUPPORT THE FAIR, JUST ADMINISTRATION OF THIS POLICY.

II. THERE ARE DEBTS THE BELIEVER MUST PAY

vs. 6-10.

A. TAXES - 6-7 TAXES ARE INVOLVED FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD. THE STATE COULD NOT EXIST OR FUNCTION WITHOUT THEM. JESUS ESTABLISHED THE BELIEVERS RESPONSIBILITY TO BOTH GOD AND CAESAR DURING HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY. THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT LEVIED TAXES PRIMARILY IN 3 AREAS:

(1). GROUND TAX ^{10%} HE PAID AT LEAST ONE TENTH OF ALL GRAIN AND ONE FIFTH OF ALL FRUIT PRODUCED BY HIS GROUND.

(2). INCOME TAX - THIS WAS ONE PERCENT OF HIS INCOME. ^{1%}

(3) POLL TAX - THIS WAS PAID BY ALL PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 14 AND 65. IN ADDITION TO THIS THERE WERE CUSTOMS, DUTIES, IMPORT AND EXPORT TAXES THAT HAD TO BE PAID FOR THE USE OF ROADS, CROSSING BRIDGES, ENTRY INTO MARKETS, HARBORS, THE RIGHT TO POSSESS ANIMALS, OR TO DRIVE A CART OR A WAGON. I AM SURE SUCH TAXES WERE AS GALLING TO THE ROMANS AS SIMILAR TAXES ARE

TO AMERICANS TODAY!

B. DEBT - vs. 8. THERE ARE TWO VIEWS AS TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS VERSE.

(1). THE BELIEVER SHOULD HAVE NO DEBT, NO BORROWING AT ANY TIME FOR ANY REASON. TWO WELL KNOWN EXPONENTS OF THIS IDEA WERE J. HUDSON TAYLOR AND CHARLES H. SPURGEON. THEIR PHILOSOPHY WAS A PERSON CAN NOT GET INTO PHYSICAL PROBLEMS IF HE REFUSES TO BORROW MONEY. THERE IS WISDOM IN THIS APPROACH.

(2). OTHERS BELIEVE THAT A PERSON DOES NOT OWE A DEBT IF HE MEETS HIS CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENT. THE DANGER IS BORROWING BEYOND THE ABILITY TO REPAY. IT IS A FACT OF LIFE THAT IF CASH WERE REQUIRED FOR EVERY PURCHASE ITEMS SUCH AS AUTOMOBILES, HOMES WOULD BE OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR MOST ESPECIALLY FOR MEDIUM OR LOW INCOME BRACKETS. WHATEVER THIS VERSE MEANS IT REMINDS THE BELIEVER THAT A PROMISE TO PAY IS A SACRED TRUST. OVERBUYING IS A SURE ROAD TO FINANCIAL DISASTER AND IS MORALLY WRONG. IT CAN RUIN AN INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILIES EARLY. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED A "3 P PROGRAM". PRAY, PLAN BEFORE YOU PURCHASE. WHEN ZACCHEAUS GOT SAVED ONE OF HIS FIRST STEPS WAS TO MAKE RESTITUTION FOR ANY PREVIOUS THIEVERY. THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY HE HAD STOLEN FUNDS BUT HIS WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS IN ORDER TO KEEP HIS FINANCIAL AFFAIRS IN ORDER WAS A GENUINE EVIDENCE OF A GENUINE CONVERSION. (LUKE 19:8-9)

III. THE HOUR IS NOW TO WAKE UP AND SHAPE UP FOR GOD - vs. 11-14

THESE VERSES WERE WRITTEN TO BELIEVERS, THE UNSAVED MAN IS NOT ASLEEP, HE IS DEAD. IT IS EASY FOR BELIEVERS TO BE LULLED TO SLEEP

ESPECIALLY DURING A TIME THAT IS CHARACTERIZED AS NIGHT. THE RIP VAN WINKLE SYNDROME HAS INVADDED THE CHURCH. AS YOU KNOW, HE SLEPT FOR 20 YEARS WHILE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR WAS ON. THERE ARE MANY PROFESSING CHRISTIANS WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF THE CRITICAL NATURE OF THE HOUR IN WHICH WE LIVE. THEY ARE LIKE SLEEP WALKERS SITTING IN A COMFORTABLE PEW ON SUNDAY, PUTTING A MINIMUM EFFORT INTO THE LORD'S WORK. PAUL CHARACTERIZED THIS DISPENSATION AS NIGHT.

1. (THESS. 5:1-10) THE BELIEVER IS OF THE DAY AND AWAITING THE DAY WHEN CHRIST SHALL COME. THE WAY A PERSON LIVES REVEALS HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TIME IN WHICH HE LIVES. OURS IS NOT A DAY FOR PARADE UNIFORMS BUT FOR BATTLEFIELD DRESS. THE CHURCH AT ROME WAS FILLED WITH PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN SAVED OUT OF HEATHENISM. THEIR LIVES HAD BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY SEXUAL LICENSE AND DRUNKENNESS. THEIR SHAMELESS UGLY CONDUCT WAS ALL PART OF THEIR PAST LIFE. PAUL WAS VERY SPECIFIC ABOUT CERTAIN SINS WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE CHRISTLESS LIFE.

(1). REVELRY - IT REFERS TO A NOISEY BAND OF WILDPeople WHO ROAMED THE STREETS THREATENING PEOPLE. (WILDING)

(2). DRUNKENNESS - THE GREEKS WERE WINE DRINKING PEOPLE, EVEN CHILDREN DRANK WINE FOR BREAKFAST. EVEN THEIR DRUNKENNESS WAS CONSIDERED A SHAMEFUL THING. AND THE GREEKS OFTEN DRANK WINE THAT HAD BEEN DILUTED WITH WATER. THE IDEA IS PEOPLE WHO ENGAGED IN DRUNKEN BRAWLS.

(3). IMMORALITY - THIS IS THE WORD FOR BED. IN HEATHENISM CHASTITY WAS UNKNOWN.

(4). SHAMEFULNESS - BARKLEY SAYS THIS IS ONE OF THE UGLIEST WORDS IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE. IT NOT ONLY DESCRIBES IMMORALITY BUT THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAD NO SHAME. THIS PERSON DOES NOT CARE WHAT HE DOES OR WHO SEES HIM DO IT. CAUGHT IN

THE GRIP OF LUST HE DARES TO DO PUBLICLY
WHATEVER HE DESIRES TO DO WITHOUT REGARD FOR
OTHER FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS.

(5). CONTENTION - THIS IS THE MAN WHO
PUTS HIMSELF IN THE FOREGROUND OF EVERY PICTURE.
HE AND HE ALONE COUNTS. IT IS THE "ME FIRST"
GENERATION".

(6). ENVY - PEOPLE WHO ARE JEALOUS AND
CARRY GRUDGES. BARNHOUSE MADE AN INTERESTING
OBSERVATION ABOUT THIS PASSAGE WHEN HE SAID
"IN OUR DAY, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHOSE HANDS
ARE SO SHAKEY FROM SATURDAY NIGHT DRINKING
THAT THEY HAVE DIFFICULTY HOLDING A COMMUNION
CUP ON SUNDAY MORNING". ONE CAN NOT READ THIS
PASSAGE WITHOUT REMEMBERING AUGUSTINE. HIS
LIFE HAD BEEN ONE OF SHAMEFUL IMMORALITY -
THE WORDS IN THE TEXT APTLY DESCRIBE HIS LIFE
BEFORE CHRIST. IT WAS A DEEP BURDEN OF HIS
MOTHER THAT HE CAME TO KNOW CHRIST AND SHE
PRAYED FOR HIM REGULARLY AND ESPECIALLY THAT
HE WOULD NOT GO TO ROME. HOWEVER, THROUGH
A CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES, AUGUSTINE DID GO
TO ROME AND ONE DAY WHILE SITTING IN A GARDEN
HE BECAME DEEPLY TROUBLED ABOUT HIS SIN. WHILE
WALKING IN A GARDEN IT WAS AS IF GOD SPOKE TO HIS
HEART AND HE HEARD A VOICE SAYING "TAKE AND
READ". ACCORDING TO AUGUSTINE IT SOUNDED LIKE
A CHILD'S VOICE BUT WOULD NOT LEAVE HIS MIND.
HE HURRIED BACK TO THE SEAT WHERE HIS FRIEND
ALYPHIUS WAS SITTING READING SOME OF PAUL'S
WRITINGS. ACCORDING TO AUGUSTINE HE SNATCHED
UP THE BOOK OF ROMANS AND READ THIS VERY PASSAGE.
HE READ NO FURTHER. AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE
IT WAS AS IF THE LIGHT OF GOD FELL UPON HIS
TROUBLED HEART AND HE WAS NEVER, EVER THE SAME
AGAIN. OUT OF GOD'S WORD, GOD SPOKE TO
AUGUSTINE. GOD'S WORD ALWAYS FINDS IT'S PRIMARY
TARGET - THE HUMAN HEART.

WORDS FOR THE WEAK

ROMANS 14:1-23

THE SUBJECT OF THIS CHAPTER IS RECORDED IN VERSE 1: "HIM THAT IS WEAK IN THE FAITH...." THE CHAPTER HAS TO DO WITH BELIEVERS WHO ~~HAVE NOT BUT~~ NEED TO GROW UP. (ROMANS 14 AND 15 DEAL WITH THE WEAK AND THE STRONG BELIEVER. THE WEAK BROTHER IN CHAPTER 14 TAKES THE WRONG POSITION REGARDING MANY ETHICAL QUESTIONS. IN OTHER WORDS, HE PUTS HIGH VALUE ON LITTLE ISSUES. THE STRONG BELIEVER HAS ADOPTED THE RIGHT POSITION ON ETHICS BUT HAS USED IT IN THE WRONG WAY.) THE LORD'S FAMILY IS LIKE EVERY OTHER FAMILY, IT HAS ALL KINDS OF MEMBERS. THOSE WHO ARE WEAK AND IMMATURE BELIEVERS ARE A LOT OF TROUBLE IN AND TO A LOCAL CHURCH. THEY CREATE ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS JUST AS BABIES DO IN A FAMILY. THEREFORE, SOME CHURCHES BELIEVE THEY ARE MORE TROUBLE THAN THEY ARE WORTH SO THE WEAK ARE KEPT OUTSIDE THE FELLOWSHIP OR MEMBERSHIP OF A LOCAL CHURCH. IN ORDER TO BECOME A MEMBER OF SUCH CHURCHES, ONE MUST IN EFFECT PASS A BATTERY OF TESTS, ADHERE TO A HIGH MORAL STANDARD, COMPLY WITH A STRICT POLICY OF BOTH ECCLESIASTICAL AND PERSONAL SEPARATION. SOME SUCH PROCEDURES ARE ~~BARELY~~ ONE STEP SHORT OF ORDINATION! TO BE SURE, IT IS AN ADMIRABLE TRAIT TO WANT TO HAVE A DOCTRINALLY AND ETHICALLY PURE CHURCH BUT NOT AT THE EXCLUSION OF GENUINE BELIEVERS EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY BE WEAK. WE ALL UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS VERY CLEAR IN SCRIPTURE THAT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IS AN EXCLUSIVE MATTER FOR THE SAVED ONLY. THE UNSAVED MAN HAS NO PART IN THE CHURCH POLICY OF A BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCH. HOWEVER, WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH SHOULD BE THE ATTITUDE OF A LOCAL CHURCH TOWARD A WEAK BROTHER IN CHRIST?

Ch. never meet to be ... a cozy-club
of like-minded people" h.
of like-minded people" h.
of like-minded people" h.

-2-

Christians are
not clones"

Pop rest with you me.

Ch. is not
a country
club"

I. BRING HIM IN - VERSES 1-13

THE WORD "RECEIVE" MEANS TO WELCOME AND TO WELCOME WARMLY. IT IS THE PRESENT MIDDLE IMPERATIVE - "KEEP ON TAKING TO YOURSELVES." THERE SHOULD BE A BANNER IF NOT LITERAL CERTAINLY UNDERSTOOD - THE "WEAK ARE WELCOME". THE CHURCH IS TO FEED LAMBS AND SHEEP - NOT GOATS AND GIRAFFES! WE ARE TOLD THAT DURING WORLD WAR II, SHIPS CROSSING THE OCEAN TRAVELED IN CONVOYS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST SUBMARINE ATTACK. ALL VESSELS IN THE CONVOY ADJUSTED THEIR SPEED TO THE SPEED OF THE SLOWEST AND NOT FASTEST VESSEL. THE CHURCH IS A HOSPITAL FOR SINNERS, NOT A MUSEUM FOR SAINTS. IT IS NOT A SPIRITUAL HEALTH STUDIO WHERE SUPER-SAINTS WHO ARE MUSCLE-BOUND WITH BIBLE DOCTRINE WALK AROUND AND FLEX THEIR "SPIRITUAL MUSCLES" WHILE OTHERS LOOK ON IN ADMIRATION. THE CHURCH IS A PLACE WHERE BELIEVERS ARE FED AND WHERE FELLOWSHIP IS PART OF THE GROWTH PROCESS. THE RECEPTION OF WEAK BELIEVERS MUST NOT BE IN A SPIRIT OF "LINT PICKING" OR ARGUING OVER TRIVIAL MATTERS. THE PHRASE "DOUBTFUL DISPUTATIONS" IS ONE WORD THAT CARRIES THE IDEA OF "THOUGHT CONTROL." IT HAS TO DO WITH MATTERS OF OPINION. BELIEVERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO HAVE THE SAME VIEW OF SEPARATION IN SECONDARY MATTERS. THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES THAT WE MAY HAVE WIDE LATITUDE AND DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN SOME AREAS. OUR VIEWS DO NOT NEED TO BE THE SAME ON EVERY SUBJECT. THERE ARE CERTAINLY GRAY AREAS IN LIFE WHERE THERE IS NO CLEAR PATH MARKED IN SCRIPTURE. THIS IS WHERE CHRISTIAN MATURITY, DISCERNMENT AND JUDGMENT ENTERS THE PICTURE. WE ARE GOD'S SONS AND NOT HIS ROBOTS. UNIFORMITY IS NOT REQUIRED FOR UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. THE "SHIBBOLETH SYNDROME" IS NOT REQUIRED

IN CHURCH. (COMPARE JUDGES 12:6) AUGUSTINE SAID IT WELL: "IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY; IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY; IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY." BELIEVERS ARE NOT PERMITTED OR REQUIRED TO "PLAY GOD" IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. THERE ARE ETHICAL MATTERS WITH WHICH GOOD PEOPLE DISAGREE. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE SPEND SO MUCH TIME FIGHTING OVER FASHION THAT BEFORE THE FIGHTING IS SETTLED THE FASHION HAS CHANGED! WE CANNOT PREACH OUR PREFERENCES AND CALL THEM PRINCIPLES. I FIND IT HARD TO UNDERSTAND HOW BELIEVERS WILL ARGUE WHETHER OR NOT ANY VERSION OF THE BIBLE IS PERMITTED OTHER THAN THE KING JAMES VERSION AND CALL SUCH DIVERSION PERVERSION AND HERESY! IN MANY AREAS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS THERE IS ROOM FOR DISAGREEMENT AND REQUIREMENTS OF TOLERATION. FOR EXAMPLE, DR. WIERSBE REMINDS HIS ROMANS READERS OF TWO OF THE BEST KNOWN PREACHERS OF THE VICTORIAL ERA IN ENGLAND. THEY WERE CHARLES SPURGEON AND JOSEPH PARKER, BOTH MIGHTY PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL AND ABLE STUDENTS OF THE BIBLE. EARLY IN THEIR MINISTRIES, THESE FRIENDS EXCHANGED PULPITS. HOWEVER, LATER ON THERE WAS DISAGREEMENT AND SOME OF THEIR DISAGREEMENT SPILLED OVER INTO THE NEWSPAPERS. SPURGEON ACCUSED PARKER OF BEING UNSPIRITUAL BECAUSE PARKER ATTENDED THE THEATER. PARKER ACCUSED SPURGEON OF BEING UNSPIRITUAL BECAUSE HE SMOKED CIGARS. (BY THE WAY, SPURGEON STOPPED THIS PRACTICE ON SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS WHEN HE SAW THE TOBACCO HE SMOKED ADVERTISED UNDER HIS NAME. HE STOPPED THEN, NEVER TO SMOKE AGAIN.) WHICH MAN WAS RIGHT? WHICH MAN WAS WRONG? IN ALL PROBABILITY THEY WERE BOTH WRONG! WHEN IT COMES TO QUESTIONABLE MATTERS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, BELIEVERS, EVEN SPIRITUAL BELIEVERS, SOMETIMES DISAGREE AND THAT IS PERMITTED IN SCRIPTURE BUT BEING DISAGREEABLE ABOUT THE SUBJECT IS NOT.

SOMEONE TOLD DR. WIERSBE ON ONE OCCASION THAT HE HAD LEARNED THAT GOD CAN BLESS PEOPLE HE DISAGREED WITH. SO IT IS. THE WEAK BROTHER IN THIS CHAPTER HAS TWO PRIMARY PROBLEMS IN THE AREA OF CHRISTIAN SEPARATION:

(A) DIET - VERSES 2-3

FOR THE GENTILE BELIEVER CONVERTED OUT OF RAW PAGANISM, EATING ANYTHING, ANYTIME PROPOSED NO RELIGIOUS CEREMONIAL PROBLEM FOR HIM WHATSOEVER. HE COULD DO ANYTHING WITH NO PANGS OF CONSCIENCE AND DID SO. HOWEVER, FOR THE CONVERTED JEW IT WAS NOT THAT EASY. EATING PORK WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM TO HIM. HE HAD KNOWN AND BEEN BOUND BY AGE-OLD FOOD LAWS AS RECORDED IN LEVITICUS 11. SO, COMPROMISE WAS REQUIRED BY BOTH PARTIES. THE GENTILE WAS REQUIRED TO BE CONSIDERATE OF THE JEW AND THE JEW WAS REQUIRED NOT TO BE CRITICAL OF THE GENTILE. THIS WAS AN ACUTE PROBLEM IN THE EARLY CHURCH. COMPARE ACTS 10, 11:15-18)

(B) DAYS - VERSE 5

TO THE JEWISH BELIEVER, OLD TESTAMENT HOLY DAYS WERE STILL HARD TO GIVE UP. HOWEVER, FOR THE GENTILE CONVERT THERE WAS NO SUCH PROBLEM. PAUL, IN A CAPSULE FORM, HAS CHARACTERIZED ETHICAL PROBLEMS THAT HAVE EXISTED IN LOCAL CHURCHES FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. THERE ARE BOTH THE WEAK AND THE STRONG IN EVERY CHURCH. THE STRONG ARE MORE MATURE AND UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL TRUTH AND PRACTICE AND GENERALLY LIVE A LIFE OF FREEDOM. THE WEAK ARE NOT AT THAT LEVEL OF LIBERTY. THEREFORE, BOTH GROUPS MUST LEARN TO LOVE AND LIVE TOGETHER WITHOUT WRECKING THE CHURCH. YOUR AND MY SUCCESS AS A BELIEVER DOES NOT DEPEND UPON WHAT OTHERS THINK WE SHOULD DO, IT DEPENDS UPON WHAT OUR RELATIONSHIP IS TO

OUR MASTER! (VERSE 4) WE CAN'T FORGET THAT DIFFERENT CULTURES AND CUSTOMS ARE NOT NECESSARILY HERETICAL IN NATURE. (COMPARE MEXICAN TRIP 1968 AND LACONDONE PASTOR WHO HAD LONG HAIR AND WORE A DRESS! IT WAS A SHATTERING, SPIRITUAL BLESSING.) THE STORY IS TOLD OF A CHURCH THAT WAS VIOLENTLY OPPOSED TO THEATER AND ANYTHING WITH THE WORD PLAY IN THE TITLE. A CHRISTMAS PLAY NEARLY CAUSED A CHURCH SPLIT. HOWEVER, THE NEXT YEAR THE WORD PLAY WAS CHANGED TO SKIT AND THE CHRISTMAS SKIT WAS WELL RECEIVED! COMMENT REGARDING YESTERDAY'S TABOOS IN OUR CULTURE SUCH AS POOL, MIXED BATHING, BOWLING, SKATING, ALL "SINS" IN MY DAY BUT NOT NEARLY AS SINFUL TODAY! ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ETHICAL ISSUE IN OUR CONTEXT ACCORDING TO VERSE 6 BOTH ARE DOING OUT OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE WHAT THEY ARE DOING AS "UNTO THE LORD." THAT IS THE PRIMARY CONCERN. ACTIONS MAY DIFFER BUT ATTITUDE MUST BE THE SAME - TO PLEASE HIM. ON THE SUBJECT OF DAYS BARCLAY TELLS THE INTERESTING STORY ABOUT A FAMOUS MISSIONARY WHO SPENT THREE LONELY YEARS IN THE BUSH OF A BACK COUNTRY TO THE EXTENT THAT SHE SOMETIMES GOT HER DAYS MIXED UP BECAUSE SHE HAD NO CALENDAR. ACCORDING TO THE STORY SHE ONCE FOUND HERSELF HOLDING SERVICES ON MONDAY AND BY CONTRAST ON SUNDAY SHE DISCOVERED THAT SHE HAD BEEN HAMMERING AWAY TO FIX A LEAK IN THE ROOF! NO ONE WAS GOING TO ARGUE WITH MISSIONARY MARY SLESSOR THAT HER SERVICES WERE NOT VALID SIMPLY BECAUSE SHE GOT MIXED UP IN HER CALENDAR. WORSHIP TO GOD COULD IT BE AS VALID ON MONDAY AS ON SUNDAY WITHOUT VIOLATING ANY MAJOR SCRIPTURE PRINCIPLE. OF COURSE PAUL SPECIFIED THE LORD'S DAY AS A DAY OF WORSHIP BUT IT IS NOT THE DAY WE WORSHIP BUT THE LORD OF THAT DAY AND ALL DAYS! SURELY THERE'S ROOM IN THE FAMILY OF GOD FOR PEOPLE WHO THINK AND EVEN THINK DIFFERENTLY REGARDING IDEAS AND OPINIONS WHICH WE MAY NOT NECESSARILY EMBRACE. HORROR OR HORRORS - WE

ARE FALL Faced WITH THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT WE COULD BE WRONG ON A CERTAIN SUBJECT!

II. BUILD THEM UP - VERSE 19

THE WORD EDIFY COMES FROM A GREEK WORD THAT REFERS TO A HOUSE - OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN EDIFICE. WE OFTEN SPEAK OF "HOME BUILDERS" OR "HOME WRECKERS" AND THAT IS TRUE IN THE CHURCH. THE YOUNG AND IMMATURE COME INTO A HOME. CHANGES TAKE PLACE. SCISSORS, NEEDLES, PINS, GUNS ARE ALL CAREFULLY PUT AWAY OUT OF REACH. HOWEVER, WHEN A CHILD GROWS UP, STOPS CRAWLING, FALLING DOWN, HE IS ABLE TO BE DEALT WITH IN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT WAY. THE CHURCH NEEDS TO BE A PLACE WHERE LAMBS ARE LOVED AND SHEEP ARE FED AND WE GROW UP AND OLD TOGETHER.

(II PETER 2:2, 3:18) LET US SINGLE OUT ONE BASIC FACTOR IN THE AREA OF EDIFICATION AND THAT IS MENTIONED IN VERSE 13 - STUMBLING BLOCK. COUPLED WITH WORDS IN VERSE 15 WE ARE NOT TO CAUSE OTHERS TO STUMBLE, TO BE GRIEVED OR TO BE DESTROYED! FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE CERTAIN PRACTICES WHOLLY PERMISSIBLE TO A MATURE BELIEVER THAT COULD BE WHOLLY DISASTROUS TO A WEAK BELIEVER. COMMENT REGARDING WINE-SPAGHETTI SUPPER. ACCORDING TO VERSE 21, THE STRONG BELIEVER WILL BE WILLING TO FORGO BOTH EATING MEAT AND DRINKING WINE IF EITHER OF THE TWO CAUSE A CHRISTIAN BROTHER TO STUMBLE. IN OTHER WORDS, IN THINGS THAT REALLY DON'T MATTER THERE SHOULD BE FLEXIBILITY IN PROCEDURE AND FEELING TOWARD OTHERS AS THE BOTTOM LINE.

III. BECKON THEM ON - 19A, VERSE 10

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MATURE BELIEVERS TO CONCENTRATE ON LIVING A LIFE IN HARMONY WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER DEDICATED TO HELPING AND NOT HARMING WEAK BELIEVERS. THIS CHAPTER IS DEALING IN PART WITH BEHAVIOR THAT HAS BEEN CALLED "BORDERLAND BEHAVIOR", THAT IS, BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS, THE CLEARLY WRONG AND THE CLEARLY RIGHT. TO BE SURE, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE BELIEVER IS NOT SURE WHERE HE IS STEPPING IN THE REALM OF ETHICS. THERE IS A TWILIGHT OR DUSK-LIKE AREA WHERE EVERY BELIEVER ON OCCASION HAS QUESTIONS. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THERE ARE THREE TESTS WHICH MAY HELP US TAKE THE HIGH ROAD OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. MAY I DO THIS, MAY I GO HERE, SHOULD I SEE THIS.

(1) HOW WILL IT AFFECT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST? IF I CAN TAKE HIM WITH ME THAT IS A GOOD TEST. WE OFTEN HEAR HOLLYWOOD PERSONNEL OR PEOPLE FACED WITH THE MATTER OF NUDITY USING THEIR PARENTS AS A STANDARD OF RIGHT AND WRONG. THIS IS HARDLY A VALID TEST. WE ARE NEVER IN DIFFICULTY IF HE IS THE TEST.

(2) HOW WOULD IT AFFECT ME PERSONALLY? WILL I BE A STRONGER OR WEAKER CHRISTIAN FOR HAVING DONE OR SEEN THIS PARTICULAR THING?

(3) HOW WILL IT AFFECT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS? THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH WE ARE ALL OUR BROTHER'S KEEPER. A STRONG CHRISTIAN WILL "GIVE UP" CERTAIN PRACTICES IN ORDER THAT HIS FELLOW CHRISTIAN MAY "GROW UP" UNHINDERED. THIS PRINCIPLE IS PRACTICED BY LOVING PARENTS WHO SACRIFICE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

New People - Members?

IN THIS CHAPTER, PAUL SHOWS THAT THE WEAK NEED MORE LIGHT. THE STRONG NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR LIBERTY. IN THE AREA OF PERSONAL SEPARATION, TRUTH IS SELDOM AT EITHER END OF THE SPECTRUM. AT ONE END IS LICENSE AT THE OTHER END IS LEGALISM AND LIBERTY IS SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. EXTREME POSITIONS ARE USUALLY THE EASIEST DECISION TO MAKE BUT THEY ARE SELDOM RIGHT. THE "BECKONING" ASPECT OF THESE VERSES HAS TO DO WITH THE BEMA JUDGMENT. HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT DEATH OFTEN DISSOLVES DIFFERENCES. AFTER WE ARE DEAD, SOME OF THESE "CRITICAL ISSUES" WON'T BE VERY IMPORTANT IN THE LIGHT OF SETTLING OUR ACCOUNTS WITH THE DIVINE ACCOUNTANT ON THE DIVINE AUDITING DAY. WE ARE ABOVE ALL ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD FOR OUR STEWARDSHIP. THIS FACT OUGHT TO CHALLENGE US TO BETTER SERVICE AND THE HIGH ROAD OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

IV. Bind Them Up (Lehman 6)

"Folks need Fixing"

"Church on the Run"

We ~~Break~~ run down, run over,
run off, run after

[Gal. 6:1]
"Restore"

= Mand
Mt. 4:21

Ch in the "Mending Ministry" - A. Runyan =

"A Mender"
"Fixes Broken things"

"Even if a man should be
detested in some sin ... the spiritual one
among you should quietly set him back on
the right path ...

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE STRONG

ROMANS 15

The strong may be wrong.

THE SPIRITUALLY STRONG MAY BE WRONG IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SPIRITUALLY WEAK. THE WORD "OUGHT" IN THE TEXT REFERS TO MORAL AND SPIRITUAL OBLIGATION, NOTHING LESS THAN OWING AS A DEBT. BELIEVERS HAVE A SPIRITUAL OBLIGATION ABOUT WHICH THEY MAY BE IGNORANT, IRRITATED OR CHOOSE TO IGNORE. HOWEVER, WHEN INFORMED OF THIS RESPONSIBILITY THEY ARE REQUIRED TO IMPROVE AND INCORPORATE THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THIS CHAPTER INTO CHRISTIAN LIVING. THERE IS A DANGER THAT THE STRONG MAY GIVE THE WEAK HIS FOOT AND NOT HIS HAND! SERVITUDE IS EXPECTED FROM THE WEAK AND NOT THE STRONG - BUT NOT HERE! (*Weak serve strong... but not in His Family!*)

I. THE OBLIGATION TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR -

VERSES 1-3

THE SPIRITUALLY STRONG SHOULD BE A SPIRITUAL SUPPORT GROUP FOR THE SPIRITUALLY WEAK. THE INFIRMITIES OF THE WEAK MENTIONED IN THE TEXT REFER TO WEAKNESSES OR SCRUPLES. (SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING TO EAT WHILE DRINKING TEA - BUT IN REALITY A TINY WEIGHT ON THE SCALES TO WEIGH SMALL AMOUNTS. THE LATIN ORIGIN REFERS TO A SMALL, SHARP STONE NOT UNLIKE A PEBBLE IN THE SHOE THAT IRRITATES MORE THAN IT CRIPPLES. THE SPIRITUALLY AND MORALLY STRONG BELIEVER HAS THE OBLIGATION TO HELP THE WEAK GROW UP. CONSIDERATION, CONCERN, ENCOURAGEMENT AND ENDURANCE ARE REQUIRED. "NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES" - THIS INTERESTING PHRASE DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE SPIRITUALLY STRONG NEVER DO ANYTHING FOR THEMSELVES OR ANYTHING THEY ENJOY.

IT MEANS THE STRONG DO NOT ADOPT A "GO YOUR OWN SWEET WAY" PHILOSOPHY WITH TOTAL DISREGARD FOR OTHERS. HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT CONCEDE CONTROL IN LEADERSHIP TO THE SPIRITUAL NOVICE. THE STRONG DO NOT RUSH TO DO EVERY WEIRD AND GOOFY THING THE SPIRITUALLY WEAK SUGGEST SHOULD OR NEEDS TO BE DONE. THIS WOULD BE UNWISE AND UNSPIRITUAL. A LOW LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP CHAMPIONED BY THE SPIRITUALLY WEAK ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING BUT SPIRITUAL FRUSTRATION AND FAILURE AT A LOCAL CHURCH LEVEL. BARNHOUSE SUGGESTS THAT IT MEANS NOT TO DEVELOP "AN INGROWN PERSONALITY" WHERE SELF BECOMES THE CENTER OF ONE'S LIFE. SELFISHNESS IS THE SOURCE OF UNHAPPINESS FOR MOST PEOPLE. IT IS UNNATURAL TO BE UNSELFISH AND UNLESS ONE TAKES THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST SERIOUSLY SELFISHNESS WILL INDEED BE CENTRAL IN ONE'S LIFE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE ALL UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR IN OUR COMMUNITY. GOOD NEIGHBORS MOW THEIR GRASS, PAINT THEIR HOUSES, HAVE NO BARKING DOGS, OR ABANDON BIKES OR TOYS LEFT IN A NEIGHBOR'S DRIVEWAY, LOUD MUSIC, THREE OR FOUR EITHER BROKEN DOWN OR PARKED CARS IN FRONT OF A NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE OR WORST OF ALL, PARTIALLY ON HIS LAWN. HOWEVER, THERE IS SUCH A THING AS BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR IN CHURCH ALSO. MOST OF US DO NOT CONSIDER OURSELVES SELFISH BUT WE DO EXPECT AND DEMAND BETTER TREATMENT IN CHURCH THAN ANYWHERE ELSE. QUESTION: AM I SELFISH - EVEN A LITTLE BIT? POP QUIZ:

(1) THE PARKING TEST - DO YOU THINK IT IS YOUR PERROGATIVE OR AT LEAST PREFERENCE TO PARK AS NEAR THE DOOR OF THE CHURCH AS POSSIBLE EVEN IF YOU BLOCK SOMEONE ELSE GETTING IN OR OUT? DO YOU BRISTLE WITH RESENTMENT IF A PARKING ATTENDANT ASKS YOU TO PARK SOMEWHERE OTHER THAN IN YOUR REGULAR PLACE? (Is that . . . ?)

- (2) THE SEATING TEST - Do you expect to sit in "YOUR SEAT" EVERY SUNDAY? AFTER ALL, YOU ALWAYS SIT THERE SO WHY WOULD ANYONE DARE SIT IN YOUR SPECIAL PLACE?
- (3) THE HEATING, COOLING, SOUND TEST - Do you expect USHERS to TURN UP THE HEAT OR THE AIR CONDITION DOWN OR THE SOUND UP OR DOWN BECAUSE YOU ARE TOO HOT, TOO COLD, OR CAN'T HEAR?
- (4) THE CHILDREN/GRANDCHILDREN TEST - ARE YOU IRRITATED WHEN TEACHERS IN SUNDAY SCHOOL OR CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL DO NOT RECOGNIZE THAT YOUR CHILD IS "GIFTED?" WHEN SPECIAL PARTS FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS ARE GIVEN OUT, ARE YOU UNHAPPY IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT GET IF NOT THE BEST PART, AT LEAST A PART IN THE PROGRAM? Do you REALLY BELIEVE THAT YOUR CHILDREN AND BRIGHTER AND BETTER THAN JUST ORDINARY KIDS?
- (5) THE SCHOOL TEST - If your SON OR DAUGHTER DOES NOT MAKE THE VARSITY TEAM OR FIRST SEAT IN THE BAND, DO YOU CALL THE SCHOOL OFFICIALS DUMMIES AND IDIOTS AT THE DINNER TABLE? Do you GET ON THE PHONE AND CALL ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO WILL LISTEN TO YOUR GRIPES ABOUT HOW DEMENTED THE SCHOOL OFFICIALS ARE IN REFUSING TO RECOGNIZE THE SUPERIOR SKILLS OF YOUR CHILDREN?
- (6) THE HANDICAPPED TEST - Do you PARK IN THE HANDICAPPED SECTION IF THERE ARE EMPTY SPACES AND NO ONE IS LOOKING? Do you SAY ENCOURAGING WORDS, COME OPEN THE DOOR, ASSIST THEM IN ANY WAY IN ORDER TO MAKE CHURCH LIFE MORE PLEASANT FOR THEM?

late

Front
Door

1945 - just after the war!
over!

(7) THE EGO TEST - HAVE YOU SAID RECENTLY, "I AM WRONG, I AM SORRY, I STAND CORRECTED?"

(8) THE ADVERTISING TEST - DO YOU REALLY DESERVE A BREAK TODAY? DO YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO DO YOURSELF A FAVOR? DO YOU AGREE WITH FRANK SINATRA WHEN HE SINGS, "I CHEWED THEM UP AND SPIT IT OUT AND DID IT MY WAY?" *Is your way - or God's way? your concern?*

(9) THE BRIDE AND CORPSE TEST - MUST YOU BE THE BRIDE AT EVERY WEDDING AND THE CORPSE AT EVERY FUNERAL? DO WE MONOPOLIZE EVERY CONVERSATION ABOUT OUR LIFE, OUR PROBLEMS, OUR INTERESTS WITH ALMOST A TOTAL DISREGARD AND DISINTEREST IN WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS OR DOES? IS OUR BROKEN NAIL MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN THE BROKEN NECK OF A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOR? *Burned finger - burned house!*

SELFISHNESS IS A SUBTLE MONSTER THAT HANGS AROUND OUR LIFE WEARING SIGNS CALLED SELF-SEEKING - THAT WHICH EAGERLY EMBRACES ANYTHING THAT WILL ADVANCE OUR INTERESTS, PARADE OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR OTHERS TO SEE. SELF-ASSERTION - OUT-TALKING, OUT-DOING, OUT-SHINING EVERYBODY ELSE TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE KNOWS WHO IS REALLY No. 1. SELF-INDULGENCE - I WANT SO I HAVE. SELF-PITY - THAT QUALITY OF DISPOSITION THAT CONSTANTLY WHINES AND COMPLAINS, FEELS SORRY FOR ONESELF, MAGNIFYING OUR SORROWS AND MINIMIZING OTHERS' SUFFERING. EASILY OFFENDED, EASILY WOUNDED, HARD TO RECONCILE. SELF-DEPRECIATION - THAT ATTITUDE THAT SAYS OTHERS CAN DO IT BETTER BUT SECRETLY BELIEVE NOT NEARLY AS WELL AS I. SELF-JUSTIFICATION - DOES NO WRONG, NEVER APOLOGIZES BECAUSE IT NEVER NEEDS TO. MARTIN LLOYD-JONES HAS WELL SAID: "SELF IS THE MAIN CAUSE OF UNHAPPINESS IN LIFE." THINK

OF WHATEVER SITUATION IS MAKING YOU UNHAPPY -
MARRIAGE - EMPLOYMENT - CHURCH - COMMUNITY -
SOMEWHERE AT THE BEDROCK OF THE PROBLEM
~~SELFISHNESS HAS BEEN LOOSED FROM ITS MOORINGS.~~

① IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED IMPROVING YOUR SERVE,
CHUCK SWINDOLL IS A CLASSIC ILLUSTRATION OF
SELFISHNESS. HE AND HIS OLDER SON TOOK A FEW
DAYS OFF TO RIDE BOATS OR SPECIFICALLY CANOES
DOWN THE RAPIDS OF A CERTAIN RIVER IN OREGON.
THEY WENT WITH SEVERAL PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH
AS WELL AS SOME OTHER OUTSIDE GUESTS. ACCORD-
ING TO HIS STORY, WHILE THEY WERE RECEIVING
INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE GUIDE, SWINDOLL BEGAN TO
EYE THE BOATS. SOME OF THEM WERE OLD AND WORN
AND JUST A FEW NEW. HE WHISPERED IN HIS SON'S
EAR FOR HIM TO MOVE NEAR THE TWO NEW CANOES ON
THE END SO THAT THEY COULD GET THEM BEFORE
ANYONE ELSE. HIS SON COOPERATED AND THEY DID
GET THE TWO NEWEST CANOES WHICH HANDLED NICELY
AND LOOKED BETTER THAN THE OTHERS AND NO ONE
REALLY KNEW THAT THEY HAD ~~MANEUVERED TO GET~~
~~THE BEST.~~ SWINDOLL CONCLUDES THAT THE ONE
THING HE TAUGHT HIS SON ON THAT TRIP WAS
HOW TO BE SELFISH! IF HE FOLLOWS GOOD OLD
DAD'S EXAMPLE, IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME HE
WILL BE A MASTER AT SELFISHNESS BECAUSE HE
LEARNED IT FROM A MASTER. WE WOULD SMILE AT
THIS STORY IF IT WERE NOT SO SELF-REVEALING!

② IN THE SAME ARTICLE HE QUOTES FAMED CONDUCTOR
LEONARD BERNSTEIN WHO ANSWERED A QUESTION:
"MR. BERNSTEIN, WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT
INSTRUMENT TO PLAY?" HIS RESPONSE WAS:
"SECOND FIDDLE. I CAN GET PLENTY OF FIRST
VIOLINISTS BUT TO FIND ONE WHO PLAYS SECOND
VIOLIN WITH AS MUCH ENTHUSIASM OR SECOND FRENCH
HORN OR SECOND FLUTE - THAT'S THE PROBLEM.
AND YET, IF NO ONE PLAYS SECOND - THERE WILL
BE NO HARMONY."

II. THE OBLIGATION TO BE A STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE - VERSE 4

THERE ARE MANY SOURCES OF HELP AND HOPE FOR BELIEVERS BUT NONE MORE VITAL THAN A GRASP OF SCRIPTURE. THE WORD "LEARNING" IN THE TEXT REFERS TO TEACHING OR BECOMING A DISCIPLE - A LEARNER.

(A) LEARN FROM THE PAST - GOD'S DEALING WITH THE NATION OF ISRAEL PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT ILLUSTRATION OF HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO HIM. IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD THAN ANYONE OR ANYTHING ELSE. WE LEARN FROM GOD THAT HIS WAY IS NOT ALWAYS THE EASY WAY BUT IT IS ALWAYS THE BEST WAY. FROM HISTORY WE LEARN WHAT TOMMY LASORDA SAYS ON TELEVISION, "IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN DO IT." IF ISRAEL COULD DO IT, YOU AND I CAN DO IT TOO.

(B) LEAN ON THE PROMISES - GOD NEVER BREAKS A PROMISE - NEVER HAS, NEVER WILL, NEVER CAN. PATIENCE REFERS TO THE ABILITY OF A PLANT TO GROW IN UNFAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT AND CIRCUMSTANCES. SOMEONE HAS CALLED IT "SPIRITUAL STAYING POWER OR HOLDING UP UNDER THE LOAD." HOPE HAS WITH IT THE DEFINITE ARTICLE. HOPE SEES EVERYTHING, SUFFERS EVERYTHING YET SOMEHOW BELIEVES THAT GOD WILL SEE HIM THROUGH. (COMMENT REGARDING PASTOR IN HOSPITAL VISITED BY A CHRISTIAN OF WHOM HE SAID, "HE GAVE ME HOPE.") IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED, WHY US? WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOD'S PEOPLE, WIERSBE POINTS OUT THAT THERE ARE SITUATIONS IN LIFE WHERE THERE ARE NO APPARENT ADEQUATE EXPLANATIONS. SOME THINGS HAPPEN IN LIFE WHICH ARE MYSTERIES WE CANNOT EXPLAIN. "PEOPLE LIVE BY PROMISES, NOT BY EXPLANATIONS." NOBODY CAN FULLY ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS AND EVEN IF SOMEONE COULD, THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS WOULD NOT, IN THEMSELVES, MAKE LIFE EASIER OR SUFFERING MORE BEARABLE.

III. THE OBLIGATION TO MISSIONS - VERSES 8-19, 20, 26-27 "3 spirits"

SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID THAT CHURCHES AND BELIEVERS WHO DO NOT SEND MISSIONARIES TO THE MISSION FIELD WILL SOON BECOME A MISSION FIELD! (COMMENT REGARDING NORTH AFRICA) MISSIONS IS NOT ONE OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CHURCH LIFE. IT IS FUNDAMENTAL AND IS BASIC TO CHURCH MINISTRY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF ANY CHURCH.

(A) THE IMPARTIAL SPIRIT OF MISSIONS - VERSES 8-12 - THE PROBLEM OF ONE RACE LIVING WITH ANOTHER RACE OR CULTURE IS NOT NEW. THE BIBLICAL DIVISION OF ALL NATIONS WAS SIMPLY THAT ALL NON-ISRAEL PEOPLE WERE CALLED GENTILES OR NATIONS OR HEATHEN. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, ALL PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT FROM THE STOCK OF ABRAHAM WERE CALLED GENTILES. GENTILES HAD MANY PRIVILEGES AND WERE TREATED WITH COURTESY BY ISRAEL BUT THEY WERE NOT PART OF THE COVENENTAL PROMISE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, THE ATTITUDE OF MANY JEWS TOWARD THE GENTILES CHANGES FROM RESPECT TO HATRED. GENTILES WERE CONSIDERED UNCLEAN DOGS AND JEWS WERE FORBIDDEN TO BE FRIENDLY WITH THEM. CHILDREN OF MIXED MARRIAGES WERE TREATED AS ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN. SOME HISTORIANS HAVE ATTRIBUTED THE REASON FOR THIS CHANGE IN ATTITUDE TO THE EXILE WHERE JEWS SUFFERED HARSH TREATMENT AT THE HANDS OF THEIR GENTILE CAPTORS. MEN SUCH AS ANTIOCHUS, EPIPHANES ADDED TO THIS ATTITUDE. PAUL'S PURPOSE IN THIS PASSAGE IS TO GET MEN TO SEE GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN OF LOVE FOR ALL MEN IN THE WORLD. THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL MEN EVERYWHERE. CHRIST IS THE SAVIOUR OF JEW, GENTILE AND ANYONE ELSE ON THIS PLANET. DURING THE DAYS OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY THE ANIMOSITY OF THE RACES SEEMED TO SURFACE WITH THE SAMARITANS.

THE ATTITUDE OF A BELIEVER REGARDING THE COLOR OF ONE'S SKIN AND RACIAL BACKGROUND HAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH GOD'S LOVE FOR HIM AND FOR THE AVAILABILITY OF THE GOSPEL TO HIM. (COMPARE MATTHEW 28, ACTS 10)

(B) THE PIONEER SPIRIT OF MISSIONS -

VERSES 19-20, 14 - PAUL WAS A PIONEER. HIS ATTITUDE IN THESE VERSES IS NOT NECESSARILY THE ATTITUDE EVERYONE SHOULD OPT IN MISSIONS. HOWEVER, THE SPIRIT OF MEN SUCH AS DAVID LIVINGSTONE WAS, "ANYWHERE FOR CHRIST ~~AS~~ LONG AS IT IS FORWARD." HE WAS HAUNTED BY THE SMOKE OF A THOUSAND VILLAGES WHERE THE NAME OF CHRIST WAS NOT KNOWN. PAUL'S PASSION WAS TO GO TO SPAIN. (RELATE STORY OF TRIP TO RIO DE JANEIRO AND THE VISIT TO CORCOVADO, SUGAR LOAF AND THE OUTSTRETCHED HANDS OF A STONE MONUMENT OVER ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HARBORS IN THE WORLD. HOWEVER, CHRIST WAS NOT THERE BUT RATHER ALONG THE AMAZON, AT A SMALL HOSPITAL WHERE PEOPLE CAME TO KNOW CHRIST. A HOSPITAL THAT WAS BUILT BECAUSE OF THE PIONEER SPIRIT OF A MISSIONARY DOCTOR.

(C) THE GIVING SPIRIT OF MISSIONS -

VERSES 26-27 - THE OLD CLICHE THAT EVERYONE CANNOT GO IN PERSON BUT EVERYONE CAN GO EITHER BY PRAYER OR BY PURSE. PERSONAL TESTIMONY: I HAVE NOT BEEN CALLED TO BEG FOR JESUS - TO VERBALLY BEAT ON GOD'S PEOPLE TO MAKE THEM DO SOMETHING THEY OUGHT TO DO FOR WORLD MISSIONS. MY RESPONSIBILITY IS TO TEACH AND PREACH THE BIBLE AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE WORD OF GOD AND ENCOURAGE GOD'S PEOPLE TO RESPOND BUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR GIVING RESTS SQUARELY UPON EVERY BELIEVER. IT IS MY HEARTFELT CONVICTION THAT EVERY BELIEVER WHO IS GENUINELY SAVED AND SPIRITUALLY MATURE WILL MANIFEST THAT PROPER ATTITUDE IN TWO MAJOR AREAS:

(1) HE WILL HAVE A KEEN INTEREST IN GETTING THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

(2) HE WILL BE GENEROUS IN GIVING TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL. I AM ~~DEPRESSED~~ ~~AMAZED~~ OVER THE MANY PEOPLE WHO ATTEND CHURCH FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME THAT CATCH NO MISSIONARY VISION. THE MISSIONARY VISION IS BASICALLY PIOUS TALK AND VEILED HYPOCRISY. CAUTION: EVERYTHING WITH A MISSIONARY LABEL IS NOT MISSIONARY IN NATURE. EVERY PERSON WHO'S CALLED A MISSIONARY IS NOT A MISSIONARY BY CALLING. EVERY MISSIONARY IS NOT A HARD WORKING MISSIONARY. HOW, WHERE, WHO, WHY ARE ALL QUESTIONS ONE SHOULD ASK IN THE REALM OF MISSIONS. ONE WOULD NOT SEEK TO DISCOURAGE MEDICAL MISSIONS, EDUCATIONAL MISSIONS, AGRICULTURAL MISSIONS, BUT KEEPING FOREMOST IN MIND THAT OUR MISSION'S MOTIVE SHOULD EVER BE TO EVANGELIZE THE LOST - NOTHING ELSE AND NOTHING LESS. THE POOR SAINTS IN JERUSALEM NEEDED HELP.

IV. THE OBLIGATION TO PRAYER - VERSES 30-33

QUESTION? DO YOU EVER ASK ANYONE TO PRAY FOR YOUR PARTICULAR MINISTRY EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NOT IN FULL-TIME MINISTRY? DO YOU EVER OFFER TO ASSIST OTHERS IN PRAYER? IF I UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE CORRECTLY, YOU AND I AS CHRISTIANS HAVE A "DEBT TO PRAY." THE USAGE OF THE TERM BESEECH IS A KING OF SPIRITUAL SOS OR A 911 PRAYER LINE. THE TERM "AGONIZE" HAS IN BACKGROUND AN ATHLETIC CONTEST WHERE A STRUGGLE OR FIGHT TO THE FINISH IS PICTURED. PAUL MENTIONS THREE PRAYER REQUESTS IN THIS HIS MISSIONARY LETTER:

(1) PRAY FOR DELIVERANCE - VERSE 41
JERUSALEM WAS A DANGEROUS PLACE FOR PAUL.
THERE WERE MANY THERE WHO HATED HIM, WOULD HURT

HIM, AND HALT HIS MINISTRY. THE ANSWER TO SUCH A DILEMMA IS NOT INCREASE THE BODYGUARDS OR TROOPS, BUT PRAYER.

(2) PRAY FOR ACCEPTANCE - THE MESSENGER IS SOMETIMES REJECTED EVEN IF THE MESSAGE IS NOT. SOME PEOPLE SIMPLY DIDN'T LIKE PAUL, NOT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE PREACHED BUT BECAUSE OF HIS PERSONALITY. (I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT PERSONALITIES ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE PREACHING.) GIVING OF MONEY SOMETIMES EVOKES A STRANGE REACTION. IT WAS TRUE IN JERUSALEM - IT IS TRUE IN CHARLESTON. (EXPLAIN)

(3) PRAY FOR THE ACCOMPLISHED TASK AND JOURNEY THE COMPANY OF CHRISTIANS IN A CHURCH HOME FOR PURPOSES OF FELLOWSHIP WAS IMPORTANT TO PAUL. FELLOWSHIP FILLS THE NEED IN THE LIFE OF EVEN A PERSON AS BUSY AND SPIRITUAL AS PAUL. HE NEEDED TO BE WITH THE LORD'S PEOPLE. THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION SAYS OF THE WORD REFRESHED "ENJOY A LITTLE HOLIDAY."

ROMANS RELATIONSHIPS

ROMANS 16

Redwood

HISTORIAN PAUL JOHNSON SAYS OF ONE OF HIS SUBJECTS: "LIKE MOST INTELLECTUALS, HE PREFERRED IDEAS TO PEOPLE. THERE WAS NO WARMTH IN ANY OF HIS RELATIONSHIPS. HE HAD NO FRIENDS IN THE USUAL SENSE OF THE WORD. HE ENJOYED WORKING WITH PEOPLE PROVIDED HE WAS IN CHARGE!" ONE AFTER ANOTHER THESE INTELLECTUALS ABOUT WHOM JOHNSON IS WRITING DEMONSTRATED THE CAPACITY FOR POOR RELATIONSHIPS. FOR EXAMPLE, ROUSSEAU CARED MORE FOR ANIMALS THAN PEOPLE. HIS PARENTS, MISTRESSES AND THE FIVE CHILDREN HE FATHERED WERE UNNAMED, UNWANTED, UNCARED FOR, ABUSED AND ABANDONED. SIMPLY STATED, HE LOVED IDEAS BUT LOATHED INDIVIDUALS. BY CONTRAST, PAUL HAD GREAT PERSONAL INTEREST IN PEOPLE. IN THIS MESSAGE, ONE SEES PAUL'S HIGH REGARD FOR WOMEN. ALL EIGHT WOMEN MENTIONED IN THE TEXT ARE SPOKEN OF IN WARM, GLOWING TERMS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP. IT IS AS IF PAUL LOOKED BACK ACROSS HIS ROMANS EXPERIENCE AND PAINTED A VERBAL GROUP PICTURE OF THE SAINTS FOR WHOM HE HAD HIGHEST REGARD. IT IS AS IF PAUL WERE SAYING, "RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING, MAINTAIN THEM AT ALL COSTS."

I. THE RELATIONSHIP OF FRIENDS - VERSES 1-16, VERSES 22-23

THE USAGE OF THE TERMS SALUTE AND KISS WERE BIBLE WAYS OF SAYING HELLO AND SHAKING HANDS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE EAST, THE KISS WAS A SIGN OF RESPECT AND RECOGNITION. IT WAS A TRADITIONAL, ORIENTAL GREETING. IT WAS

Do we
have 30???

MEN TO MEN AND WOMEN TO WOMEN. FROM THE PEAKS OF DOCTRINE TO THE PAVEMENT OF DEPARTMENT, PAUL MENTIONS OVER 30 FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. IF YOU ARE NOT IMPRESSED WITH THIS NUMBER, STOP FOR A MOMENT AND ASK YOURSELF HOW MANY TRUE FRIENDS DO I HAVE? LET US SEE WHAT DAVID SAID ABOUT HIS FRIENDS. (RELATE STORY OF MEN IN A RESTAURANT WHO WERE CASTIGATING AN ABSENT MEMBER OF THE GROUP. ONE COMMENTED: "HE'S A REAL MENACE, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MAN WILL DO!" "OH YES I DO, I KNOW HIM BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE FOR AFTER ALL I AM HIS BEST FRIEND!") PAUL DID NONE OF THIS.

(1) PHEBE - VERSE 1

PHEBE WAS "A FRIEND WHO WAS SOMEBODY SPECIAL." THREE PRIMARY STATEMENTS ABOUT HER: SHE WAS A SISTER, A SERVANT, AND A SUCCOURER. THE WORD PHEBE MEANS BRIGHT OR RADIANT. SHE WAS A GENTILE, NOT A JEW. THE COURIER OF THE ROMAN EPISTLE. BARNHOUSE SAYS OF HER: "SHE CARRIED THE REFORMATION IN HER LUGGAGE." THE WORD SERVANT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR DEACON. SHE WAS A DEACONESS. IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL WHETHER THIS IS REFERRING TO AN OFFICIAL POSITION IN A LOCAL CHURCH OR THE HELPFUL PRACTICE OR SPECIAL MINISTRY SHE HAD TO WOMEN. WAS SHE THE COUNTERPART TO A DEACON OR WAS SHE A "LADY LAY PERSON?" I AM NOT SURE THE COMMENTATORS KNOW FOR SURE AND I AM QUITE SURE I DON'T KNOW FOR SURE! WHATEVER HER POSITION IN THE CHURCH SHE WAS A TRUSTED COLLEAGUE OF PAUL AND PART OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY. THE WORD OUR IN THE TEXT IS LITERALLY "THE". IN SUCH USAGE, THE ARTICLE IS USED TO IDENTIFY, IN OTHER WORDS A SPIRITUAL SISTER IN CHRIST WHO HAD TOUCHED MANY AND WHO WAS HIGHLY REGARDED BY PAUL.

THE WORD SUCCOURER IS THE WORD "PROTECTRESS OF MANY." THIS TERM IS USED NOT ONLY TO DESCRIBE SOMEONE WHO WAS ENCOURAGING TO OTHER BELIEVERS BUT WAS USED OF MEN TO SPEAK OF THOSE WHO GAVE LEGAL COUNSEL AND ASSISTANCE TO THOSE IN NEED. HOWEVER, THERE WERE NO LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES WHO WERE WOMEN SO EXACTLY WHAT PHEBE DID WE DO NOT KNOW.

(2) PRISCILLA AND AQUILA - VERSE 3

THIS WIFE AND HUSBAND COMPOSED A CONSECRATED COUPLE AND A TREMENDOUS TEAM IN GOSPEL MINISTRY. THEY WERE BOTH "TENT MAKERS" AND "RISK TAKERS" IN THE MATTER OF CHRISTIAN WORK. CHURCH BUILDING WAS THEIR SPECIALTY. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ENTERTAINING A CLIENT, TEACHING A CLASS, OR GETTING A CROWD COMPARED TO BUILDING A CHURCH! WE ARE ACQUAINTED WITH THEIR MINISTRY IN ACTS 18:2, 18, 26. WE KNOW OF THEIR MINISTRY IN BOTH ✓ EPHESUS AND CORINTH BUT OF ALL THE OUT-
STANDING QUALITIES THEIR RISK TAKING IMPRESSES ME. DANGER DID NOT DETER THEM FROM GOSPEL MINISTRY. ONE COMMENTATOR SUGGESTS THAT OLD AND MOULD GO TOGETHER. ✓ THE OLDER ONE GETS THE MORE HE DESIRES THE SECURITY OF THE MOULD - OR THE "MOLDIER" HE GETS. HE LOVES PREDICTABILITY. HE SAILS HIS SHIP NEAR THE SHORE BECAUSE WHEN HE VENTURES FURTHER OUT HE GETS BOTH SEASICK ① AND FEARS SINKING. ② THEREFORE, HE NEVER VENTURES FAR FROM THE SHORE. SOMEONE HAS DESCRIBED SUCH A PERSON AS HAVING ALL ROOTS AND NO WINGS. IT IS A LIFE THAT IS DULL, DEAD AND IN MANY CASES DONE. ✓ VANCE HAVNER SAID: "THERE ARE SOME TIMID SOULS WHO NEVER MAKE A VENTURE BECAUSE OF RISKS INVOLVED. NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED."

NO COLUMBUS EVER DISCOVERED A WORLD STAYING AT HOME READING BOOKS ON ADVENTURE. WE HAVE TO MAKE A PLUNGE."

(3) EPAENETUS OLYMPAS QUARTUS

THE FOLLOWING IS A QUICK COMMENTARY ON THE BROAD LIST OF FRIENDS MENTIONED BY PAUL IN ROMANS 16.

EPAENETUS - A REFERENCE TO THOSE WHOSE CONVERSION IS IMPORTANT IN THE BIBLE, LONG REMEMBERED.

MARY - ONE OF SIX MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT HEBREW MIRIAM. SHE WAS AN UNSELFISH, HARD WORKER.

APELLES - THE WORD MEANS "TESTED." IN SOME WAY THIS BROTHER HAD UNDERGONE THE TEST AND EXAMINATION OF AFFLICTION AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

TRYPHENA AND TRYPHOSA - SISTERS - TWINS, CANDIDATES FOR THE DOUBLEMINT CHEWING GUM COMMERCIAL!

PERSIS - A WOMAN WHO TOILED TO THE POINT OF EXHAUSTION AND GAVE ALL SHE HAD, WORE HERSELF OUT FOR THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

TERTIUS ~~AND~~ AMANUENSIS - ANOTHER WORD FOR STENOGRAPHER OR SECRETARY.

OVERRIDING ALL IDEAS ABOUT THIS LIST OF PEOPLE IS THE INTERESTING PHRASE USED 11 TIMES IN 27 VERSES - "IN THE LORD." THESE WERE PAUL'S PEOPLE, HIS FRIENDS, JESUS' FRIENDS ~~AND~~ THE KIND OF PEOPLE I WANT TO BE MY FRIENDS! A NEST OF NAMES.

SUMMARY: "QUARTUS, THE BROTHER....THIS IS ALL THAT IS SAID ABOUT THIS MAN IN THE BIBLE BUT THAT'S ENOUGH. THERE WERE OTHERS MORE FAMOUS BUT THIS ONE WAS IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF SIMPLE SONS OF GOD WHO WERE BROTHERS IN CHRIST - NOTHING POSITIONALLY IS GREATER THAN THIS. (LOOK FORWARD TO A DAY WHEN "VIDEOS OF HEROES" WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ALL TO SEE.)

II. THE RELATIONSHIP TO FOES - VERSES 17-18, VERSE 20

IN THIS PASSAGE IT IS AS IF PAUL WERE SAYING TO US: "WATCH OUT FOR...."

(A) IMMEDIATE FOES

THE WORD MARK MEANS "KEEP YOUR EYE ON SOMEONE BUT DON'T LISTEN TO THEM!" (I FIRST LEARNED ABOUT THIS VERSE IN A SEMINARY CLASS WHERE DR. ~~CHARLES WOODBRIDGE~~ WARNED OF CURRENT DANGERS.) THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO ASSIST THOSE WHO HAVE A HEART FOR THE WORK AND AVOID THOSE WHO CREATE DIVISION. THOSE WHO SOW DISSENTION, TURMOIL AND DIVIDE THE PEOPLE OF GOD OVER SILLY THINGS. CONCERNING THE WORD AVOID, McCLAIN SAYS: "GET AS FAR AWAY FROM THEM AS POSSIBLE." WE HAVE LEARNED THAT TRIVIAL MATTERS OF ETHICAL PRACTICE SHOULD NOT DIVIDE THE PEOPLE OF GOD BUT FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE SHOULD! DOCTRINES SUCH AS INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURES, THE DIETY OF CHRIST, BLOOD ATONEMENT, JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ARE CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS WHICH TO DENY IS NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN HERESY. A REFERENCE TO THE WORD BELLY REFERS TO THE APPETITES OR THE LOW MOTIVES OF SELF-SEEKING PEOPLE. IT IS A CONTEMPTUOUS WAY OF DRAWING ATTENTION TO SUCH MOTIVES AND SPIRIT. THEY ARE SLICK, SUBTLE AND SUAVE DECEIVING THE SIMPLE, THE SPIRITUALLY NAIVE. THERE IS A TIME TO

TO DEAL WITH HERESY BOTH PUBLICALLY AND PRIVATELY. BUT THIS IS NOT THE APOLOGETIC ABILITY OF MANY ORDINARY BELIEVERS SO THEY ARE ENCOURAGED NOT TO WASTE TIME ARGUING WITH CULTS WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED IN TRUTH NEARLY AS MUCH AS CONVERTS. DON'T LET THESE FOLKS POISON YOUR MIND WITH POMPOUS PROPAGANDA. JOHN PHILLIPS DESCRIBES THIS MENTALITY BY THE WOMAN WHO CALLED A PASTOR AND ASKED WHERE SHE COULD GET A GREEK NEW TESTAMENT. WHY DO YOU WANT A GREEK NEW TESTAMENT? THE WOMAN WAS NOT A STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE LET ALONE A STUDENT OF GREEK BUT SHE HAD BEEN LED TO UNDERSTAND THAT SHE WOULD HAVE A MUCH BETTER GRASP OF MANY THINGS IF SHE COULD SIMPLY GO BACK TO THE ORIGINAL TEXT. SUCH THINKING IS ABSOLUTELY SILLY.

(B) THE ULTIMATE FOE - VERSE 20

IT IS THE GOD OF PEACE WHO WILL CRUSH OR TRAMPLE UNDER FOOT SATAN. (GEN. 3:15)
THE WORD SHORTLY OR TACHOS IS NOT REFERRING TO SOMETHING THAT IS NEAR IN TIME BUT RATHER SOMETHING WHICH, WHEN IT BEGINS, WILL BE DONE WITH SPEED, IN OTHER WORDS IT WON'T TAKE GOD LONG - HE WILL MAKE SHORT WORK OF SATAN! (LUKE 18:8)

III. THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE FATHER - VERSES 25-27

WE SING THE DOXOLOGY AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR SERVICE. PAUL WROTE HIS DOXOLOGY AT THE END OF HIS EPISTLE. BY THE WAY, THIS IS PAUL'S LONGEST WRITTEN BENEDICTION. IN THIS PASSAGE WE LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT GOD, THAT HE IS ETERNAL, WISE AND ABLE TO PUT STABILITY INTO THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED

CHRIST THROUGH THE GOSPEL. THE GOSPEL
AND STABLE GO TOGETHER. OBEY SEEMS TO BE
THE KEY TO THE PASSAGE. WILLIAM BARCLAY
TELLS THE STORY HOW THAT JESUS AFTER HIS
RESURRECTION RETURNED TO GLORY STILL BEARING
THE MARKS OF CALVARY. ONE OF THE ANGELS
ASKED ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF HIS SUFFERING.
HE ASKED IF THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM HE SUFFERED
UNDERSTOOD THE EXTENT OF HIS SUFFERING ON
THEIR BEHALF. THE ANSWER WAS PROBABLY NOT.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE THAT ALL MAY KNOW. JESUS
REPLIED THAT HE HAD SELECTED PEOPLE LIKE
PETER, JAMES AND JOHN AND IT WAS THEIR
BUSINESS TO TELL OTHERS AND THEN THE OTHERS
TO TELL STILL OTHERS UNTIL THE STORY OF
THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL HAD REACHED OUT IN
EVER-WIDENING CIRCLES TO THE ENDS OF THE
EARTH. THE ANGEL LOOKED DOUBTFUL BECAUSE HE
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE FRAILTIES OF HUMAN-
KIND. WHAT IF PETER, JAMES AND JOHN AND
THESE FORGET OR GROW WEARY OR STOP TELLING?
WHAT IF THROUGH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THEY
SIMPLY STOP, WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS? THE STORY
SAYS THAT JESUS ANSWERED: "I HAVEN'T MADE
ANY OTHER PLANS. I'M COUNTING ON THEM."
THE ROMANS ROAD HAS BEEN MADE REGAL ROAD
OF GLORIOUS DOCTRINE AND GRACIOUS DEPORTMENT.
FROM TIME TO TIME DURING THIS SERIES, I HAVE
REFLECTED BACK TO A CLASSROOM IN 1956 WHEN
ROMANS BEGAN TO BURN IN MY OWN SOUL UNDER
A TEACHER THE LIKES OF WHICH I HAD NEVER
HEARD BEFORE NOR SINCE.

TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL

MATTHEW 4:1

LAST SUNDAY WE BEGAN A PRE-EASTER SERIES ON THE MINISTRY OF JESUS. THE FIRST CONSIDERATION WAS HIS TEACHING. TODAY WE CONTINUE WITH HIS TESTING. AFTER JESUS' APPROVAL BY THE FATHER, HE WAS ASSAULTED BY SATAN. AFTER THE DOVE CAME DOWN, THE DEVIL CAME AROUND. THE WORD "TEMPT" HAS TWO SIDES:

- (1) TO ENTICE OR ALLURE TO SIN.
- (2) TO EVIDENCE OR APPROVE THAT HE DID AND COULD NOT SIN!

HEREIN LIES A DIFFERENCE OF THEOLOGICAL OPINION. IN THEOLOGY THE SUBJECT IS CALLED THE IMPECCABILITY OF CHRIST. IT MEANS NOT ONLY DID JESUS NOT SIN BUT HE COULD NOT SIN. UNLIKE YOU AND ME, JESUS HAD NO SINFUL NATURE - HUMAN NATURE, YES - SINFUL NATURE, NO. THERE WAS NOTHING SINFUL IN JESUS TO RESPOND TO THE TEMPTATION TO SIN. BY THE WAY, IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE IMPECCABILITY OF CHRIST THEN THE IMPLICATION THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS INVOLVED IN TRYING TO GET JESUS TO SIN IS APPARENT. (SEE JOHN 14:30, HEBREWS 4:15) TEMPTATION IN US IS LIKE A MAGNET PASSING OVER STEEL SHAVINGS IN HIM WOOD SHAVINGS. THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE. WE ARE DRAWN TO CERTAIN KINDS OF SIN - HE IS REPELLED BY ALL SIN. THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT A RAILROAD BRIDGE BUILT IN TEXAS MANY YEARS AGO. AFTER THE BRIDGE WAS COMPLETED, THEY RAN A COUPLE OF TRAINS ACROSS THE BRIDGE NOT TO SEE IF IT WOULD COLLAPSE UNDER THE ADDED WEIGHT BUT TO PROVE TO THE PUBLIC THAT IT WOULD NOT FALL! QUESTION: IF JESUS COULD NOT SIN HOW COULD THE TEMPTATION BE REAL? ANSWER: A ROW BOAT MAY ATTACK AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER. THE OUTCOME WOULD NEVER BE

Unconquerable

IN DOUBT BUT THE ATTACK IS REAL. AN ~~INCOMPARABLE~~ CITY MAY BE ATTACKED BY A HOSTILE ARMY. THE OUTCOME IS INEVITABLE BUT THE ATTACK IS STILL REAL. IF JESUS COULD SIN THEN, HE COULD SIN NOW. IF CHRIST IS IMMUTABLE, THAT IS, HE CANNOT AND DOES NOT CHANGE IN NATURE AND BEING, THEN HE MUST BE IMPECCABLE! THE POPULAR IDEA THAT THE DEVIL PUSHED JESUS INTO A CORNER AND MADE HIM A VICTIM OF TEMPTATION IS NOT BORNE OUT BY SCRIPTURE. IF THERE IS A VICTIM IN THIS STORY IT IS SATAN AND THE VICTOR IS JESUS!

I. THE CHALLENGE TO TURN STONES INTO BREAD

VERSES 3-4 (THE SUPERNATURAL)

SATAN WAS SUGGESTING TO JESUS THAT HE PROVE HIS IDENTITY. SATAN'S LOGIC: WOULD YOU USE YOUR SPECIAL POWERS TO PROVIDE BREAD FOR THE MULTITUDE? THEN WHY NOT FOR YOURSELF. AFTER ALL GOD PROVIDED MANNA IN THE WILDERNESS IN SUCH A FASHION, HE PROVIDED FOOD FOR ELIJAH SUPERNATURALLY. WHAT WOULD BE THE HARM IN PERFORMING A MIRACLE TO SATISFY A LEGITIMATE PHYSICAL NEED? AS USUAL SATAN DEALS IN HALF TRUTHS. THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN EATING WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY - WHAT WAS WRONG HERE WAS TO RESORT TO MEANS OR POWERS NOT AVAILABLE TO OTHERS TO DO SO. THE NATURAL MAN BELIEVES THAT PHYSICAL NEEDS COME FIRST. AFTER ALL, A PERSON "HAS TO EAT" AND HE SHOULD DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. ALSO, THERE IS THE FEELING THAT ONE MUST AVOID PHYSICAL SUFFERING NO MATTER WHAT. JESUS POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE THINGS IN LIFE MORE IMPORTANT THAN SATISFYING ONE'S APPETITE. THINK OF THE MANY PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THAT MOST OF OUR EFFORTS IN LIFE SHOULD BE DIRECTED AT THE MATERIAL INSTEAD OF THE SPIRITUAL. MAKING

*Dennis
Levine
on.
Insider
Trilogy =
Same
Logic
than me!*

Take care of it!

MONEY IS THEIR PRIMARY GOAL, EVERYTHING ELSE IS SECONDARY. THIS PHILOSOPHY IS A SURE FORMULA FOR FAILURE - JESUS SAID SO. CONCLUSION: JESUS REFUSED TO RESORT TO RESOURCES NOT AVAILABLE TO OTHERS IN DEALING WITH TEMPTATION. GOD'S PATH WOULD BRING GOD'S PROVISION. LEGITIMATE NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED BY ILLEGITIMATE MEANS. USING FOR HIMSELF THE POWERS THAT WERE DESIGNED TO BE USED FOR OTHERS HE SIMPLY WOULD NOT DO. YOU AND I DO NOT HAVE SUCH POWERS BUT WE ARE TEMPTED TO USE WHAT WE DO POSSESS FOR SELF AND NOT OTHERS. WE CALL THIS PHILOSOPHY "ME FIRST". LIVE FOR TODAY AND NOT TOMORROW, TAKE MORE THAN YOU GIVE, LIVE IT UP, LIVE IN THE FAST LANE, LIVE THE GOOD LIFE. NONE OF THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WHEN "MY WILL" TAKES PRECEDENT OVER "HIS WILL". "Thy will"

II. THE CHALLENGE TO CAST HIMSELF OFF THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE _ VERSES 5-7 (THE SPECTACULAR)

THIS WAS NOT A SUGGESTION TO COMMIT SUICIDE. THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE IS NOT LIKE THE STEEPLE OF A CHURCH. IT IS A CORNER WALL OF THE TEMPLE AREA FROM WHICH THERE IS A SHEER DROP OF SEVERAL HUNDRED FEET TO THE KEDRON VALLEY BELOW. SATAN WAS SUGGESTING THAT JESUS DO SOMETHING SPECTACULAR TO GAIN SUPPORT OR POPULAR APPEAL OF THE PEOPLE. THE COMMON IDEA THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD COME IN A SUDDEN SPECTACULAR WAY SUGGESTED TO SATAN THAT JESUS SHOULD APPEAL TO THAT IDEA, SHOW THEM WHAT HE COULD DO AND DO IT THEN! IF YOU ARE THE MESSIAH, THERE WAS NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO ESTABLISH THAT FACT. JUMP AND GOD WILL CATCH YOU! SATAN WAS TRYING TO GET JESUS TO RESORT TO THE SENSATIONAL OR SPECTACULAR IN ORDER TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR HIS MOVEMENT. JESUS REFUSED

TO PRESUME UPON GOD AND TO GO BEYOND THE LIMITS WHICH GOD HAS SET FOR EVERY MAN. JESUS REFUSED TO RESORT TO THE SPECTACULAR IN ORDER TO GENERATE FAITH. HE WOULD NOT USE THE WRONG METHODS TO ACCOMPLISH A PROPER GOAL. JUMPING FROM THE PINNACLE OF THE TEMPLE WOULD NOT PROVE JESUS' FAITH IN GOD IT WOULD SIMPLY PRESUME UPON GOD'S PATIENCE. JESUS REFUSED TO SHOW HIS LACK OF FAITH IN GOD BY RESORTING TO SUCH TACTICS. THIS TEMPTATION IS EVER BEFORE THE LORD'S PEOPLE, THAT IS, RESORTING TO SENSATIONAL METHODS IN ORDER TO APPEAL TO THE MASSES. TO BE SURE, BIZARRE METHODS, SHOW BIZ TACTICS MAY ENTERTAIN THE MASSES BUT THAT IS NOT THE WAY GOD ACCOMPLISHES HIS WILL ON EARTH. WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO WORK PATIENTLY AND STEADFASTLY IN THE WORK OF GOD. (1 COR. 15:58) WE DO NOT GET MEN INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD BY DAZZLING THEM WITH SOME KIND OF PERFORMANCE OR PROGRAM. MEN WILL COME TO KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOR WHEN WE LIVE A CONSISTENT LIFE AND USE THE METHODS GOD HAS PRESCRIBED IN HIS WORD TO REACH MEN WITH THE GOSPEL. SATAN IS A SHOWMAN - JESUS IS NOT, NEVER HAS BEEN, NEVER WILL BE. HIS IS THE DIGNITY OF DIVINITY.

III. THE CHALLENGE TO WORSHIP SATAN

VERSES 9-10 (THE SHORTCUT)

SATAN KNOWS THAT PEOPLE WILL DO FOR POWER WHAT THEY WILL NOT DO FOR MONEY. THIS IS ONE OF THE SECRETS OF POLITICS. IN THIS REQUEST, THE VEILED DESIRE OF SATAN COMES TO THE SURFACE. HE WANTS ABOVE ALL ELSE TO BE WORSHIPPED. (ISAIAH 14:14) HE WANTS TO BE GOD IN THE LIVES OF MEN. AS STATED EARLIER, SOME MEN COVET POWER AND POSITION MORE THAN MONEY. MONEY IS SIMPLY THE PLATFORM FROM WHICH THEY MAY MOVE INTO THIS HIGHER ORBIT OF POWER.

JESUS KNEW THAT THE CROSS CAME BEFORE THE CROWN. THE FLESH REBELLS AT THIS DIVINE ORDER. THE TEMPTATION TO TAKE A SHORTCUT, THE EASY WAY OUT TO AVOID SUFFERING, TO COMPROMISE IS EVER BEFORE US. THERE SEEMS TO BE A PRINCIPLE IN LIFE THAT THERE CAN BE NO TRUE SUCCESS WITHOUT BOTH SACRIFICE AND SUFFERING. THE GLORY OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM WOULD EVENTUALLY COME TO JESUS ANYWAY SO THE SHORTCUT WAS NOT NECESSARY. SATAN ALWAYS STANDS IN THE SHADOWS URGING MEN TO BARGAIN, MAKE UNNECESSARY AND UNHOLY COMPROMISES IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH DESIRABLE GOALS. I DO NOT DOUBT THAT SATAN HAD THE ABILITY TO DELIVER WHAT HE PROMISED BUT HIS IS ALWAYS AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE. SATAN BAITS MEN IN ORDER THAT THEY WILL SELL PRINCIPLE FOR POWER. THE TEMPTATION TO LOWER THE STANDARD, TO COMPROMISE AND DO THINGS THE EASY WAY IS EVER BEFORE US. THE BELIEVER SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THE NEAR WAY IS NOT NECESSARILY GOD'S WAY.
(ILLUSTRATE WITH SCHOOLING)

SUMMARY: JESUS DID NOT LET THE MATERIAL OR TEMPORAL MOVE HIM AWAY FROM THE ETERNAL. HE DID NOT PUT SELF OVER SERVICE. HE DID NOT ACCEPT SHOW OVER SUBSTANCE. HE DID NOT ACCEPT SUCCESS AT A LESSER PRICE. HE RELIED UPON GOD IN EVERY SITUATION. THE WORDS "IT IS WRITTEN" DEMONSTRATED TO SATAN THAT THE WORD OF GOD WAS UPPERMOST IN JESUS' MIND. THE WILL OF GOD WAS THE SUPREME GOAL OF HIS LIFE. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SERVING GOD AND SERVING SATAN IS SUMMED UP IN VERSE 9. SATAN OFFERS PEOPLE "THINGS" FOR SERVICE. GOD OFFERS THEM OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE HIM AND HUMANITY. (MATTHEW 6:33, MARK 8:36-38.) IT IS A MATTER OF WHAT WE WANT TO BE FIRST IN LIFE.

JOHN

"THE HALL OF JUDGMENT:
THE TRIAL OF JESUS"

JOHN 18:28

OUR PRE-EASTER SERIES HAS CONSIDERED THE TESTING, TEACHING, TRANSFIGURATION AND NOW THE TRIAL OF JESUS. FOR 500 YEARS, ROME RULED THE WORLD. THAT VAST EMPIRE HAD THOUSANDS OF PROVINCIAL OFFICERS BUT ONLY ONE IS REMEMBERED WORLDWIDE. HIS NAME - PONTIUS PILATE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, FEW REMEMBER THE EMPEROR OF ROME AT THAT TIME - TIBERIOUS. PILATE WAS A ROMAN OFFICER WITH AN UNDISTINGUISHED RECORD OVERALL. HE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN IN THE ANNALS OF ROMAN AND JEWISH HISTORY BECAUSE HE WAS THE MAN WHO SENTENCED JESUS TO BE CRUCIFIED AND THE WHOLE MATTER WAS ILLEGAL, UNFAIR, UNJUST AND UNFORGIVABLE. THE TRIAL OF JESUS WAS THE GREAT MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE IN THE ANNALS OF JURISPRUDENCE. JUSTICE WAS MISSING AT JESUS' TRIAL WHILE PREJUDICE AND HATRED PREVAILED.

I. THE ARREST OF JESUS - 18:3, 12

THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO GLARING IRREGULARITIES IN THE TEXT THAT ARE OBVIOUS EVEN TO THE CASUAL READER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:

(1) SUNSET - JEWISH LAW CLEARLY STATED THAT NO STEPS IN A CRIMINAL PROCEDURE COULD BE TAKEN AFTER DARK. TO DO SO MADE THE ENTIRE ACTIVITY ILLEGAL AND WOULD BE AND SHOULD BE THROWN OUT OF COURT. THE USAGE OF THE TERM TORCHES OR LAMPS IN VERSE 3 MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT JESUS' ARREST TOOK PLACE AFTER DARK. THE ARRESTING PARTY INCLUDED JUDAS, A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP OF PRIESTS AND ELDERS AND MEMBERS OF THE SANHEDRIN ALONG WITH TEMPLE MILITIA AND A BAND OF ROMAN SOLDIERS. THE EXACT NUMBER OF SOLDIERS IS NOT MENTIONED.

(2) THE SANHEDRIN - VERSE 3

THE CHIEF PRIEST AND PHARISEES WERE JUDGES IN THE CASE WHO TOOK PART IN THE ARREST. THEY WERE SO ANXIOUS TO GET THEIR HANDS ON JESUS THAT THEY WENT ALONG WITH THE TEMPLE PRIESTS TO SEE THAT HE WAS ARRESTED. THIS ACT WAS ILLEGAL, UNJUST, UNFAIR. THE LAW NEVER HAD A CHANCE IN THEIR PRESENCE. JUDAS TURNED HIS SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE AND PRIVILEGE INTO TREACHERY. HE FEIGNED LOYALTY TO JESUS AND THEN BETRAYED HIM WITH A KISS. ANOTHER INCREDIBLE FEATURE OF THIS ARREST WAS THE ARMED FORCE OR GUARD WHO SET OUT AGAINST AN UNARMED GALILEAN. THE USAGE OF THE TERM LANTERN AND TORCHES WOULD SUGGEST THAT THEY MAY HAVE EXPECTED JESUS TO BE HIDING. HOWEVER, JESUS WAS NOT A TRAPPED ANIMAL CAUGHT IN FLIGHT BUT RATHER HE VOLUNTARILY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AND SOUGHT OUT THE ARRESTING PARTY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO DEAL WITH HIS DIRECTNESS AND WAS STUNNED BY HIS FORWARD ACTION. BY THE WAY, JESUS COULD HAVE EASILY ESCAPED THE CROWD. EVEN THOUGH JESUS WAS BOUND BY THE ARRESTING PARTY, ONE GETS THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT HE IS THE VICTOR AND NOT THE VICTIM IN THIS SITUATION. THE IMPRESSION IS THAT JESUS PERMITTED THE ARREST THOUGH HE HAD THE POWER TO PREVENT IT IF HE CHOSE TO DO SO.

II. THE TRIAL OF JESUS - VERSE 13, 24, 25

IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS, JESUS WAS SUBJECTED TO THE INDIGNITY OF THREE APPEARANCES BEFORE THE ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES, NAMELY ANNAS, CAIPHAS AND THE SANHEDRIN. HE ALSO MADE THREE APPEARANCES BEFORE THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES, NAMELY, TWO APPEARANCES BEFORE PILATE AND ONE BEFORE HEROD. THE RELIGIOUS TRIALS WERE ALL ILLEGAL CONTRARY TO RELIGIOUS LAW. SUCH THINGS AS PAID FALSE WITNESSES, REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO GET JESUS TO INCRIMINATE HIMSELF AND THE

SECRETIVE NATURE OF THE TRIAL. THE FACT THAT THE CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY ORIGINATED WITH THE JUDGES WHO ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE ARREST IS AS INCREDIBLE AS IT IS ASTONISHING. THE TWO PRINCIPLE PARTIES IN THE RELIGIOUS OR ECCLESIASTICAL TRIAL WERE ANNAS AND CAIPHAS. ANNAS HAD BEEN THE HIGH PRIEST FOR MANY YEARS BUT AT THIS PARTICULAR POINT HIS SON-IN-LAW WAS IN POWER BUT ANNAS WAS IN FACT THE REAL POWER BEHIND THE HIGH PRIEST. ONE COMMENTATOR HAS SUGGESTED THAT ANNAS HAD BECOME RICH WHILE HE WAS HIGH PRIEST BY CONTROL OF THE SHOPS IN THE TEMPLE AREA WHERE SACRIFICES WERE BROUGHT. HE COULD REFUSE SACRIFICES BROUGHT FROM THE OUTSIDE AND FORCE WORSHIPPERS TO BUY FROM HIS SHOP. THIS WAS THE VERY BUSINESS JESUS SHUT DOWN WHEN HE RAN THE MONEYCHANGERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE. IN THE MOCKERY OF A TRIAL, ANNAS SOUGHT TO GET EVEN. ON THE SURFACE THE TRIAL MIGHT SEEM FAIR BUT THE SUTLE EFFORT TO ENSNARE AND ENTANGLE JESUS IN A WEB OF QUESTIONS REVEALED THE PENT-UP HATRED OF THE RELIGIOUS FOR JESUS. ACCORDING TO VERSE 19 THE CHARGE AGAINST JESUS INVOLVED TREASON AND BLASPHEMY. THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES WERE DETERMINED TO KILL JESUS AND SINCE THEY DID NOT HAVE THE POWER OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, THAT RESTED WITH ROME, JESUS WAS TAKEN TO PILATE. PILATE NORMALLY RESIDED AT CAESAREA, BUT DURING THE FEAST SEASON, HE STAYED IN JERUSALEM AT A PALACE CALLED THE PRAEPEORIUM. JESUS WAS NO REVOLUTIONARY AND HIS TALK ABOUT A KINGDOM MISTIFIED PILATE. AFTER EXAMINING JESUS, PILATE KNEW FULL WELL THAT THE JEWS WERE PREJUDICED IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO CONVICT JESUS. THERE WAS NOT A SHRED OF EVIDENCE FOR HIS GUILT BUT FACED WITH THE ANGRY HOSTILE RELIGIOUS CROWD, PILATE'S SENSE OF JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY VANISHED COMPLETELY. THE IDEA THAT A POOR DOWN-CAST FORSAKEN PERSON LIKE CHRIST COULD BE KING OF ANYTHING WAS UTTERLY UNTHINKABLE TO PILATE EVEN IF THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY.

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UNDERNEATH ALL OF THIS PALESTINE WAS A PROVINCE WITH PROBLEMS. PILATE HAD BEEN FACED WITH ONE BAD POLITICAL SITUATION AFTER ANOTHER AND HAD ACTED UNWISELY ON ALMOST EVERY OCCASION. HE HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR A FLARE-UP AMONG THE PEOPLE OVER MONEY TAKEN OUT OF THE TREASURY TO BUILD AN AQEDUCT. WHEN A MILD RIOT BROKE OUT SOLDIERS WERE SENT TO BREAK IT UP AND THE WHOLE CIRCUMSTANCE HAD LEFT A BAD TASTE IN THE MOUTH OF THE PEOPLE AND ROME TOO. PILATE WAS IN NO POSITION FOR ANOTHER REBELLION.

SUMMARY: TO CALL THIS A KANGAROO COURT WOULD BE AN INSULT TO KANGAROO SPECIFICALLY AND ANIMALS IN GENERAL! THINK OF IT, A RELIGIOUS TRIAL HELD AT NIGHT, IN SECRET, ON A FEAST DAY, AND THE CHARGE ORIGINATED WITH THE JUDGES WHO HAD NO CONCERN FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE PRISONER WHATSOEVER - THEY WERE DETERMINED TO GET A CONVICTION AT ALL COSTS, INCLUDING THE SACRIFICE OF JUSTICE! CONCERNING THE ROMAN TRIAL FAIRNESS GAVE WAY TO FEAR UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF AN EMPIRE NOTED FOR ITS LAW AND JUSTICE - ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE.

III. THE VERDICT AGAINST JESUS - 18:38

IN MODERN TIMES, THIS WOULD BE CALLED AN ACQUITTAL. THERE WAS NO LEGAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE CHARGES AGAINST JESUS. LEGALLY, THE RELEASE OF A PRISONER UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES WAS A MUST. THE STATEMENT IN THE TEXT IS NOT THE CASUAL OBSERVATION OF A ROMAN RULER, IT IS THE DECLARATION OF A JUDGE - A JUDICIAL DECISION. PILATE WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED WITH JESUS, KNEW THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM BY THE JEWS WAS A PACK OF LIES AND THAT JESUS WAS FULLY AND COMPLETELY INNOCENT. PILATE DID NOT WANT TO CONDEMN JESUS, AS A MATTER OF FACT HE PRONOUNCED HIM INNOCENT BUT WAS AFRAID OF THE MOB AND HIS JOB. WITH BOTH HEROD AND PILATE, IT WAS CAREER OVER CHRIST (POLITICALLY SPEAKING THEIRS WAS AN SOS POLITICALLY MOVE - SAVE OUR

SKIN!) PILATE TRIED TO GET RID OF THE CASE BY SENDING IT TO HEROD AND HE TRIED TO RELEASE JESUS BY SUBSTITUTING BARABBAS IN HIS PLACE. ALL SUCH ATTEMPTS FAILED. AT PILATE'S DECLARATION OR PRONOUNCEMENT THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN AN IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF JESUS. PILATE RESORTED TO EVERY LEGAL MANEUVER AT HIS DISPOSAL, BUT FAILED TO PLEASE THE CROWD AND WAS FEARFUL OF DOING THE CORRECT THING LEGALLY. SO A MAN WHO WAS TRIED ILLEGALLY AND FOUND INNOCENT WAS CONDEMNED TO DIE.

IV. THE IMPLICATIONS

ONE GETS THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT JESUS WAS NOT ON TRIAL BUT HIS PROSECUTORS WERE. THOSE WHO PROSECUTED HIM WERE CONFUSED - HE IN CONTROL. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH EVERY MAN, LIKE PILATE, MUST CHOOSE FOR OR AGAINST JESUS. (MATTHEW 12:30) ONE OF THE GREAT TRAGEDIES OF HISTORY IS THAT MEN WOULD RELEASE BARABBAS, A MAN OF VIOLENCE, THIEVERY AND GREED AND CRUCIFY IN HIS PLACE THE LOVING GENTLE SAVIOR WHO NOT ONLY HAD NEVER COMMITTED A CRIME BUT WHO HAD NEVER SINNED. EVERY MAN, LIKE PILATE, MUST DECIDE ABOUT JESUS. WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS? THIS IS THE QUESTION GOD WHISPERS IN THE EAR AND HEART OF EVERY MAN. WHEN BROUGHT INTO THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST, ALL MEN, LIKE PILATE, MUST DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH HIM. LIKE JUDAS THEY MAY BETRAY HIM, LIKE THE DISCIPLES THEY MAY RUN FROM HIM, LIKE THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES THEY MAY BLASPHEME HIM BUT THEY CANNOT IGNORE HIM. CHRIST IS EITHER REJECTED OR RECEIVED. LIKE THE TWO THIEVES ON THE CROSS, THERE ARE TWO CLASSES OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD - THOSE WHO REJECT AND THOSE WHO RECEIVE CHRIST. ① "JESUS IS STANDING IN PILATE'S HALL, FRIENDLESS, FORSAKEN, BETRAYED BY ALL; HARKEN WHAT MEANETH THE SUDDEN CALL! WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?" ② JESUS IS STANDING ON TRIAL STILL, YOU MAY BE FALSE TO HIM IF YOU WILL, YOU MAY BE FAITHFUL THROUGH GOOD OR ILL; WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?

WILL YOU EVADE HIM AS PILATE TRIED, OR WILL YOU
CHOOSE HIM WHATEVER BETIDE? DARING FOR JESUS
TO LIVE OR DIE; WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?
WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS? NEUTRAL YOU CANNOT
BE; SOMEDAY YOUR HEART WILL BE ASKING, WHAT WILL
HE DO WITH ME?"