

THE THINGS OF GOD IN ROMANS

ONE OF THE HIGH POINTS OF MY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE WAS TO STUDY THE BOOK OF ROMANS UNDER A MAN WHO HAD TAUGHT IT FOR OVER 30 YEARS. EVEN THOUGH I HAD BEEN SAVED FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND HAD STUDIED ROMANS IN BOTH BIBLE INSTITUTE AND BIBLE COLLEGE, IT WAS IN THAT CLASS I GAINED A NEW APPRECIATION FOR THE WORD OF GOD. MANY OF THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS AWAKENINGS IN CHURCH HISTORY MAY BE LINKED TO A NEW DISCOVERY OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS. LUTHER AND THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION WERE LINKED TO THE ROMAN IDEA: "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." BOTH JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY WERE PREACHERS OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS. IN OUR GENERATION, WHO CAN FORGET THAT DONALD BARNHOUSE PREACHED FROM THIS BOOK FOR OVER 3½ YEARS IN HIS CHURCH WITHOUT VARIATION AND IT BOTH TRANSFORMED AND FILLED HIS CHURCH! AS A MATTER OF FACT, I CANNOT REMEMBER HEARING BARNHOUSE PREACH ANYTHING OTHER THAN FROM ROMANS. JAMES STIFLER STATES THAT AS A SEMINARY PROFESSOR HE HAD GUIDED OVER 20 CLASSES OF STUDENTS THROUGH THIS WONDERFUL BOOK - 14 OF THEM DEALING WITH THE ORIGINAL TEXT AND CONSIDERING EVERY MAJOR WORD - AN ENORMOUS BLESSING. THE BOOK OF ROMANS TELLS US HOW GOD CAN FORGIVE SIN AND HOW WE MAY HAVE A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THE PHRASE "OF GOD" OCCURS 59 TIMES IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS AND WE WILL ATTEMPT TO LOOK AT JUST A FEW TONIGHT.

I. THE GOSPEL OF GOD - 1:1

THE NEWSPAPER COMES TO MANY HOMES EVERY DAY. IT BRINGS NEWS OF THE WORLD. THE MAIL ALSO COMES ON A DAILY BASIS BRINGING BOTH GOOD AND BAD NEWS. THE GOSPEL IS NOT GOD'S BAD

NEWS BUT HIS GOOD NEWS TO MEN. IT IS GOOD NEWS TO BAD MEN AND BAD NEWS TO GOOD MEN! (LUKE 5:32 - "I CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE." THE GOSPEL IS NOT GOOD ADVICE OR GOOD INTENTIONS BUT GOOD NEWS. PAUL SPENT HIS LIFE MAKING THIS GOOD NEWS AVAILABLE TO MEN. IN CHAPTER 1 ALONE IT STATES IN VERSE 1 THE GOSPEL IS FROM GOD, NOT MEN. VERSE 2 - NOT A NEW IDEA BUT PROMISED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. VERSE 3 - ITS THEME IS JESUS CHRIST. VERSE 15 - ITS MANNER OF DISSEMINATION THROUGH PREACHING. VERSE 16 - IT IS A POWERFUL MESSAGE AND IT IS TO ALL MEN - A UNIVERSAL MESSAGE. VERSE 17 - IT DECLARES THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. THE GOSPEL WAS THE ONE MESSAGE THAT COULD HAVE SAVED ROME.

II. THE WILL OF GOD - 1:10

FROM THE TIME OF HIS CONVERSION TO CHRIST, PAUL'S PERSONAL PLANS FOR HIS LIFE AND CAREER VANISHED. FROM THAT DAY, HIS OWN AMBITIONS GAVE PLACE TO THE WILL OF GOD. HE HAD NO PLANS FOR LIFE BUT GOD'S PLAN. THIS WAS THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST. NOTHING IN LIFE WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WILL OF GOD. A STUDY IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN ON THE TERM WILL: 1:13, 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, 39, 40, 7:17. JESUS WAS SAYING IN THESE VERSES THAT TO DO THE WILL OF GOD IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE FOR ANYONE. IT IS BIGGER AND MORE VITAL THAN ANYTHING ELSE IMAGINABLE. TO DO THE WILL OF GOD DOES NOT MEAN THE ELIMINATION OF DIFFICULTIES OR PROBLEMS BUT IT DOES SUGGEST A LIFE OF FULFILLMENT AND SATISFACTION. WHEN WILLIAM CAREY DIED HE SAID: "I HAVE NOT A SINGLE DESIRE UNGRATIFIED." WHEN JESUS DIED AT THE POINT OF LIFE'S MATURITY, NOT FAR FROM WHERE HE WAS BORN, HAVING POURED HIS LIFE INTO THE LIVES OF A DOZEN MEN - HE STATED EMPHATICALLY THAT HE HAD DONE THE WILL OF GOD - WHAT ELSE COULD A PERSON WANT?

III. THE POWER OF GOD - 1:16

THE CITIZENS OF ROME MAY HAVE LAUGHED WHEN THEY READ THIS VERSE TO HEAR A JEWISH RABBI TALK ABOUT POWER. THERE ARE SEVERAL WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATED POWER. IN MANY PLACES IT REFERS TO AUTHORITY. HOWEVER, AS YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW THE WORD IN THIS VERSE IS THE BASIS FOR AT LEAST TWO ENGLISH WORDS, DYNAMITE AND DYNAMO. PLEASE NOTICE THAT THIS VERSE ASCRIBES THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO A SINGLE ACT AND THAT OF BELIEVING. (COMPARE ACTS 16:31, JOHN 5:24, JOHN 3:36, JOHN 1:12, II TIM. 1:12) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE GOD? SUPPOSE THREE HUNGRY MEN ARE SITTING A TABLE ON WHICH IS A GREAT PLATTER FILLED WITH ALL KINDS OF SANDWICHES. ONE MAN IS A CHEMIST, ANOTHER A DOCTOR, THE THIRD A FARMER. THE SANDWICHES ARE PASSED FROM ONE TO ANOTHER. THE CHEMIST TAKES A SANDWICH AND BEGINS TO TALK TO THE DOCTOR ABOUT THE LATEST EXPERIMENTS IN WHICH THE ENERGY CONTAINED IN CERTAIN TYPES OF FOOD HAS BEEN FASCINATING TO STUDY. THE DOCTOR IN TURN REPLIES THAT HE TOO HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN CERTAIN TYPES OF RESEARCH TO SEE HOW FOOD IS TRANSMITTED TO BLOOD, MUSCLE AND BONE AND HOW CELLS ARE BROKEN DOWN AND BUILT UP AND ALSO THE FUNCTION OF VARIOUS GLANDS IN REHABILITATING THE BODY. THE AIR IS FILLED WITH TECHNICAL TERMS AND THE TWO MEN ARE SO ENGROSSED IN THEIR CONVERSATION THAT THEY ARE ANNOYED TO DISCOVER AFTER FINISHING THE FIRST SANDWICH THE FARMER HAS EATEN ALL THE REST. THE SCIENTISTS KNEW FAR MORE ABOUT THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY AS RELATING TO THE PROCESS OF CHANGING SANDWICHES INTO ENERGY BUT THE FARMER WAS THE ONE WHO WENT AWAY FILLED WHILE THEY, HUNGRY. THE POINT:

THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD CLASSES IN RELIGION AT COLLEGE. THEY HAVE GONE TO SUNDAY SCHOOL AND MAY KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE BIBLE TO THE POINT THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF TALKING ABOUT RELIGION, ANY RELIGION, ON A PANEL DISCUSSION. THE POINT IS SATISFACTION DOES NOT COME FROM TALKING ABOUT THE TECHNICALITIES OF CHRISTIANITY BUT RATHER FROM A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS CHRIST BUT THIS IS WHAT THE WORD BELIEVE IMPLIES.

IV. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD - 1:17

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE THEME OF THIS EPISTLE. IN ONE SENSE, IT IS THE WORD THAT DESCRIBES THE STORY OF MANKIND IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. MAN IS EVER SEEKING TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GOD IS EVER SHOWING THAT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH. ROMANS TEACHES US THAT CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND NOTHING ELSE IS ENOUGH. (ISAIAH 64:6, TITUS 3:5, ROMANS 3:10, PHILIPPIANS 3:9). ROME WAS THE NERVE CENTER FOR LAW AND ORDER IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. ROMAN LAW, ROMAN COURTS WERE AMONG THE FAIREST IN THE WORLD AND THEY WERE PROUD OF THEIR CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF JUSTICE. THE BIBLE STATES THAT MAN IS NOT RIGHTEOUS BY NATURE. MAN DOES NOT, BY NATURE, CONFORM TO RIGHT AND SEEK TO BE STRAIGHT AND FAIR IN ALL HE SAYS AND DOES. WHEN MEN THINK OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THEY THINK OF IT IN TERMS OF RELATIVE AMOUNTS. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY THINK OF GOD AS HAVING A GREAT DEAL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, MEN OF MORAL CONVICTION AS HAVING MORE THAN OTHERS, THE AVERAGE MAN AS HAVING SOME AND CRIMINALS HAVING LITTLE OR NONE. THE BIBLE STATES THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE. THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF ROMANS

DECLARE THAT THE WHOLE UNIVERSE IS BOTH GUILTY AND DEVOID OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD. THE BIBLE DECLARES THAT GOD REQUIRES AND PROVIDES MEN WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS. GOD REQUIRES OF EVERY MAN THAT HE BE PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS IN ORDER TO GET TO HEAVEN. HOWEVER, WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF MEN HE ALSO PROVIDES FOR THEM. (II COR. 5:21) (SEVERAL YEARS AGO, A FRIEND ON VACATION AND HIS FAMILY STOPPED IN A CERTAIN TOWN FOR DINNER. THEY HAD BEEN TRAVELING ALL DAY AND MY FRIEND HAD ON A SHORT-SLEEVE SHIRT, SHORTS, SNEAKERS, NO SOCKS, NO COAT, NO TIE. AT A CERTAIN RESTAURANT WHERE THEY INQUIRED AND APPLIED FOR A TABLE, THE HOSTESS WAS A LITTLE EMBARRASSED TO REMIND MY FRIEND THAT IT WAS THE POLICY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT THAT GENTLEMEN MUST WEAR COATS FOR THE EVENING MEAL AND EVEN MORE SPECIFICALLY NO ONE COULD GET IN WITHOUT A COAT. HOWEVER, ANTICIPATING SUCH A SITUATION, THE HOSTESS SAID TO MY FRIEND: "COME WITH ME PLEASE." HE WAS TAKEN INTO A CERTAIN COAT ROOM WHERE HANGING ON SEVERAL RACKS WERE COATS OF ALL SIZES. MY FRIEND WAS QUICKLY FITTED WITH A COAT FOR DINNER. IN SO DOING, THE POLICY OF THE RESTAURANT WAS OBSERVED AND MY FRIEND WAS NOT OFFENDED NOR RESTRICTED FROM THE PLEASURE OF A PLEASANT DINNER WITH HIS FAMILY.)

POINT: WHAT GOD REQUIRES OF US, HE ALSO PROVIDES FOR US. PROBLEM: MEN DO NOT EASILY NOR WILLINGLY ACCEPT GOD'S PERFECT PROVISION BUT RATHER IN LARGE MEASURE MAKE UP THEIR OWN RULES AND ATTEMPT TO GET INTO HEAVEN BY THEIR OWN DEVICES. THE BIBLE STATES CLEARLY AND EMPHATICALLY THIS CANNOT BE DONE.

V. THE WRATH OF GOD - 1:18

1 WHEN MEN SPEAK OF WRATH IT IS USUALLY REFERRING TO EMOTIONAL UPSURGE OR AS STATED IT IS THE WRATH OF RAGE AND NOT OF REASON. FOR EXAMPLE, AT NUREMBURG WHERE WAR CRIMINALS WERE TRIED MANY OF THE VICTIMS WERE FILLED WITH RAGE AGAINST THE GERMANS BUT THE COURT ITSELF DID NOT CONDEMN THEM ON THE BASIS OF EMOTION ALONE BUT RATHER THE WRATH OF THE WORLD OF LAW AND ORDER DESCENDED UPON THESE CRIMINALS. IT WAS THE WRATH OF A COURT OF LAW. THE GOD OF LOVE MUST ALSO BE A GOD OF WRATH IN ORDER TO BE A MORAL GOD. EVERYTHING THAT IS DECENT IN MANKIND CRIES OUT FOR FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE AGAINST THE TYRANNY OF MEN LIKE HITLER, MUSSOLINI AND STALIN. 2 LOVE DEMANDS WRATH IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, A MAN MIGHT OWN A DOG WHICH HIS SON LOVES VERY MUCH. THE DOG MIGHT BECOME THE PET OF THE HOUSE. ONE DAY THAT ANIMAL CONTACTS RABIES, GOES MAD AND SEEKS TO BITE THE SON. THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT THE DOG MUST BE DESTROYED IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE SON. THE PRINCIPLE MIGHT BE FURTHER STATED OF A FATHER WHO HAD TWO SONS. ONE GOES INSANE AND SEEKS TO KILL HIS BROTHER. THE RIGHT KIND OF FATHER WILL PROTECT HIS CHILDREN EVEN AGAINST HIS OWN SON. THERE IS A FEELING ABROAD TODAY THAT MEN MAY SIN AND GET BY OR GET AWAY WITH IT SIMPLY BECAUSE SO MANY DO. BARNHOUSE TELLS THE STORY ABOUT A MAN WHO SOWED AND REAPED A BUMPER CROP AND DID SO BY WORKING ON SUNDAY. SOMEONE ASKED THE LOCAL PASTOR HOW COULD EXPLAIN SUCH A THING. HIS ANSWER: "GOD DOES NOT SETTLE HIS ACCOUNTS IN OCTOBER." ONE COMMENTATOR HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE WRATH OF GOD IS LIKE A GREAT DAM AND THE WATERS ARE BACKED UP BEHIND IT. FROM THE

DAY THAT MAN SINNED AGAINST GOD THE WRATH OF GOD HAS BEEN STORED UP AGAINST SIN. THERE WAS A PLACE CALLED CALVARY WHERE SOME OF THAT PENT-UP WRATH SPILLED OVER ON HIS SON BUT THE DAY OF HIS FUTURE JUDGMENT IS SURE AND MEN MUST FACE THAT WRATH. MEN WILL BE DEALT WITH IN WRATH BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO BE DEALT WITH IN LOVE.

VI. THE GLORY AND TRUTH OF GOD - 1:23,25

THESE VERSES TELL US OF MANKIND THAT HAS BEEN CARELESS CONCERNING GOD'S GLORY AND GOD'S TRUTH. PAUL POINTS TO THE FACT THAT THE UNSAVED MAN TAKES A DOWNWARD ROAD TOWARD IDOLATRY AND SEX PERVERSION. THIS IS ONE PRICE MEN PAY FOR TURNING THEIR BACK ON GOD - HE TURNS HIS BACK ON THEM. MAN HAS TWO CHOICES, EITHER MAN'S LIE ABOUT GOD OR GOD'S TRUTH ABOUT MAN.

VII. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD - 1:32

WHENEVER THE WORD JUDGMENT IS MENTIONED, SOME GET OFFENDED. IN OUR DAY OF SOPHISTICATION AND REFINEMENT, THIS IS A NO NO IN SOCIAL CONVERSATION. SUPPOSE WESTERN UNION ADVERTIZED FOR A CARRIER WHO UPON APPLYING SAID: "I AM OF SUCH EMOTIONAL MAKEUP THAT I CANNOT STAND BAD NEWS. I WILL DELIVER ALL OF THE MESSAGES RELATING TO GOOD FORTUNE SUCH AS MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, BUSINESS SUCCESS, BUT PLEASE NO ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MESSAGES ABOUT DEATH, SICKNESS OR DISASTER." OR, WHAT WOULD YOU THINK OF A PHYSICIAN WHO UPON GRADUATION FROM MEDICAL SCHOOL SAID, "I WILL INFORM MY PATIENTS OF ALL MINOR DISEASES WHICH HAVE OR ARE KNOWN TO BE CURABLE. SERIOUS MATTERS SUCH AS HEART DISEASE OR CANCER THEY WILL HAVE TO LEARN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH DISEASES FROM SOMEONE ELSE. SUCH THINKING IS SHEER NONSENSE BECAUSE WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE DISEASE IS A REALITY. THESE VERSES IN THE CONTEXT OF

THIS CHAPTER STATE SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT MAN'S SIN. MAINLY

(1) MAN SINS AGAINST LIGHT IN THIS PASSAGE, PAUL MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT MAN HAS TURNED HIS BACK ON THE VOICE OF GOD IN SEVERAL WAYS. FOR EXAMPLE HE HAS IGNORED THE VOICE OF GOD IN CREATION - ROMANS 1:19-20; HE HAS IGNORED THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE - ROMANS 2:14-16. MAN HAS WILFULLY GONE AGAINST THE TESTIMONY OF GOD IN CREATION AND HIS OWN CONSCIENCE. MAN HAS WILLFULLY GONE AGAINST HIS OWN MORAL STANDARDS REGARDLESS OF HOW LOW OR HOW HIGH THEY MIGHT BE. THIS VERSE STATES THAT MAN SANCTIONS SIN IN HIS FELLOWMAN - HE GETS PLEASURE FROM IT. THE IDEA OF THE VERSE IS THAT OF APPROVING OR APPLAUDING PEOPLE WHO ARE SINNING. «RECENTLY SOME FRIENDS STOPPED BY AND WE WERE REVIEWING SOME OF THE PLEASANT TIMES OF HAVING LIVED IN A SMALL TOWN IN MICHIGAN. ONE OF MY REGRETS ABOUT LIVING IN THE TOWN WAS THE PRESENCE OF A LOCAL RACE-TRACK. MANY POOR PEOPLE WASTED THEIR EARNINGS ON THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM AND THE PROBLEMS WHICH AROSE OUT OF THE RACETRACK WERE ENORMOUS. HOWEVER, BECAUSE MULTIPLIED THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WERE PAID EACH YEAR IN TAXES TO THE TOWN - EVERYONE WAS SUPPOSED TO KEEP HIS MOUTH SHUT AND TO PUBLICALLY SANCTION THE SINS INVOLVED. SIMPLY STATED IT WAS THE STATE SANCTION OF GAMBLING AND GIVING IT OR PUTTING IT IN A GOOD MORAL LIGHT. IT WAS AND IS A SAD COMMENTARY ON SOCIETY WHEN MEN TAKE A LIGHT VIEW OF GETTING MONEY FROM OTHER MEN BY APPEALING TO THEIR LOWER MOTIVES AND PASSIONS. THE IDEA THAT LIQUOR IS RESPECTABLE BECAUSE THE DEALER IS A RESPECTABLE CITIZEN IS LUDICROUS. THE IDEA THAT DIVORCE IS RIGHT BECAUSE EVEN THE PRESIDENT OF OUR COUNTRY IS A DIVORCED MAN IS ALSO ABSOLUTELY

ASTOUNDING. IN THIS VERSE, PAUL TEACHES THAT REGARDLESS OF HOW MEN MAY RATIONALIZE OR EVADE THE ISSUE, JUDGMENT IS INEVITABLE AND MEN WILL FACE THEIR CREATOR. YEARS AGO, IN ATLANTA, A FIRE BROKE OUT IN A DOWNTOWN HOTEL. FIRE EQUIPMENT, SEARCH LIGHTS WERE SET UP IN THE STREET. LOUD SPEAKERS WERE SET UP AS FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS PLEADED WITH PEOPLE NOT TO JUMP FROM THE BUILDING. ENCOURAGING WORDS WERE CALLED OUT TO STAY IN THEIR ROOMS BECAUSE EQUIPMENT WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO ESCAPE. IN THE UPPER STORIES OF THE BUILDING, AS THE FIRE INTENSIFIED, PEOPLE LEAPED TO THE PAVEMENT BELOW AND THEIR DEATH. IN THAT PARTICULAR FIRE, 127 PEOPLE DIED. THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS THAT MEN WILL GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO ESCAPE FIRE.

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW COULD HURT YOU

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING "WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW WON'T HURT YOU." IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTER, PAUL USES AN EXPRESSION THAT SAYS IN EFFECT: "WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW COULD HURT YOU, SO YOU NEED TO KNOW." HE REPEATS THE EXPRESSION "KNOW YE NOT" SEVERAL TIMES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO KEY TRUTHS THE BELIEVERS AT CORINTH NEEDED TO LEARN.

I. WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GOD'S TEMPLE -

I CORINTHIANS 3:16 (A LESSON FROM THE TEMPLE)

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE TEMPLE WAS WHERE GOD'S PRESENCE DWELT. HOWEVER, THE CORINTHIANS WERE MORE ACQUAINTED WITH THE HILL OF THE ACROPOLIS WHERE THERE STOOD THE GREAT TEMPLE OF APHRODITE, THE GODDESS OF LOVE. THERE WERE ONE THOUSAND "SACRED PROSTITUTES" WHO INHABITED THE STREETS OF CORINTH EVERY NIGHT. COMPARED TO OTHER RELIGIONS AND OTHER ARCHITECTURE THE TEMPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS SMALL. HOWEVER, NO SPOT ON EARTH IS MORE SACRED TO JEWS THAN THE TEMPLE AREA IN JERUSALEM. TODAY, THE DOME OF THE ROCK STANDS ON THE SITE. THE WAILING WALL REVEALS THE FERVOR IN THE HEART OF JEWS FOR THE TEMPLE. THE EMPHASIS OF THIS VERSE IS NOT ON BIG, BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS BUT UPON BELIEVERS. THE WORD "YE" IS PLURAL - TEMPLE IS SINGULAR. PAUL WAS SPEAKING TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH IN A COLLECTIVE SENSE. THE WORD TEMPLE IS ONE OF TWO IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. THE REFERENCE IS TO THE SANCTUARY OR HABITATION OF GOD, THE HOLY OF HOLIES, THE INNER SANCTUARY WHERE GOD DWELT. THE WORD DWELLETH IS THE ROOT WORD FOR HOUSE OR HOME. IT SPEAKS OF RESIDENCE. GOD MAKES HIS

RESIDENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE. HOWEVER, THE EMPHASIS IS NOT ON SACRED PLACES BUT UPON SACRED PEOPLE. THE WORDS DEFILE AND DESTROY ARE THE SAME WORD. IT IS A REFERENCE TO TEMPLE TRANSGRESSIONS OR SACRILEGE. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THE PENALTY WAS DEATH. (LEVITICUS 16:2) THIS VERSE IS A WARNING TO THOSE WHO ARE CARELESS ABOUT SACRED THINGS. A. T. ROBERTSON SAYS "THE CHURCH WRECKER, GOD WILL WRECK." DEFILEMENT INVOLVES THE MESSAGE, MORALS AND METHODS OF A LOCAL CHURCH.

II. WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEAVEN -

I CORINTHIANS 5:6 (A LESSON FROM THE KITCHEN)

(Leaven of the Sadducees)

LEAVEN WAS DOUGH THAT HAD BEEN KEPT OVER FROM A PREVIOUS BAKING AND IN THE KEEPING IT FERMENTED. SIMPLY STATED, LEAVEN IS ANY SUBSTANCE THAT PRODUCES FERMENTATION. IT DID FOR BREAD THEN WHAT YEAST DOES TODAY.

THERE ARE TWO IDEAS ABOUT WHAT LEAVEN SYMBOLIZES: (1) THE PENETRATING POWER OF THE GOSPEL. (A POPULAR POST-MILLENIAL IDEA)

(2) IT REPRESENTS THE CORRUPTING POWER OF EVIL AND IS A SYMBOL OF EVIL. THIS IS SCOFIELD'S VIEW AND SEEMS TO BE THE EMPHASIS OF SCRIPTURE. (MATTHEW 16:6, 11, 12)

THESE VERSES MAKE LEAVEN TO REPRESENT FALSE TEACHING OR DOCTRINE. THE TEXT EMPHASIZES THE WORD LITTLE AND NOT LOT. THE WORD IS "MICRO" THAT IS A SMALL AMOUNT. A LITTLE BAD DOCTRINE IN CHURCH MAY HAVE AN ENORMOUSLY CORRUPTING INFLUENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, ONE

ROTTEN APPLE OR POTATO IN A BIN CAN CAUSE THE REST TO ROT. ONCE IT SETS IN, IT NEVER GETS BETTER UNTIL THE ROTTEN PART IS REMOVED.

WE DO NOT MIX GOOD AND BAD DOCTRINE. OUR TOLERANCE FOR EVIL AND ITS CORRUPTING INFLUENCE

Beware = Be aware
Be careful

- (1) Legalism - Galatians
- (2) Per. ty - Corinthians
- (3)

~~*~~ IN THE CHURCH IS INCREDIBLE. THIS TYPE OF TEACHING MUST BE SURGICALLY REMOVED. (COMMENT WITH REFERENCE TO WALTON SHEPHERD)

III. WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FUTURE JUDGMENT - I CORINTHIANS 6:2-3 (A LESSON FROM THE COURTROOM)

THE SUBJECT OF JUDGMENT BRINGS UP THE PICTURE OF THOSE BEING JUDGED, NOT PARTICIPATING IN JUDGMENT. IT IS TRUE THAT NO MORTAL IS QUALIFIED TO BE AN ABSOLUTE JUDGE OF ANYONE ELSE. HOWEVER, THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH THE SAINTS WILL BE ASSOCIATED WITH CHRIST IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECT OF FUTURE JUDGMENT IN TWO AREAS: (1) THE WORLD; (2) ANGELS. ACCORDING TO REVELATION 12:3-4, WHEN SATAN FELL APPROXIMATELY ONE THIRD OF THE ANGELS OF GOD JOINED IN THAT REBELLION. SOME OF THESE EVIL ANGELS ARE SPOKEN OF AS IN JUDGMENT RESERVED FOR A FUTURE DAY. (JUDE 6, II PETER 2:4) HOWEVER, THERE SEEMED TO BE ANOTHER GROUP OF EVIL ANGELS WHO ARE ACTIVE AS PART OF SATAN'S "EVIL EMPIRE" WORKING TODAY. (EPHESIANS 6:11-12) (REVELATION 12:7-9) ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 25:41, HELL WAS PREPARED FOR SATAN AND HIS ANGELS. ALSO, MATTHEW 19:28 INTRODUCES THE SAME PRINCIPLE OF JUDGING TO ISRAEL AS WELL AS THE CHURCH.

IV. WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN RACE - I CORINTHIANS 9:24-27 (A LESSON FROM THE SPORTS STADIUM AND ARENA)

THE WORD RACE IN THE TEXT IS THE GREEK STADIOO OR "RACE COURSE." PLEASE NOTE THE WORD IS RACE COURSE - NOT RACE TRACK! PAUL SAW THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS AN ATHLETIC CONTEST

IN THE ONE INSTANCE OF A RUNNER, IN THE OTHER A WRESTLER OR BOXER. IN THESE VERSES THERE ARE THREE IDEAS ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN RACE:

- (1) THE RACE - ALL PARTICIPATE
- (2) THE RULES - SOME ARE DISQUALIFIED.
- (3) THE REWARD

IN ORDER TO WIN THE RACE OR THE PRIZE, ONE MUST PLAY ACCORDING TO THE RULES. IN THIS PASSAGE, PAUL MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION. SALVATION IS A GIFT. REWARDS ARE EARNED. SALVATION IS FOREVER. REWARDS MAY BE FORFEITED. THE EMPHASIS IN THIS PASSAGE IS ON EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE. FOR EXAMPLE, AN ATHLETE IN A CONTEST MIGHT BE DISQUALIFIED FOR BREAKING THE RULES. THIS INVOLVED HIS SPORTSMANSHIP BUT NOT HIS CITIZENSHIP IN THE COUNTRY. AN ATHLETE MIGHT BE A POOR SPORTSMAN BUT STILL MAINTAIN HIS CITIZENSHIP. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN THE REALM OF ATHLETICS I REFUSE TO WATCH ON TELEVISION - NAMELY JOHN MACENROE - BECAUSE OF HIS TEMPER TANTRUMS I SIMPLY WILL NOT WATCH HIM. IT IS NOT HIS TALENT THAT IS IN QUESTION. IT IS HIS TEMPERAMENT THAT RUINS EVERYTHING. PAUL'S GREAT CONCERN IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY WAS NOT THAT HE WOULD BE LOST AND GO TO HELL BUT THAT HE WOULD BE RESERVED TO THE SHELF OF INACTIVITY WHERE GOD COULD AND WOULD NO LONGER USE HIM FOR THE GLORY OF GOD. IN THIS CONTEST, TOO MANY OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE ARE SEATED IN THE BLEACHERS AND NOT POSITIONED IN THE STARTING BLOCKS. OR, SOME ARE IN THE RESERVED SEATS AND NOT ON THE RACE COURSE. ONE REASON, YOU NEVER GET MUDDY OR BLOODY WATCHING THE CONTEST.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

AUGUST 21, 1988

- JUNE 1993 -
when it's Time To Rest (P.M.)

TAKING TIME TO REST "THE REST WE NEED"

ELSEWHERE!
LARRY K. WALTER
TO B. WALTER
eternally
AUGUSTINE WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID: "THOU HAST MADE US FOR THYSELF AND OUR HEART IS RESTLESS TIL IT FINDS REST IN THEE." EVERY PERSON KNOWS SOMETHING OF THAT RESTLESS DISSATISFACTION OF THE SOUL. IT IS A HUNGER FOR SOMETHING THIS EARTH CANNOT SUPPLY. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH WE INHABIT THIS PLANET BUT ARE HOMESICK FOR SOMEONE, SOMETHING, SOMEWHERE ELSE. THE BIRDS AND BEASTS EAT AND ARE FULL BUT MAN HAS AN ETERNAL LONGING THAT NOTHING BUT GOD CAN SATISFY. A STORY ABOUT A RICH GIRL WHO TRIED EVERY EXPERIENCE SHE COULD TO SUPPRESS THE UNEASINESS IN HER SOUL. SHE CONFESSED ON ONE OCCASION TO HER FATHER THAT SHE HAD ALWAYS WANTED SOMETHING BUT DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS... THERE IS AN ACHES IN THE SOUL THAT WILL NOT GO AWAY UNTIL A PERSON TURNS IN FAITH TO JESUS CHRIST. THE BIBLE USES THE WORD REST TO DESCRIBE THAT RELATIONSHIP TO GOD:

I. THERE IS REST FOR THE SOUL FROM THE BURDEN OF SIN - MATTHEW 11:28-30

THE BURDEN-BEARER WAS A COMMON SIGHT IN PALESTINE. AT ANY CORNER OF ANY TOWN ONE COULD SEE A MAN OR WOMAN STAGGERING UNDER A HEAVY LOAD OF WOOD, WATER OR WASH. JESUS TAUGHT THAT SIN IS A HEAVY LOAD ON THE HEART. HE ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO BRING THEIR SINS TO HIM FOR RELEASE AND RELIEF. RELIGION DOES NOT LIGHTEN BUT HEIGHTENS THE BURDEN. JUDAISM WEIGHED PEOPLE DOWN WITH RULES, REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS. THE SONG WRITER SAID "MY FAITH HAS FOUND A RESTING PLACE, NOT IN DEVICE OR CREED...." THE UNIQUENESS

Alvin's
Progress!

OF CHRISTIANITY IS THAT IT IS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND NOT A PUNITIVE RELIGION. THERE IS AN ANCIENT ARCTIC LEGEND THAT SAYS EARLY EXPLORERS OF THAT REGION ONCE HAD THE CANDLE FLAMES IN THEIR TENTS TO FREEZE INTO A SOLID FORM. THE FROZEN FLAME WAS THEN TAKEN AND WORN AS A GOLDEN ORNAMENT AROUND THE NECK. ONE COMMENTATOR SUGGESTED THAT THE BURNING WORDS OF SCRIPTURE WERE BLAZING TRUTHS AND WARM CONVICTIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD. HOWEVER THE FIRE FROZE IN MANY TEMPLES AND CHURCHES IN A COLD, ARCTIC CLIMATE THAT PROVIDED NO LIGHT AND NO WARMTH TO THE WORLD. COLD CREEDS AND CODES OF CONDUCT ARE FROZEN FORMS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE BUT PROVIDE NO REAL JOY AS DOES A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP TO JESUS CHRIST.

II. THERE IS REST FOR SAINTS WHO ARE TROUBLED IN TRIBULATION - II THESS. 1:7

THE YOUNG CHURCH AT THESSALONICA WAS GOING THROUGH HARDSHIPS AND DIFFICULTIES OF ALL KINDS NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS PERSECUTION FOR THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST. PAUL REMINDED THAT CHURCH THAT PERSECUTION WAS PART OF THE PROCESS OF PREPARING US FOR FUTURE GLORY! (ACTS 14:22)

of John = OT:8
"CONFIRMING THE SOULS OF THE DISCIPLES, AND EXHORTING THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, AND THAT WE MUST THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD." (COMMENT ON THE MUST AND THE MUCH OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.) THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH HAD BEEN PATIENT UNDER PRESSURE. (COMPARE II THESS. 1:4-6)

TEXT: THE WORD TROUBLED IS THE GREEK THLIBOO WHICH IS TRANSLATED NARROW IN MATTHEW 7:13-14. PAUL USED THE WORD SPECIALLY IN THE CORINTHIAN LETTER - II COR. 4:8, II COR. 7:5. "WE ARE HANDICAPPED ON ALL SIDES BUT WE ARE NEVER FRUSTRATED; WE ARE PUZZLED,

BUT NEVER IN DESPAIR. WE ARE PERSECUTED, BUT WE NEVER HAVE TO STAND IT ALONE, WE MAY BE KNOCKED DOWN BUT WE ARE NEVER KNOCKED OUT!

(PHILLIPS TRANSLATION) PHILLIPS ALSO SAYS OF THE 7:5 PASSAGE "ALWAYS GOING THROUGH IT YET NEVER GOING UNDER." (COMMENT REGARDING J. DON JENNINGS ON THESE PASSAGES)

THE WORD TROUBLED IS A PICTURE WORD OF A BOW STRING WITH PRESSURE BEING INCREASED STEADILY. TO BE SURE, SOME TENSION IS GOOD SUCH AS THE TENSION ON A STRING OF AN INSTRUMENT FROM WHICH ONE GETS BEAUTIFUL MUSIC. TOO MUCH CAN DESTROY ITS USEFULNESS AS AN INSTRUMENT! THE CONTEXT WOULD INDICATE THAT THE PRESSURE PRODUCED UPON THE THESSALONIANS HAD TO DO WITH OPPOSITION TO THEIR CHRISTIAN FAITH. (TODAY'S TROUBLES FOR MANY BELIEVERS ARE OFTEN UNRELATED TO FAITH, JUST SIMPLY THE PRESSURES OF FAMILY, WORK, SOCIETY, YOU NAME IT. THE WORDS "REST WITH US" ARE SIGNIFICANT. PAUL WAS NOT WRITING FROM THE COMFORT OF A CLASSROOM. HIS¹ EXPERIENCE GREW OUT OF VISITING CITIES, (COUNTRIES) CHURCHES AND BELLS! PAUL KNEW HOW TO IDENTIFY WITH THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE. THE WORD REST IS THE GREEK ANESIN WHICH MEANS RELIEF FROM TENSION OR IN KEEPING WITH OUR WORD PICTURE, TO PUT SLACK IN THE BOW STRING TO KEEP SOMETHING FROM SNAPPING! QUESTION: HOW DID PAUL SPELL RELIEF?

ANESIN! ONE SECRET OF DEALING WITH THE PRESSURE OF PERSECUTION IS TO LEARN HOW TO REST. (PSALM 91:1) HE THAT DWELLETH IN THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL ABIDE UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY." THERE IS SHELTER UNDER THE SHADOW OF GOD'S PROTECTIVE PROVIDENCE FROM THE PERILS AND PRESSURES OF PERSECUTION.

shelter/shadow

III. THERE IS REST FROM THE RIGORS OF DEDICATED SERVANTS - MARK 6:31

SERVICE

625
Fiona
Bels

THE APOSTLES WERE BUSY TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS. IT WAS AN URGENT MISSION FOR MESSIAH WAS AMONG THEM. YET THESE MEN WERE NOT SUPER-MEN. EVEN THEIR LIVES HAD LIMITATIONS REGARDING HUNGER, THIRST, MONEY, SICKNESS, WEARINESS AND ALL THE THINGS THAT AFFECT OUR LIVES. EVEN IN THE LORD'S WORK, THERE HAD TO BE TIME FOR REST. VANCE HAVNER SAID OF THIS PASSAGE: "JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES COME APART BEFORE YOU COME APART - GO TO PIECES!" THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WORKERS MUST STOP SHOPPING LONG ENOUGH TO SHARPEN THE AX. HAVNER SAID HE HAD NO SYMPATHY FOR THE PERSON WHO ONCE SAID TO HIM BEFORE HAVNER WENT ON VACATION: "THE DEVIL NEVER TAKES A VACATION, WHY SHOULD YOU?" ANSWER: "I DON'T WORK FOR THE DEVIL AND HE DOESN'T PASTOR THIS CHURCH." THERE IS REAL WISDOM IN UNDERSTANDING THAT FISHING IN THE CREEK MAY HELP US FISH FOR CHRIST IN A BETTER FASHION. THIS PASSAGE REMINDS US ALL THAT THERE NEED TO BE NIGHTS AT HOME WITH OUR FAMILY, DAYS AWAY FROM WORK, VACATIONS FOR REST. GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO BURN OUT. HE WANTS US TO BURN ON. RECENTLY, I WAS GIVEN A BOOK ENTITLED "WATCH OUT FOR BURNOUT" WITH AN INSCRIPTION THAT INDICATED I SHOULD NOT BE THE VICTIM OF THIS MODERN-DAY WORD. THE TERM WAS COINED IN 1960 BY A CALIFORNIA PSYCHOANALYST. WHILE LOOKING AT A FEW BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT THERE CAME TO MIND SOME NON-MEDICAL, NON-TECHNICAL AND MAYBE NON-HELPFUL IDEAS ABOUT THIS MATTER OF REST AND RELAXATION. I WILL MENTION 5 GENERAL AREAS OF CONSIDERATION.

Star's husband

we should

(1) TIME. CONTROL YOUR TIME AND DON'T LET IT CONTROL YOU. (1) THINK AHEAD, START EARLY, (2) WRITE IT DOWN. DO IT NOW SHOULD BE OUR WISE USAGE OF TIME. (3) ON SOME DAYS, SUCH AS SATURDAYS OR DAYS OFF, DON'T WEAR A WATCH. KEEP IT TWO OR THREE MINUTES FAST SO YOU WILL BE ON TIME MORE OFTEN. SLOW DOWN. DRIVE UNDER THE SPEED LIMIT ONCE IN A WHILE. LET SOMEONE GET AHEAD OF US IN THE CHECKOUT LINE WITHOUT IRRITATION AND EXPECT FOUL-UPS AND SLOW-DOWNS WITH THE PEOPLE AHEAD OF US. QUESTION: IF GOD WANTED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY, WHAT WOULD HE HAVE TO DO?

I forgot = no excuse!

- (1) TAKE A NUMBER AND WAIT HIS TURN.
- (2) MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH OUR SECRETARY.
- (3) PUT A MESSAGE ON OUR ANSWERING MACHINE.
- (4) PULL US OVER AND GIVE US A SPEEDING TICKET.

(2) LEISURE. IN OUR VERSE, JESUS WAS EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING AWAY FROM OUR WORK AND DOING SOMETHING ELSE OR NOTHING AT ALL. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE BLOCK OUT HOURS, EVENINGS, WEEKENDS AND VACATIONS. COMMENT ABOUT EVENINGS - TURN OFF THE TELEVISION, TURN ON SOME RESTFUL MUSIC, READ AND TALK. ONCE IN A WHILE, A WEEKEND AWAY IS NECESSARY BUT BE CAREFUL OF SATAN'S INCIDIOUS SNARES THAT BECAUSE YOU AND I WORK SO HARD WE DESERVE THE WEEKEND AWAY. WORSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF GOD MAY BE MORE BENEFICIAL THAN A WEEKEND WANDERING AROUND IN LEISURE.

Back nuts

(3) HEALTH. MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT DIET, EXERCISE AND SLEEP. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT A SENSIBLE DIET MAKES SENSE. A WALK IN THE WOODS WITH ONE'S WIFE EITHER EARLY OR LATE IN THE DAY IS GREAT FOR THE BODY AND THE SOUL.

Dr. Martin
his sleep
20 Sept 12
better than 4 after

GOLF, FISHING, TENNIS, WHATEVER IS VITAL.
A PHYSICAL EXAM ON A REGULAR BASIS IS A MUST. WHEN THE NERVES ARE FRAYED AND THE MIND SATURATED, GOING TO BEDEARLY IS TONIC THAT MONEY CANNOT BUY.

(4) WORK. ONE OF THE VERY ARTFUL AND SKILLFUL THINGS IN LIFE IS TO TURN ONE'S WORK INTO A PLEASURABLE EXPERIENCE. TO DO SOMETHING THAT ONE ENJOYS DOING EVERY DAY. OCCASIONALLY SOMEONE WILL SEEK COUNSEL FROM ME ABOUT MAKING A DRAMATIC CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT - SOMETIMES THIS IS ADVISABLE AND SOMETIMES IT IS DISASTROUS. GREAT CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED ESPECIALLY IN MID-LIFE. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT A CHANGE MIGHT NOT BE GOOD. SEEK COUNSEL, COMPANION, CASH AND COMPETENCY TEST.

(5) SPIRITUAL LIFE

(1) PUBLIC CHURCH LIFE - AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE MAKE YOUR CHURCH LIFE AND MINISTRY A BLESSING AND NOT A BURDEN TO YOUR FAMILY. THERE MAY BE OCCASIONS WHEN ONE NEEDS TO BACK AWAY FROM TOO MUCH AND TOO LONG IN THE SAME SETTING IN A LOCAL CHURCH. RELATE WISDOM OF BOARD AND COMMITTEE ROTATION.

(2) PRIVATE LIFE - READ THE BIBLE, STUDY IT, PRAY OVER IT, THINK. FIND A PLACE ON A REGULAR BASIS TO BE ALONE WITH THE LORD. MARK 1:35.

IV. THERE IS FINAL REST FROM THE LABORS OF LIFE - REVELATION 14:13

THIS IS A FAMILIAR FUNERAL TEXT. IT DEALS WITH THE BEAST AND THE BLESSED.

T.G. F.
40-50
fund. in
ult. l. l.

405

Substitution
Ch. to Byron

Q. 257

"Retard?"
Review!
 "Let you know
 say them"

3 "Blesseds"

(A) THE BLESSED DEAD - THE WORDS BLESSED AND DEAD ARE THOUGHT TO BE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE. HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE IN THE LORD, ONE'S DEATH IS NOT THE END BUT THE ETERNAL SIDE OF EXISTENCE. REVELATION 20:6

(B) THE BLESSED REST - THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH ONE'S CHRISTIAN WORK IS NEVER DONE. (COMPARE TO A FARM.) SOMEDAY OUR WORK OVER HERE WILL BE DONE AND OUR WORK OVER THERE WILL BEGIN.

(C) THE BLESSED WORKS - COMPARE REVELATION 22:12. MENTION PASTOR SANFORD AND BUCKFIELD'S SCHOOL IN KENTUCKY.

THE WORD REST IS USED TO CONTRAST LIFESTYLES BOTH HERE AND THE HEREAFTER. COMPARE REVELATION 14:11, REVELATION 14:13.

(HAROLD MORRIS REMINDS US IN HIS RECENT BOOK THAT PRISON IS A PLACE WHERE ONE CANNOT FIND REST. USUALLY CELLS DESIGNED FOR TWO OR THREE ARE FILLED WITH SIX TO EIGHT CONVICTS OR INMATES. IN HIS OWN WORDS THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE IN YOUR FACE, THERE IS LITERALLY NO PRIVACY THERE FOR ANYONE.) SO, DEAR FRIENDS, IF YOU DO NOT KNOW CHRIST, GET ALL THE REST YOU CAN NOW FOR WHEN YOU ARE DEAD THERE IS NO REST FOR THE SOUL. THAT IS FOUND IN CHRIST AND HIM ALONE.

WHEN GOD LAUGHS

PSALM 2:1-12

"THE ONE ENTHRONED IN HEAVEN LAUGHS...."(NIV)
GOD IS NOT LAUGHING BECAUSE HE IS AMUSED IN THIS PSALM, HE IS LAUGHING BECAUSE HE IS AMAZED AT MAN'S FOLLY! THERE IS NOTHING FUNNY OR HUMOROUS ABOUT THIS SCENE. THIS IS THE FIRST MESSIANIC PSALM. (OTHER KINDS ARE HISTORICAL, DEVOTIONAL AND PROPHETIC.) IT RECORDS THE INSOLENT ATTITUDE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE GENTILE NATIONS OF THE WORLD PRIOR TO ARMAGEDDON AND BEFORE GOD'S SWIFT AND STERN RESPONSE IN THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST. THE WORD ARMAGEDDON IS WIDELY MISUSED AND MISUNDERSTOOD. IT APPEARS ONLY ONCE IN SCRIPTURE. (REV. 16:16) THE WORD ARM IS THE HEBREW WORD FOR MOUNTAIN AND THE WORD MAGEDDO IS A REFERENCE TO A TOWN THAT GUARDS THE PASS THAT FORMS THE EASIEST ROUTE BETWEEN THE PLAIN OF SHARON AND THE VALLEY OF JEZREEL. THE AREA ALONG THE PLAIN OF ESDRALEON HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF MANY BATTLES IN HEBREW HISTORY. OUR GUIDE, IN 1974, SAID MORE MILITARY BATTLES HAD BEEN FOUGHT IN THIS AREA THAN ANY OTHER SINGLE SPOT ON THE EARTH. THE AREA IS ACCESSIBLE FROM ALL POINTS OF THE COMPASS STRETCHING SOME 200 MILES NORTH AND SOUTH AND 100 MILES EAST AND WEST. NAPOLEON CALLED IT "THE WORLD'S GREATEST NATURAL BATTLEFIELD." ARMAGEDDON HAS COME TO REPRESENT THAT PLACE WHERE THE LAST AND BLOODIEST BATTLE IN HUMAN HISTORY WILL TAKE PLACE. THE FORCES OF ANTICHRIST AND THE OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD WILL FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION AND EFFORTS ON PALESTINE AND ULTIMATELY CROWD INTO THAT TINY COUNTRY TO UNITE IN ONE LAST EFFORT TO OPPOSE THE MESSIAH. PSALM 2 PICTURES

THE GATHERING OF GENTILE NATIONS FOR THAT GREAT AND FINAL CONFRONTATION. IT WILL BE THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE BATTLE IN HUMAN HISTORY. THERE WILL BE NO SURVIVORS WITH CASUALTIES EXCEEDING 200 MILLION. THE PSALM MAY BE STUDIED IN FOUR STANZAS OF THREE VERSES EACH.

I. STANZA NO. 1: THE VOICE OF THE NATIONS -
VERSES 1-3

THIS PSALM WILL BE FULFILLED WHEN THE KINGS OF THE EARTH GATHER TOGETHER TO FIGHT AGAINST THE LORD AT ARMAGEDDON, (REV. 16:13-16, REV. 19:19-21, JOEL 3:2, ZECHARIAH 12.)

THE WORD "HEATHEN" IS THE HEBREW GOYIM OR GENTILES. "RAGE" CARRIES THE IDEA OF SWARMING, RESTLESS MASSES OF PEOPLE RIOTING, HYSTERICAL, FRENZIED. MAN'S LONG RESENTMENT AND REBELLION AGAINST GOD BREAKS OUT IN AN OUTCRY OR MASSIVE PROTEST MOVEMENT TO RID THE WORLD OF ANY IDEAS ABOUT GOD. IT IS THE LARGEST ANTI-GOD, ANTI-CHRISTIAN CONVENTION EVER CONVENED. IT INVOLVES MASSIVE MILLIONS WHO CONSPIRE TO KICK GOD OUT OF HUMAN AFFAIRS. (IT IS BABEL ALL OVER AGAIN.) HUMAN RELIGIONS MAY LIVE IN TOLERANCE OF ONE ANOTHER BUT FAITH IN THE ONE TRUE GOD, IN THE END OF THIS DISPENSATION, WILL SIMPLY NOT BE TOLERATED!

"IMAGINE" - IT IS THE SAME WORD TRANSLATED MEDITATE IN PSALM 1:2. THE GODLY MEDITATE ON THE THINGS OF GOD, THE UNGODLY MEDITATE OR SCHEME ON HOW TO GET RID OF GOD ALTOGETHER. IT WAS NOT A PASSING THOUGHT BUT A PREMEDITATED PLOT. "VAIN THING" - EMPTY, FUTILE, NO POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS, DOOMED FROM THE START, MAKES NO SENSE WHATSOEVER. "SET" - TO TAKE A POSITION OR STAND, THE BATTLE FORMATION OF AN ARMY. "TAKE COUNSEL TOGETHER" - THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN RELIGION CAN NO LONGER BE PERMITTED.

THE AGENDA AT THIS MASSIVE MEETING IS A DO-AWAY WITH GOD, PURGE GOD FROM THE PLANET MENTALITY. GOD HAS TO GO - U.N RESOLUTION 666! "BANDS... CORDS" - THIS IS THE BIBLE WAY TO DESCRIBE CUTTING ALL TIES AND RESTRAINTS WITH REFERENCE TO DIVINE AUTHORITY. IN THE MINDS OF MEN, GOD IS A FETTER TO BE SEVERED IN ORDER FOR MAN TO BE FREE. THE PURPOSE IS TO CAST OFF ALL MORAL AND ETHICAL RESTRAINTS RELATED TO THE BIBLE AND ADOPT A NEW SYSTEM. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT MARRIAGE, ABORTION, SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE, MORAL STANDARDS, ETC. WILL BE SUBSTITUTED OR SUPPLANTED BY ATHEISM, MATERIALISM, HUMANISM, SECULARISM, AND MILITARISM. MEN WANT NO CONTACT WITH GOD AND NO CONTROL BY HIM. SIMPLY STATED, THIS IS A WORLDWIDE CONVENTION OF GOD HATERS INVOLVING A CAST OF MILLIONS!

II. STANZA NO. 2: THE VOICE OF THE FATHER - VERSES 4-6

THE SCENE SHIFTS FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN. THE CHAOS ON EARTH IS IN CONTRAST TO THE CALM IN HEAVEN. GOD IS SITTING. HE IS AT PERFECT EASE AND IN FULL CONTROL. AS STATED BEFORE, THE LAUGHTER HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HUMOR. IT IS THE LAUGHTER OF STRENGTH THAT WONDERS HOW MAN COULD BE SO FOOLISH AND RIDICULOUS TO THINK HE COULD FIGHT AGAINST GOD. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT AN EMERGENCY SITUATION WITH GOD. HIS ANSWER TO SUCH PUNY PLOTS IS TO NO LONGER DEFER BUT DELIVER JUDGMENT. THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM WILL COME ON SCHEDULE.

III. STANZA NO. 3: THE VOICE OF THE SON - VERSES 7-9

"THE SCEPTER OF THE UNIVERSE WILL BE HELD BY A MAN WITH NAIL PIERCED HANDS," (MCGEE) MESSIAH'S RULE HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS "WITH A ROD OF IRON." THIS IS A REFERENCE TO

(BEAST)

HIS RIGHTEOUS RULE IN WHICH THE BEST WILL NOT ONLY BE BESTED BUT BROKEN! DANIEL DESCRIBED THIS SCENE AS FOLLOWS: "AND IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN SET UP A KINGDOM WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED: AND THE KINGDOM SHALL NOT BE LEFT TO OTHER PEOPLE BUT IT SHALL BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME ALL THE KINGDOMS AND IT SHALL STAND FOREVER." (DANIEL 2:44) THE IRON KINGDOM WILL BE BROKEN AS CLAY BEFORE CHRIST'S IRON SCEPTER." (JAMESON FAWCETT BROWN)

IV. STANZA NO. 4: THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT - VERSES 10-12

THE PHRASE "KISS THE SON" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS EQUIVALENT TO THE NEW TESTAMENT "BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED." BY THE WAY, THE WORD ADORE LITERALLY MEANS "TO THE MOUTH." IN ONE SENSE, A KISS IS AN INDICATION OF RESPECT OR SUBMITTING TO AUTHORITY. IN SEMINARY, THE LATE CARL ARMEDING SPOKE IN CHAPEL FROM THIS PSALM AND I REMEMBER HIS CONCLUDING REMARKS EMPHASIZING EITHER DRAWN TO CHRIST WITH CORDS OF LOVE AND GRACE OR DRAWN BEFORE HIM IN JUDGMENT. BUT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE MUST FACE JESUS CHRIST. HE IS EITHER OUR REFUGE OR OUR JUDGE. DR. VERNON MCGEE LIKENS THIS PSALM TO AN EXPERIENCE HE HAD OF SERVING IN A PASTORATE IN TENNESSEE. SOME FRIENDS INVITED HIM TO A SYMPHONY WHICH WAS NOT THE KIND OF MUSIC HE REALLY WANTED TO HEAR BUT IN ORDER TO BE POLITE HE ACCEPTED THE INVITATION AND DESCRIBES HOW AT THE PRELIMINARY PART OF THE SYMPHONY PEOPLE CAME OUT IN SHIRT SLEEVES, TUNED UP THE INSTRUMENTS WITH ALL KINDS OF DISCORDANT AND CONFUSING SOUNDS. THEY DISAPPEARED INTO

THE WINGS AND AFTER A FEW MINUTES THE HOUSE
LIGHTS WERE DOWN, THE LIGHTS ON THE STAGE
CAME UP AND THE MUSICIANS APPEARED THIS TIME
WITH THEIR COATS ON AND A HUSH FELL ACROSS
THE AUDIENCE, THE SPOTLIGHT FOCUSED ON THE
CONDUCTOR, APPLAUSE, A BOW, A SILENCE IN THE
AUDITORIUM AND THEN WHEN THE BATON CAME DOWN
BEAUTIFUL MUSIC, IN HARMONY, GIVING THE
AUDIENCE GOOSE PIMPLES. MCGEE'S COMMENT WAS
AS FOLLOWS: "TODAY WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE
EVERY MAN IS TOOTING HIS OWN LITTLE HORN.
EVERY LITTLE GROUP WANTS TO BE HEARD. EVERY-
BODY WANTS TO TELL WHAT HE THINKS. EVERYBODY'S
PLAYING HIS OWN LITTLE FIDDLE AND IT IS A
MELODY OF DISCORD. EVERYTHING IS OUT OF TUNE.
ONE OF THESE DAYS THE SPOTLIGHT IS GOING ON
AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL COME."

WHEN HASTE IS NOT WASTE

THERE ARE SEVERAL PHRASES USED TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE WHO ARE IN A HURRY. THEY ARE SAID TO BE: "GO GETTERS", "HIT THE GROUND RUNNING", "LIVING IN THE FAST LANE." WE RATIONALIZE THAT IF TIME IS MONEY THE FASTER ONE MOVES THE MORE MONEY HE WILL MAKE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE THOSE WHO SAY THAT THESE THREE WORDS ARE LINKED TOGETHER: HURRY WORRY AND BURY. THAT RUSH AND PUSH SUGGEST A BREATHLESS PACE THAT COULD LEAVE ONE BREATHLESS! HOWEVER, THE QUESTION ARISES ARE THERE TIMES WHEN HASTE IS NOT ONLY DESIRABLE BUT DEMANDED? TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION, ONE SHOULD EXAMINE THE WORD RUN IN SCRIPTURE. IT IS USED IN AT LEAST TWO PRIMARY WAYS:

- (1) RUN TO AVOID A CRISIS. THAT IS RUN AWAY.
- (2) RUN TO ACCEPT A CHALLENGE. THAT IS RUN TOWARD IT AND GRASP IT FIRMLY.

THIS STUDY WILL SUGGEST FOUR SITUATIONS IN SCRIPTURE WHERE HASTE IS REQUIRED.

1. THE HASTE OF YOUTHFUL OBEDIENCE -

I SAMUEL 3:5

THESE CHAPTERS RECORD A TIME IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY WHEN MORAL, POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL STANDARDS WERE IN DECLINE. ~~THE DARK WAS IN THE LAND~~ PERMISSIVENESS AND POLYGAMY WERE WIDESPREAD AND POPULAR. EVEN ELI'S SONS WERE A SAD REPRESENTATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD. HEAVEN WAS SILENT. THERE WAS NO VOICE FROM GOD AS IN THE DAYS OF GREAT LEADERSHIP IN THE PAST. (COMPARE

A godly life in a ungodly world.
 (So Moses - Egypt Daniel - Babylon)
 Become God's Spokesman

ABRAHAM AND MOSES) A BABY WAS BORN WHO WOULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY AND HELP CHECK THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DECADENCE OF THE AGE. HIS EARLY LIFE REFLECTED HIS SENSITIVITY TO THE THINGS OF GOD AND HIS AVAILABILITY TO GOD'S CALL. BY THE WAY, IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE LORD CALLED HIM IN THE HOUSE OF GOD - A GOOD PLACE TO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD! WHEN SAMUEL HEARD GOD'S CALL, HE OBEYED. THE WORD RAN SUGGESTS THE EAGERNESS, ENTHUSIASM AND EXCITEMENT HE BROUGHT TO DIVINE SERVICE. THERE ARE FIVE AREAS OF AUTHORITY WHERE OBEDIENCE IS REQUIRED: (1) PARENTS; (2) SCHOOL; (3) WORK; (4) GOVERNMENT; (5) GOD. THE TRUE TEST OF FAITH IN GOD IS OBEDIENCE. WHEN A PERSON COMES TO CHRIST HE IS CHARACTERIZED AS "A CHILD OF OBEDIENCE." (1 PETER 1:14) THE WORD OBEDIENCE MEANS "TO HEAR." NOT JUST A PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE BUT RATHER ACTIVE RESPONSE TO THE WORD OF GOD. EVERYONE MUST OBEY SOMETHING OR SOMEONE. IT MAY NOT ALWAYS BE VOLUNTARY, ON SOME OCCASIONS MANDATORY, BUT OBEY WHEN WE MUST. HANNAH BEGAN TEACHING SAMUEL AT AN EARLY AGE AND WHAT HE LEARNED IS REFLECTED IN HIS GREAT SERVICE TO GOD AND ISRAEL. EVEN ELI, THE VETERAN PRIEST, DID NOT RECOGNIZE GOD SPEAKING TO SAMUEL. (RELATE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.) THE POINT I WISH TO EMPHASIZE IN THIS PASSAGE IS THE IMMEDIACY OF SAMUEL'S OBEDIENCE. (COMPARE GENESIS 22:2 AND THE PHRASE "TAKE NOW...." THERE ARE SOME DECISIONS WHICH MAY BE DELAYED AND INDEED IT MIGHT BE DESIRABLE TO DELAY THE DECISION TO A LATER TIME. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME DECISIONS THAT NEED TO BE MADE NOW AND TO DELAY IS DANGEROUS. (COMPARE MATTHEW 8:21) THIS PASSAGE IS NOT TEACHING DISRESPECT TO PARENTS BUT THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP. WHEN IT COMES TO DISCIPLESHIP,

"use
To
Be"
To

"I say"

MRS. FRANTZ.
Pleasant Valley
"He called... I did
not respond - my
child"

HALF-HEARTEDNESS WILL NOT DO. SAMUEL WAS OPEN TO THE OPPORTUNITIES WHICH GOD GAVE TO HIM.

II. THE HASTE OF RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT -

MARK 10:17

WHEN JESUS CAME TO TOWN, HE CAUSED A STIR. PEOPLE WANTED TO SEE, HEAR AND IN SOME CASES TOUCH HIM. THE YOUNG MAN IN THIS STORY WAS VERY ATTRACTIVE. HE HAD ALL OF THE NATURAL QUALITIES THAT MAKE PEOPLE APPEALING. HE WAS RICH, YOUNG, ENERGETIC, COURTEOUS, CHARMING, HUMBLE, RESPECTFUL, INQUISITIVE, RELIGIOUS. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW A YOUNG PERSON RUN TO CHURCH? AS A MATTER OF FACT, MOST CHURCHES WOULD HAVE WELCOMED SUCH A PERSON INTO ITS MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP SIMPLY BECAUSE HE HAD SO MUCH TO GIVE AND WAS SO WILLING TO DO SO. BY ALL HUMAN STANDARDS HE WOULD HAVE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS A GOOD PERSON. ONE WORD IN THE TEXT POINTS TO HIS DEEP-SEEDED PROBLEM. THE WORD LACK IS TRANSLATED COME SHORT IN ROMANS 3:23. THE RICH YOUNG RULER WAS WILLING TO SIGN UP OR JOIN THE JESUS MOVEMENT. HE HAD RESPECT FOR JESUS BUT DID NOT WANT TO RECEIVE HIM. SALVATION WAS A GOAL TO ATTAIN AND NOT A GIFT TO ACCEPT. HE WAS WILLING TO BRING AVAILABILITY, ASSETS AND AGGRESSIVENESS TO JESUS AND DO HIS VERY BEST TO MAKE JESUS MOVEMENT POPULAR. HOWEVER, IN HIS OWN EYES HE WAS NOT A SINNER WHO NEEDED TO BE SAVED BUT SOMEBODY SPECIAL BY HIS OWN STANDARDS. JESUS POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS A PRISONER - A PRISONER OF HIS OWN POSSESSIONS. THIS WAS BOTH THE GREATEST AND SADDEST DAY IN THIS MAN'S LIFE. HE CAME RUNNING TO JESUS BUT WALKED AWAY UNDER A DEEP CLOUD. HE WALKED OUT OF THE SUNSHINE OF GOD'S GRACE INTO THE STORM OF HIS OWN GREED. HE

Jesus must do more than reside in
our hearts, He must possess them!
(V. Hauner)

Triple
"A"

See
www.
Bible

CAME IN A HURRY TO JESUS BUT WENT AWAY IN HEAVINESS. WHEN HE TURNED HIS BACK ON JESUS, THERE IS NO RECORD IN SCRIPTURE THAT HE EVER SAW OR SPOKE TO JESUS AGAIN - EVER. IT WAS TERRIBLY IMPORTANT THAT HE RESPOND THAT DAY OR FOREVER FORSAKE POSSIBILITY OF DISCIPLESHIP. (THE STORY IS TOLD OF THREE MEN WHO WENT TO NEW YORK FOR A BIG WEEKEND. THEY HAD BEEN ARMY BUDDIES AND REGISTERED AT A FANCY HOTEL AND RENTED THE FINEST SUITE ON THE 29TH FLOOR. AFTER THEY HAD SETTLED IN THE ROOM THEY WENT OUT FOR DINNER AND A NIGHT ON THE TOWN. THEY RETURNED IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS TO DISCOVER THAT THE ELEVATOR WAS NOT WORKING. THEY JOKED ABOUT WALKING TO THEIR ROOM BUT BEGAN THE PAINSTAKING TASK OF CRAWLING STEP BY STEP SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY TO THE 29TH FLOOR. THE FIRST ASKED THE SECOND TO UNLOCK THE DOOR, THE SECOND, THE THIRD ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THEY HAD FORGOTTEN THE KEY. TWENTY NINE FLOORS UP AND THEY HAD FORGOTTEN THE KEY. MANY PEOPLE, LIKE THE RICH YOUNG RULER, ARE CRAWLING AND GROPING UP THE STAIRWAY OF GOOD WORKS TRYING TO MAKE IT TO HEAVEN. THE PROBLEM IS THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN THE KEY AND THE KEY IS CALLED GRACE AND IT IS AN ELEVATOR OF GRACE, NOT A STAIRWAY OF GOOD WORKS!)

III. THE HASTE OF ONE ON ONE EVANGELISM -

Acts 8:30

THERE ARE TWO OUTSTANDING UNUSUAL FEATURES ABOUT THIS STORY:

- (1) PHILIP WAS CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL, CITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN - "SOULS FOR SAMARIA." THE SPIRIT OF GOD DIRECTED HIM TO LEAVE THAT SUCCESSFUL MEETING AND TRAVEL TO GAZA TO WITNESS TO ONE BLACK MAN IN A REMOTE PART

John Hamilton
600-0

OF THE COUNTRY. SIMPLY STATED, HE LEFT THE CROWDS OF SAMARIA TO GO TO TO A CHARIOT IN GAZA. ON THE SURFACE, THIS WOULD SEEM LIKE A VERY UNWISE MOVE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHOEVER HEARD OF A PASTOR OF A CHURCH OF A THOUSAND PEOPLE RESIGNING TO ACCEPT A CHURCH OF ONE HUNDRED! IT ALMOST NEVER HAPPENS BUT MAYBE IT IS BECAUSE MANY CHRISTIAN WORKERS ARE NOT LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

(2) A CHRISTIAN WORKER WHO ACTUALLY RAN OR HURRIED TO DO PERSONAL WORK. MANY IGNORE OR MAKE EXCUSES OR RUN FROM THE TASK - AS IN THE CASE OF JONAH - OR CREEP UP TO THE RESPONSIBILITY BUT IT IS ALMOST NEVER SEEN - A PERSON RUNNING TO DO THE WORK OF GOD WITH SUCH ENTHUSIASM. ONLY A SPIRIT-FILLED PERSON COULD EVER VIEW THE LORD'S WORK IN THIS GOD-ORDAINED FASHION. (ONE OF THE MOST ARRESTING STORIES I HAVE READ IN RECENT YEARS IS THE STORY IN LOVING GOD OF A DOCTOR NAMED BORIS KORNFELD WHO WAS IMPRISONED IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP FOR A POLITICAL CRIME - WHICH WAS THEIR WAY OF GETTING RID OF HIM BECAUSE HE DID NOT ACCEPT THEIR PHILOSOPHY. IN PRISON, KORNFELD CAME IN CONTACT WITH A DEVOUT WELL-EDUCATED CHRISTIAN WHO LED HIM TO CHRIST. DURING HIS TENURE IN PRISON, KORNFELD WITNESSED TO ONE PATIENT SHORTLY BEFORE KORNFELD DIED. IT MAY HAVE BEEN THE ONLY PERSON HE EVER SHARED HIS TESTIMONY WITH BUT THAT PATIENT'S NAME WAS ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN. (SOLZHENITSYN IS THE WRITER WHO BLEW THE WHISTLE ON THE TYRANNY OF RUSSIA AND ITS POLITICAL PRISONERS AS IT RELATED TO THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO.)

Ben Louse
Northam Ham - B. Grah
F. Brown - A. Rogers
(Research)
(1) Kennedy & Coop!

IV. THE HASTE OF PARENTAL FORGIVENESS -

LUKE 15:20

THE FATHER IN THIS STORY IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED AND UNDERRATED. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THE PRODIGAL SON HAD NO REGARD FOR HIS FATHER'S FORTUNE OR HIS FEELINGS. THE SON DID NOT RETURN HOME UNTIL HE HAD THROWN EVERYTHING AWAY - INCLUDING HIS HEALTH AND WHATEVER GOOD NAME HIS FATHER MIGHT HAVE HAD. IN THIS STORY, THE FATHER REPRESENTS IN A SYMBOLICAL WAY GOD THE FATHER. IT IS THE ONLY PASSAGE, TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THAT SPEAKS OF GOD IN A HURRY! THE TERM RAN IN THE TEXT SPEAKS OF HOW GLAD THE FATHER WAS TO SEE HIS WAYWARD SON. IT ALSO SHOWS THAT THE FATHER WAS QUICK TO FORGIVE HIS ERRING SON. THE SON FIRST SAID GIVE ME AND THEN FORGIVE ME. THE PRODIGAL SON WENT TO THE FAR COUNTRY TO LIVE HIGH ON THE HOG AND WOUND UP LIVING WITH THEM. WHEN HIS FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS WERE GONE, HE BEGAN TO THINK OF HOME, FAMILY AND PLENTY. IN A SENSE, THE PRODIGAL FORGOT HIS FATHER BUT THE FATHER NEVER FORGOT HIS SON. I WOULD SUPPOSE THAT EVERY DAY OF THE FATHER'S LIFE THAT WAYWARD BOY WAS HEAVY ON HIS HEART. TRULY, THERE IS NO SORROW IN LIFE LIKE THE SORROW OF A WAYWARD CHILD. FINALLY, WHEN THE PRODIGAL CAME TO HIMSELF IT WASN'T HIS FATHER'S WEALTH HE WANTED BUT HIS FATHER'S WILL. THE EMPHASIS OF THE STORY IS THAT WHEN THE PRODIGAL RETURNED THE FATHER DID NOT SCOLD HIM AND BRING HIM IN THE BACK DOOR BUT RATHER MANIFESTED GENUINE LOVE AND NOT A SINGLE WORD OF CONDEMNATION. IN EXCHANGE FOR RAGS HE GAVE A ROBE. ADD TO THAT A RING, A SYMBOL OF HONOR AND AFFECTION, AND SHOES, A SIGN OF SONSHIP IN CONTRAST TO SERVANTSHIP.

Monica
8:55 AM

-7- when did he —
die? —
Dead to the will of ^{Father}

SONS WORE SANDALS. WHEN THE FATHER REFERRED
TO HIS SON AS DEAD BUT NOW ALIVE, WHAT DID
HE MEAN? OBVIOUSLY HE IS NOT REFERRING
TO PHYSICAL DEATH. IT IS A REFERENCE TO HIS
SPIRITUAL CONDITION. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER
IS LIKE THE PRODIGAL'S FATHER. HE IS WAITING
FOR US TO COME HOME. THE SAME FATHER WHO
WAITED AND WANTED HIS WAYWARD SON TO COME
HOME WAITS FOR US TO MOVE IN HIS DIRECTION
AND HE WILL MOVE QUICKLY TO US. MAKE THAT
FIRST STEP. 

New Hope - Ran Down
the isle!!!
S

"MADE WHOLE"

JOHN 5:15

Only miracle Jesus
did in Jerusalem.
"The Impotent meets
the Omnipotent" (Scribble)

THE WORD WHOLE MEANS TO BE SOUND IN HEALTH. IT IS THE WORD FOR HYGIENE. (A SYSTEM OF PRINCIPLES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE GOOD HEALTH.) WE ACCEPT THE LIMITATIONS AND LOSS OF HEALTH BUT FOR MOST OF US THE DESIRE IS TO BE WHOLE IN EVERY WAY. THIS IS THE STORY OF A MAN WHO WAS NOT WHOLE UNTIL HE MET JESUS.

I. THE WAITING MULTITUDE - VERSES 1-4

IT WAS FEAST TIME IN JERUSALEM. ^{Passover?} YET FOR MANY, IT WAS NOT A VERY FESTIVE OCCASION. (WHICH FEAST WE ARE NOT SURE.) THE PLACE WAS BESIDE A POOL. IT WAS NEAR THE SHEEP GATE. (ANCIENT JERUSALEM SURROUNDED BY A WALL, THE CITY WAS ENTERED THROUGH SEVERAL MAIN GATES. THE SHEEP GATE WAS WHERE ANIMAL SACRIFICES FOR THE TEMPLE WERE BROUGHT.) THERE ARE SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS IN THE TEXT ABOUT THE MULTITUDE:

(A) IT WAS A SIZABLE MULTITUDE - VERSE 3

(ΜΕΓΑΛΗ) ("great")

THIS TERM WAS USED TO DESCRIBE THE HEAVENLY HOST OF LUKE 2:13, FISH IN THE SEA LUKE 5:6, STARS IN THE SKY, HEBREWS 11:12 AND MAN'S MANY SINS, JAMES 5:20. THE VERY TERM MULTITUDE WOULD SUGGEST IT WAS A SUBSTANTIAL CROWD.

"a Spa for the sick" i.e. a mineral spa with curation

(B) IT WAS A SICK MULTITUDE - VERSE 3

Properties?

THE TERMS IMPOTENT OR AILING, BLIND, HALT OR LAME AND WITHERED DESCRIBE THEIR CONDITION. THE TERM WITHERED IS USED ELSEWHERE TO DESCRIBE A FIG TREE THAT HAD DRIED UP AND DIED OR SOMETHING THAT HAS SHRIVELED UP FOR

"Waiting" = the waiting masses - helpless and needy - they need Jesus!

John 5:28

2 Kings 7:2

Sister Mother

(C) IT WAS PUBLIC - VERSE 14

WHAT JESUS DID FOR THIS MAN WAS A MATTER OF PUBLIC OBSERVATION AND RECORD AND NOW THAT HE IS CURED HE WAS LOCATED IN THE TEMPLE - A PLACE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP. THERE IS A PUBLIC SIDE OF CONVERSION. "WHOSOEVER THEREFORE SHALL CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN, HIM WILL I CONFESS BEFORE MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL DENY ME BEFORE ME, HIM WILL I ALSO DENY BEFORE MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN." (MATTHEW 10:32-33) SECRET DISCIPLES DO NOT MAKE STRONG DISCIPLES. CONFESSION SPEAKS FOR THE COURAGE OF ONE'S CONVICTIONS.

(D) IT WAS PROHIBITIVE - VERSE 14

THE PHRASE "SIN NO MORE" LITERALLY MEANS "NO LONGER CONTINUE TO LIVE A LIFE OF SIN." IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE ANYTHING WORSE THAN 38 YEARS OF SUFFERING BUT HERE IS A CLEAR WARNING ABOUT IDENTIFYING ONESELF WITH JESUS AND CONTINUING TO LIVE THE LIFESTYLE OF THE PAST. QUESTION: DO YOU REALLY WANT TO BE SAVED? DO YOU REALLY WANT YOUR SINS FORGIVEN? DO YOU REALLY WANT PEACE AND SATISFACTION IN YOUR SOUL? DO YOU REALLY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE? THAT IS ENTIRELY IN YOUR HANDS WITH THE POWER TO CHOOSE.

It not saved - it is not God's fault - it's your choice!

"a lottery for the lame"

LOSS OF VITALITY. THERE WERE NO HOSPITALS, INSURANCE AGENCIES, NURSES, DOCTORS, GOVERNMENT MEDICAL PROGRAMS AND NOT VERY MUCH COULD OR WOULD BE DONE FOR THE SICK. FOR MANY, THEY LIVED AND DIED IN THEIR HOMES, BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, OR IN PUBLIC PLACES. IT WAS A SAD PICTURE TO SEE THEM CLOGGING THE HIGHWAYS AND MARKET PLACES OF CITIES, SLOWLY DYING WITH NONE TO HELP.

A. Sizable
B. Sick

(C) IT WAS A STATIONARY MULTITUDE - VERSE 3

THE WORD LIE SUGGESTS THE SERIOUS NATURE OF THE PROBLEM. THEY WERE IN LARGE MEASURE IMMOBILE, UNABLE TO MOVE UNDER THEIR OWN POWER. THERE WAS SOMETHING A BIT SCARY WITH SUCH A LARGE CROWD OF PEOPLE AND NOT MANY OF THEM MOVING AROUND - AN ERRIE SIGHT.

(D) IT WAS A SUPERSTITIOUS MULTITUDE - VERSE 4 (See add. info ←)

10th hospital in S.C. (B. & P.)

1500 children - Down's Syndrome

one that
could
never
"live"

SOMEONE HAS CALLED THIS "A LOTTERY FOR THE LAME." ONLY A FEW WOULD BE HELPED AND THE MULTITUDE IN LARGE MEASURE LEFT TO ITS MISERY. THERE ARE TEXTUAL PROBLEMS REGARDING ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS WHICH I CHOOSE NOT TO TOUCH. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT VERSE 4 REFERS TO A JEWISH TRADITION OR SUPERSTITION WHICH ATTRIBUTED HEALING PROPERTIES TO THE WATER THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS. WHETHER IT ACTUALLY OCCURRED OR NOT IS HARD TO TELL BUT IN ALL PROBABILITY SOME PEOPLE WERE HELPED OR THEY WOULD NOT HAVE COME IN SUCH LARGE MEASURES SO OFTEN TO THE POOL. THE POOL SEEMS TO HAVE BUBBLED UP FROM TIME TO TIME AND JOHN IS SIMPLY RELATING THE POPULAR IDEA ABOUT THE POOL. THE BELIEF IN THE SACREDNESS OF RIVERS AND STREAMS HAS LONG

"holy water" not a new idea

EXISTED IN THE MINDS OF MEN. THE GANGES RIVER OF INDIA HAS BEEN A PLACE TO WHICH PEOPLE HAVE FLOCKED FOR YEARS. APPARENTLY, ACCORDING TO THE TRADITION, WHEN THE WATERS BUBBLED IT WAS FOR A LIMITED TIME AND ONLY A FEW WERE CURED. THE SAD PART ABOUT THIS SUPERSTITION WAS THAT HELP CAME FOR THE MAN WHO NEEDED IT LEAST, NAMELY, THE ONE WHO COULD WALK INTO THE POOL. LESSON: THE IMPOTENT MULTITUDES PRESENTS A BROADER PICTURE THAN PHYSICAL HEALING. IT IS A PICTURE OF ALL MEN, NAMELY, THE WAITING MASSES WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY NEEDY AND SPIRITUALLY HELPLESS. THEY ARE IN LARGE MEASURE SUPERSTITIOUSLY WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN THAT MAY NEVER HAPPEN FOR THEM. SIMPLY STATED, THESE VERSES POINT TO THE FACT THAT MEN NEED JESUS. MATI. 9:36 *

II. THE WITHERED MAN - VERSES 5-7

(A) THE ILLNESS - VERSE 5, 6

THE WORDS LIE, LONG TIME, 38 YEARS SPEAK OF THE CHRONIC ILLNESS OF ONE OF THE WORST CASES AT THE POOL. THIS MAN HAD BEEN LAME LONGER THAN JESUS HAD LIVED ON EARTH. HIS LIFE WAS ONE OF SICKNESS ALL THE TIME. THERE WAS NOTHING ATTRACTIVE OR APPEALING ABOUT THE MAN. HE HAD NO CLAIMS ON JESUS - NONE. HE WAS JUST A SICK MAN - ONE IN THE MIDST OF A MULTITUDE.

(B) THE INQUIRY - VERSE 6

THIS IS ONE OF THE STRANGEST QUESTIONS IN THE BIBLE. ONE WOULD ASSUME THAT ANY PERSON WHO HAD BEEN SICK FOR 38 YEARS WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE COMPLETELY CURED. HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE. JESUS

Man must recognize his "impotent" condition & want to do something about it - or better let Jesus do it!

KNEW WHAT SOME PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE LEARNED ONLY RECENTLY, THAT IS, THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE SICK. ILLNESS CAN BE AN ESCAPE FROM REALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. IT MAY BECOME THE MEANS WHEREBY PEOPLE GET SYMPATHY AND ATTENTION WHICH THEY MIGHT NOT NORMALLY RECEIVE. FOR THEM, LIFE IS COMFORTABLE BECAUSE HE IS WAITED ON HAND AND FOOT AND PERMITTED TO RETREAT FROM THE DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE BY BEING A PERPETUAL PATIENT. (ONE PSYCHOLOGIST TELLS THE STORY OF A YOUNG LADY WHO WORKED AT A JOB WHICH SHE DISLIKED VERY MUCH. HER ONLY REASON FOR WORKING ON THE JOB WAS THE INCOME IT PROVIDED. SHE BECAME ENGAGED TO A YOUNG MAN OF MEANS AND PROMINENCE. HOWEVER, AFTER A TIME THE ENGAGEMENT WAS BROKEN. FROM THAT DAY SHE REFUSED TO EAT AND A LONG SERIES OF APPOINTMENTS WITH DOCTORS AND FINALLY WITH A PSYCHOLOGIST REVEALED THE ROOT OF HER PROBLEM. HER ILLNESS BECAME THE ESCAPE SHE DESIRED TO GET AWAY FROM THEIR ENGAGEMENT. SHE WAS SICK FOR ONE REASON - SHE WANTED TO BE SICK! AS LONG AS SHE REMAINED IN THAT FRAME OF MIND, NO ONE COULD HELP HER. JESUS KNEW THAT ONE ESSENTIAL FOR CURING THIS INVALID MAN WAS THAT HE MUST WANT TO BE CURED! THERE IS A SPIRITUAL PARALLEL. THE REASON MEN ARE NOT SAVED IS NOT BECAUSE THEY CANNOT BE SAVED BUT BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT BE SAVED. ("AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE." - JOHN 5:40) IN ONE OF HIS BOOKS, PAUL LITTLE POINTS OUT WHY MANY PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW CHRIST AS SAVIOUR. IT IS NOT BECAUSE IT IS NOT RATIONAL OR SENSIBLE TO DO SO, BUT RATHER THEY HAVE SET THEIR MINDS AGAINST THE GOSPEL AND ARE DETERMINED NOT TO BELIEVE IT NO MATTER WHAT THE EVIDENCE MAY SAY TO THE CONTRARY. ONE STUDENT IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION "ARE YOU GOING TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN?" ANSWERED, "NO." "WHY NOT?" "IT WOULD MESS UP MY LIFESTYLE." THAT IS THE REAL ISSUE.

The pellet had been "Carry him
-5-
for 38 yrs - now you caught -
set up!"

THAT YOUNG MAN DID NOT HAVE INTELLECTUAL PROBLEMS, HE HAD MORAL PROBLEMS WITH THE GOSPEL! NO PERSON WILL EVER BE SPIRITUALLY WHOLE UNTIL HE WANTS AND WILLS TO BE!

(C) THE ILLUSION - VERSE 7 *Looking for help in the wrong place!*

THE PHRASE, "I HAVE NO MAN" REVEALS THAT THIS POOR MAN WAS LOOKING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. HE EXPECTED MEN TO DO WHAT GOD MUST DO. THERE IS NO MAN ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH WHO CAN FORGIVE ANOTHER MAN'S SIN. THE METHODS OF MEN IN DEALING WITH THIS MAN'S ILLS HAD BEEN TRIED FOR 38 YEARS AND HE WAS NO NEARER HEALING. HE THOUGHT THE SOLUTION TO HIS PROBLEM WAS IN THE GREAT POOL BUT INSTEAD IT WAS IN THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. IN MODERN TERMS THIS IDEA IS EXPRESSED BY PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT CHURCH, THE RIGHT PASTOR, THE RIGHT PSYCHOLOGIST, THE RIGHT MARRIAGE COUNSELOR, THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT, THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES AND THEY, LIKE THIS MAN, HAVE LOOKED IN EVERY DIRECTION EXCEPT TO GOD. MOST PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR SPIRITUAL HELP FROM SOME RELIGIOUS RITUAL THAT LEAVES THEM AS HELPLESS AND HOPELESS AS EVER. ONE IS REMINDED OF NAAMAN - II KINGS 5:11: "BUT NAAMAN WAS FURIOUS AND WENT AWAY, AND SAID, BEHOLD I THOUGHT, HE WILL SURE COME OUT TO ME, AND STAND, AND CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD HIS GOD, AND STRIKE HIS HAND OVER THE PLACE, AND RECOVER THE LEPER." FOR 38 YEARS, THIS MAN'S IDEAS AND THE IDEAS OF OTHERS HAD SIMPLY NOT WORKED AND NEVER WOULD BUT IT IS A HARD LESSON TO LEARN.

Point: Men want men to do what only God can do - make us whole spiritually.

Miracles is an event in nature
so extraordinary in force & power
that it is beyond human ability
to explain or duplicate. i.e. a manifestation
of supernatural power, the results of which cannot be
explained by natural or human efforts.

III. THE WONDERFUL MIRACLE - VERSES 8:25 ^{low}

TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THIS IS THE ONLY MIRACLE JESUS PERFORMED INSIDE THE CITY OF JERUSALEM. A CAREFUL LOOK WILL REVEAL SEVERAL INTERESTING FACTORS ABOUT IT:

(A) IT WAS PERMANENT - VERSE 9

THE WORD WALK IS IN A PARTICULAR TENSE THAT MEANS TO KEEP ON WALKING. IN OTHER WORDS, THIS MAN DID NOT FOLD WHEN THE HEALER'S TENT WAS FOLDED. THE WORD CURED IN VERSE 10 MEANS HE DID NOT KEEP GOING BACK FOR AN ADJUSTMENT EVERY WEEK OR TWO. HIS HEALING WAS IMMEDIATE AND COMPLETE. IT WAS PERMANENT AND NOT A PROCESS. THIS MAN DID NOT LEARN TO WALK BUT SIMPLY LEAPED TO HIS FEET AND KEPT ON WALKING. (APPLY TO SALVATION - WE DON'T KEEP GOING BACK FOR ANOTHER DOSE.)

(B) IT WAS PROVOCATIVE - VERSE 10

THE PROBLEM SEEMS TO BE THE PALLET OR BED. THE BED WAS THE SYMBOL OF SOMETHING. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT ALL THIS MAN HAD TO DO WAS DROP THE BED AND NOTHING WOULD HAVE BEEN SAID. THE PRESENCE OF THAT BED MADE THE TRUTH OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM STAND OUT IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREVIOUS CONDITION. RELIGION HAD NOT HELPED HIM TO WALK BUT THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT HE SUBMIT TO THE SYSTEM. THE FACT THAT HE COULD WALK WAS BARELY NOTICED! THE FACT THAT HE WAS CURED WAS OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE. THIS IS TRUE OF RELIGION TODAY. AS SPURGEON HAS SAID: "THEY (RELIGION) HABITUALLY IGNORE THE FACT OF CONVERSION. IT IS NOT WORTH THEIR ATTENTION." THEIR EMPHASIS IS NOT GETTING PEOPLE SAVED BUT INTO THE SYSTEM.

as a meeting
Parents & cults!

PERSECUTOR TURNED PREACHER

GALATIANS 1:13-24

REVIEW: KEY VERSE 5:1, KEY WORD - LIBERTY.
PROBLEM - LEGALISM.

FROM NERO TO NOW, PERSECUTORS HAVE BEEN PART OF SATAN'S PROGRAM TO GET RID OF CHRISTIANITY. NONE HAVE BEEN MORE DETERMINED TO ACCOMPLISH THAT OBJECTIVE THAN SAUL OF TARSUS. IN THE MIDST OF HIS EFFORT TO RID THE EARTH OF THE NAME OF JESUS, JESUS SPOKE TO SAUL AND SAUL RECEIVED HIM AS SAVIOR - AN INCREDIBLE CONVERSION! BY THE WAY, SAUL'S CONVERSION REMINDS ALL READERS THAT GOD SPECIALIZES IN HARD CASES. DON'T GIVE UP ON THOSE WHO SEEM HARD TO REACH. IN THIS PASSAGE, PAUL REHEARSED HIS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE WITH THE GALATIANS.

I. PAUL'S CAREER IN JUDAISM - V. 13-14

PAUL HAD A RELIGIOUS REPUTATION. THEY HAD "HEARD" OF HIM. HE HAD MADE A MARK IN THE JEW'S RELIGION, HE WAS SOMEONE TO BE RECKONED WITH, A ONE-MAN MOVEMENT. THE PHRASE "JEW'S RELIGION" POINTS TO THE FACT THAT PAUL WAS A DEVOUT JEW. HE WAS PROUD OF HIS HERITAGE. FROM AS EARLY AS 6 YEARS OF AGE, HE HAD LEARNED TO READ AND MEMORIZE PARTS OF THE PENTATEUCH AND THE PSALMS. AT AGE 13, HE BECAME A "SON OF THE LAW." HE READ THE SCRIPTURES IN THE SYNAGOGUE, ANSWERED QUESTIONS BEFORE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND FROM THAT POINT ON WAS CONSIDERED A MAN. PAUL CONTINUED HIS EDUCATION AS A RABBI AND AS A PHARISEE, THE MOST RESPECTED RELIGIOUS FRATERNITY IN ISRAEL. PAUL ALSO SAT AT THE

FEET OF GAMALEIEL, ONE OF THE MOST LEARNED MEN IN ONE OF THE BEST UNIVERSITIES IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. THE WORD ¹"PROFITED" IN THE TEXT SUGGESTS PROGRESS, NOT MAKING MONEY. PAUL OUTSTRIPPED ALL OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES IN HIS ZEAL FOR JUDAISM. HE WAS THE RELIGIOUS LEADER OF HIS TIME - ON TOP OF HIS PEERS, HIS PEDIGREE WAS UNSURPASSED. (PHIL. 3:5-6)

²"PERSECUTED" - THIS WORD HAS THE BASIC IDEA OF BEING PURSUED, THAT IS, TO RUN DOWN AND RUN OVER SOMEONE! ³"BEYOND MEASURE" - THIS IS A SINGLE GREEK WORD HYPERBOLE FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH HYPERBOLE. HYPERBOLE IS SPEECH DESIGNED TO EXAGGERATE STATEMENTS, TO OVERSTATE FOR EFFECT. THE WORD LITERALLY MEANS TO OVERSHOOT OR CAST OR THROW BEYOND. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXAMPLE OF HYPERBOLE: THREE PEOPLE MEET AT A 25-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL REUNION. AFTER PRELIMINARY CONVERSATION, TWO ARE TALKING ABOUT THE ONE WHO LEFT THE FESTIVITIES. THEY MAKE THREE HYPERBOLIC STATEMENTS: (1) SO AND SO IS AS BIG AS A HOUSE. (2) DUMB AS A SLIDE TRACK. (3) UGLY AS A MUD FENCE. THIS IS EXCESSIVE SPEECH, BEYOND NORMAL BOUNDS DESIGNED TO MAKE A POINT - NOT NECESSARILY A FLATTERING ONE! PAUL SAYS THAT HE WAS NO "ORDINARY PERSECUTOR". HE WAS A WILD MAN, OUT OF CONTROL, MEAN, MAD AND BENT ON MAYHEM AGAINST AGAINST CHRISTIANS ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE. OBLITERATING CHRISTIANS FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH WAS NOT JUST AN OBJECTIVE, IT WAS AN OBSESSION WITH SAUL! ⁴"WASTED" - THERE IS A SLANG TERM IN ENGLISH - A MOB-TYPE, GANGLAND TYPE KILLING IS DESCRIBED AS WASTING SOMEONE. THE IDEA HERE IS TO LAY WASTE OR SACK. WE ARE ALL ACQUAINTED WITH THE TERM SACK AS IT RELATES TO A FOOTBALL QUARTERBACK BUT WHAT IF THE OPPOSING LINEBACKER SACKS THE QUARTERBACK

WITH A BASEBALL BAT! SAUL OF TARSUS WAS A FEARED, FEARSOME FANATIC WHO BOTH HATED AND HURT CHRISTIANS!

II. PAUL'S CALLING TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MINISTRY-V. 15-16

"WHEN IT PLEASSED GOD" - THIS IS A REFERENCE TO GOD'S INITIATIVE AND GOOD PLEASURE. IN OTHER WORDS, GOD HAD PLANS FOR SAUL'S LIFE. HE DID NOT DISCUSS THESE PLANS WITH SAUL, HE DID NOT SEEK HIS OPINION OR HIS INPUT YET SAUL WAS NOT A ROBOT BUT INDEED THE RECIPIENT OF GOD'S GRACE. "WHO SEPARATED ME FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB" - GOD'S PLAN FOR SAUL WAS NOT PLANNED AT THE TIME OF ITS EXECUTION. IT WAS DESIGNED LONG BEFORE THE EVENTS SURROUNDING SAUL'S CONVERSION. HOW DIVINE SELECTION AND SOVEREIGNTY FIT INTO HUMAN CHOICE AND PARTICIPATION IS BEYOND HUMAN PERCEPTION AND EXPLANATION BUT IT IS SO! BY THE WAY, THE WORD SEPARATED IN THE TEXT MEANS TO "MARK OFF A BOUNDARY LINE" AND IN THIS CASE THE MARKING OFF WAS EVEN BEFORE SAUL WAS BORN. "CALLED ME BY HIS GRACE" - SAUL DIDN'T CALL HIMSELF - IT WAS THE WORK OF GOD ALONE. GOD TOOK THE INITIATIVE, HE DID THE CHOOSING, HE DID NOT WAIT UNTIL SAUL GOT BETTER, BECAME MORE APPRECIATIVE OR SAW THINGS FROM GOD'S VIEW-POINT, HE JUST CALLED PAUL ACCORDING TO GOD'S GRACE. THIS FITS INTO OTHER VERSES IN THE BIBLE WHICH PROPOSE JUST AS MANY QUESTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, JEREMIAH 1:5, I CORINTHIANS 1:26, JOHN 15:16.

III. PAUL'S CONFERENCE WITH PETER AND JAMES IN JERUSALEM - V. 16B-20

ONE IS SURPRISED BY THE ORDER OR CHRONOLOGY OF THE CONSULTATION MENTIONED IN THE TEXT. AT FIRST, SAUL "CONFERRED" WITH NONE BUT CHRIST. THE WORD CONFERRED MEANS TO CONSULT SOMEONE IN ORDER TO GET OPINION, ADVICE IN ORDER TO MAKE A DECISION. THE PHRASE "FLESH AND BLOOD" IS A REFERENCE TO FALLIBLE HUMAN BEINGS. THE TWELVE WERE LEADERS IN THE CHURCH BUT THEY WERE STILL FALLIBLE AND NOT INFALLIBLE LEADERS. WE ARE SURPRISED THAT PAUL DID NOT GO UP TO JERUSALEM IMMEDIATELY FOR INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND EVEN INSPIRATION FROM THE TWELVE. HUMAN LOGIC WOULD LEAD PAUL TO SEEK THEIR APPROVAL AND APPOINTMENT TO CHRISTIAN WORK. IT REMINDS THE LORD'S PEOPLE THAT GOD'S METHODS IN TRAINING MEN ARE NOT ALWAYS THE SAME WITH ALL MEN. THIS BRILLIANT SCHOLAR HAD STUDIED THE OLD TESTAMENT ALL OF HIS ADULT LIFE. AFTER HIS CONVERSION HE DEVOTED AS MUCH AS THREE YEARS TO INTENSIVE TRAINING AND FEW MEN HAVE BEEN SO PREPARED BECAUSE FEW MEN HAVE HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY AND ENORMOUS INFLUENCE BESTOWED UPON PAUL. HE WAS AN AMAZING MAN, AT HOME WITH SCHOLARS AND INTELLECTUALS BUT EQUALLY AT HOME WITH SIMPLE PEOPLE. PLEASE NOTE AGAIN THAT SAUL DID NOT SEEK THE APPROVAL OR ADVICE OF THE TWELVE. THIS IS NOT ARROGANCE BUT SIMPLY THE FACT THAT SAUL WENT DIRECTLY TO THE LORD JESUS, THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF DIRECTION AND INSTRUCTION AND NOT TO THE SECONDARY SOURCES. - OTHER SERVANTS OF GOD. THE GOSPEL WAS GOD'S MESSAGE AND PAUL COULD GO TO NO HIGHER AUTHORITY THAN CHRIST HIMSELF. THE ARABIAN EXPERIENCE HAD TO DO WITH A KIND OF SPIRITUAL POST-GRADUATE STUDY ESPECIALLY

HAVING TO DO WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF SOLITUDE. GOD GAVE SIMILAR INSTRUCTION AND DIRECTION TO MOSES, ELIJAH, DAVID, AND NOW PAUL. AMONG THE SPIRITUAL GIANTS, SOLITUDE SEEMS TO HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE TRAINING PROCESS. THE FIFTEEN-DAY VISITATION WITH PETER HAD TO BE ONE OF THE GREATEST BIBLE CONFERENCES EVER. (COMMENT REGARDING WINONA LAKE AND SEMINARY PLUS THE ADDITIONAL TRAINING AT THE CONFERENCE GROUNDS.) IN ONE OF JAMES MCGINLEY'S MESSAGES HE BEGINS A SERMON LIKE THIS ... "ONE EVENING, ABOUT 1900 YEARS AGO, PETER WAS SITTING ALONE IN HIS LITTLE HOUSE IN JERUSALEM READING HIS BIBLE, SIPPING A DRINK AND SNACKING BEFORE BED. THERE CAME A KNOCK AT THE DOOR, HE OPENED IT AND GAZED FOR THE FIRST TIME INTO THE FACE OF SAUL OF TARSUS. WHAT A NIGHT THAT WAS. IT BEGAN A BROTHERHOOD OF FELLOWSHIP THAT WAS AMAZING. BY THE WAY, MCGINLEY AS A CHRISTIAN, HAS DIFFICULTY WITH MEN WHO ARE "IN CHRIST," THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL FRATERNITY OF FAITH IN THE WORLD WHO SEEK OTHER BROTHERHOODS SUCH AS MOOSE, ELKS, MASONS, ODD FELLOWS AND NOT SO ODD FELLOWS! THE FRATERNITY OF FAITH IN THE GOSPEL IS THE GREATEST FRATERNITY AND FAMILY ON EARTH. MCGINLEY GOES ON TO TALK ABOUT THIS TWO-WEEK TIME AS THEY SHARED THEIR CONVERSION EXPERIENCES, TOURED THE CITY OF JERUSALEM FROM GETHSEMANE TO CALVARY, PARTICIPATED IN MEALS AND VISITATION TOGETHER AND THEN THEIR FINAL DEPARTURE. TWO SPIRITUAL GIANTS WHO CONFERRED, CONVERSED AND CONTINUED ON FOR CHRIST. SOME OF PETER'S HIGH OPINIONS OF PAUL IS REFLECTED IN II PETER 3:15-16.

IV. PAUL'S COMMENTARY ABOUT THE CHURCHES OF JUDEA - V. 21-24

AFTER HIS CONVERSION, PAUL WAS OUT OF CIRCULATION AMONG THE CHURCHES DURING THE ARABIAN EXPERIENCE. EVEN IN HIS HOMETOWN AND HOME TOWN THEY HAD HEARD OF HIM BUT MANY HAD NOT SEEN HIM FACE TO FACE, SO HE WAS RELATIVELY UNKNOWN EVEN AT HOME. THE CHURCHES HAD PIECED TOGETHER INFORMATION AND HAD COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT THE CHURCH'S GREATEST PERSECUTOR HAD NOW BECOME ITS GREATEST PREACHER. HIS CONVERSION WAS A GENUINE BASIS FOR THE CHURCHES TO PRAISE GOD. THE TEST OF ANY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE OR MINISTRY IS WHO GETS THE GLORY? QUESTION: DO PEOPLE GLORIFY GOD WHEN THEY HEAR ABOUT GREAT SINNERS WHO BECOME GREAT SAINTS OR DO THEY ELEVATE THESE PEOPLE TO A CELEBRITY STATUS? PAUL SAYS THAT "THEY GLORIFIED GOD IN ME" AND NOT "THEY GLORIFIED ME" - A BIG DIFFERENCE. ONE FUNCTION OF CHURCH MINISTRY IS TO GLORIFY GOD. EPHESIANS 3:1, ACTS 9:31.

3:21

JERUSALEM AGAIN

GALATIANS 2:1-10

REVIEW: CONTROVERSY AND CONVICTION OFTEN TRAVEL SIDE BY SIDE. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LUTHER AND ERASMUS THOUGH BOTH WERE CONSIDERED PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. ERASMUS WAS SMOOTH, EVEN SLICK, IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. HE WAS THE "DARLING" OF THE ACADEMIC WORLD. SO MODERATE HE OFFENDED NOTHING AND NOBODY! IT WAS SAID OF HIM THAT HE COULD SAY NO AND MAKE IT SOUND LIKE YES. HE WAS LEARNED, POLISHED AND ACCEPTED BY ~~THE~~ INTELLECTUALS. HE WAS THE GOLDEN-TONGUED COMPROMISER. HE COULD PUT UP WITH ALMOST ANYONE AND WOULD BE SHOCKED TO THINK OF PUTTING THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH. BUT THE BURDEN OF THE REFORMATION BEAT IN THE HEART OF LUTHER. IT WAS LUTHER, NOT ERASMUS, WHO POSTED THE 95 THESIS ON THE DOOR OF THE CHURCH AT WITTENBERG. IT WAS LUTHER, NOT ERASMUS, WHO LAID IT ALL ON THE LINE AT THE DIET OF WORMS. IT WAS LUTHER, NOT ERASMUS, WHO WAS THE FATHER OF THE REFORMATION! PAUL'S SECOND TRIP TO JERUSALEM WAS STEEPED IN DOCTRINAL CONFLICT. THE DETAILS ARE RECORDED IN ACTS 15. IT IS VERY CLEAR THAT PAUL, AN INDEPENDENT MISSIONARY, WAS ACCEPTED BY THE APOSTLES AND THE CHURCHES. HOWEVER, THERE WERE SOME WHO SAID THAT PAUL MUST CONFORM TO THEIR RELIGIOUS RULES OR HE COULD NOT PLAY IN THEIR RELIGIOUS NEIGHBORHOOD. THE CRITICS AND FALSE TEACHERS SAID THAT JEWS ENJOYED A FAVORED POSITION IN THE ECONOMY OF GOD. THEREFORE, IN ORDER TO HAVE PROPER STANDING BEFORE GOD, A PERSON MUST SUBMIT TO JEWISH CEREMONIAL LAW. GENTILES WHO DID NOT DO THIS WERE NOT SAVED - THEY SAID! PAUL KNEW BETTER AND WOULD NOT GIVE AN INCH ON THIS PRINCIPAL - NAMELY, MEN ARE SAVED AND KEPT BY GRACE - PERIOD!

I. THE CHURCH CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM - V. 1-2

SEVENTEEN YEARS AFTER HIS CONVERSION AND FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER HIS FIRST VISIT WITH PETER THERE, PAUL RETURNED WITH OTHER CHURCH LEADERS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM OF LEGALISM. CERTAIN PEOPLE INSISTED THAT SALVATION WAS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT CERTAIN CEREMONIAL RITES. (ACTS. 15:1) THE WIDE RANGING EFFECT OF PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEY AMONG THE GENTILES WAS NOT WIDELY KNOWN EVEN AMONG THE CHURCHES. THIS CHURCH COUNCIL, AT ITS CONCLUSION, MADE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT SALVATION IS BY GRACE ALONE. ALSO, IT SPELLED OUT CERTAIN DISPENSATIONAL DISTINCTIVES SUCH AS THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH. (ACTS 15:45) THIS CHURCH CONFERENCE IN HISTORY DIFFERS FROM MANY CONTEMPORARY CONFERENCES IN ONE CENTRAL ISSUE. IT CONCENTRATED ON DOCTRINAL PURITY AND DEMONSTRATIVE PREACHING! IT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE GOSPEL IS FOR JEW AND GENTILE ALIKE WITHOUT OR APART FROM THE MIXTURE OF THE LAW. * (THE NEXT TIME YOU READ ABOUT A CHURCH CONFERENCE IN THE PAPER, NOTICE THE EMPHASIS WILL BE ON MOTELS, RESTAURANTS, SIGHT-SEEING TOURS, COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES, MAJORITY AND MINORITY REPORTS, SEMINARS, THE PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE SUBJECTS OF THE CONFERENCE WILL RANGE FROM HOMOSEXUAL RIGHTS AND LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCHES, WOMEN'S RIGHTS, ABORTION, THE HOMELESS, THE JOBLESS, RACISM, AND AN ENDLESS VARIETY OF SOCIAL ISSUES. HOWEVER, IT MIGHT BE VERY DIFFICULT TO LOCATE A BIBLE IN USE OR CARRIED BY SOMEONE AT THE CONFERENCE. SUCH CHURCH CONFERENCES SEEM TO PROMOTE HERESY RATHER THAN PROTECT THE CHURCH FROM IT! AS A MATTER OF FACT, EXAMINE THE GREAT CHURCH COUNCILS OR CONFERENCES IN CHURCH HISTORY. PHILLIP SCHAFF SAYS OF THE COUNCIL

325 AD.

OF NICEA: "IT WAS THE FIRST AND MOST VENERABLE OF THE ECUMENICAL SYNODS; AND NEXT TO THE APOSTOLIC COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM, THE MOST IMPORTANT, MOST ILLUSTRIOUS OF ALL THE COUNCILS OF CHRISTENDOM." WHY? IT WAS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE OF ATHANASIUS' CRUSADE AGAINST HERESY. HE DEFENDED THE DIETY OF CHRIST AGAINST ARIUS WHO DENIED THE DIETY OF CHRIST AND THE CONFLICT CENTERED PRIMARILY AROUND TWO WORDS - SIMILAR AND SAME. (EXPLAIN) IT IS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE THAT EUSEBIUS WAS THERE REPRESENTING THE EMPEROR BUT IT WAS ATHANASIUS WHO WON THE VICTORY!

II. PAUL'S COLLEAGUES AT THE CONFERENCE - V. 1-3, 9

PAUL WAS AN INDEPENDENT IN SPIRIT AND MINISTRY, BUT HE WAS NOT A LONER. PAUL KNEW THE VALUE AND NECESSITY OF CO-WORKERS IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY. HE SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH SPIRITUALLY CAPABLE AND GIFTED PEOPLE.

(1) BARNABAS - HE WAS ONE OF THE EARLY LEADERS OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM. THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF HIS GENEROSITY. (ACTS 4:36-37) BARNABAS WAS A MAN OF MEANS WHO GAVE GENEROUSLY TO THE EARLY MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM. HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING THE CHURCH TO ACCEPT THE CREDIBILITY OF PAUL'S CONVERSION. (ACTS 9:27) BARNABAS WAS WILLING TO STICK HIS NECK OUT OR AS SOME WOULD SAY, TAKE A CHANCE ON PAUL. THIS GREAT TRUSTING ATTITUDE WAS REFLECTED IN BARNABAS' CONFIDENCE IN JOHN MARK EVEN WHEN JOHN MARK HAD FAILED. (ACTS 15:36) BARNABAS' AMAZING SPIRITUALITY IS REFLECTED MOST IN HIS WILLINGNESS TO STEP ASIDE FOR A PLACE OF LEADERSHIP AND LET PAUL ASSUME THE PLACE OF PRIMARY LEADERSHIP. THIS IS NOT EASY TO DO AND IS NOT DONE VERY OFTEN!

(2) TITUS - TITUS WAS A YOUNG GREEK WHOM PAUL HAD BROUGHT WITH HIM TO JERUSALEM AS A TEST CASE. A BETWEEN-THE-LINES READING OF THE TEXT MIGHT SUGGEST THAT SOME LEADERS IN THE CHURCH URGED PAUL TO HAVE TITUS SUBMIT TO THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION TO AVOID CONFLICT IN THE CHURCH. ON THIS PRINCIPLE PAUL REFUSED TO YIELD. EITHER ONE IS SAVED BY GRACE OR HE IS NOT! WIERSBE CALLS TITUS "EXHIBIT A" FROM THE GENTILE CHURCHES. TITUS ALSO ASSISTED PAUL IN DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CHURCHES AND WAS A MESSENGER IN THIS REGARD. (TITUS 1:5)

(3) PETER, JAMES AND JOHN - THESE THREE WERE CALLED PILLARS IN THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM INDICATING THEIR PLACE OF LEADERSHIP. THEY, ALONG WITH PAUL, WERE NOT LABELED AS GREAT, CELEBRITIES OR SUPER SAINTS IN THE CHURCH. THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE, GODLY MEN WHOSE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO SERVE JESUS CHRIST. THEY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO BE SOMEBODY SPECIAL.

III. THE CONFLICT AT THE CONFERENCE - V. 4-6

AT THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, THERE WERE MEN WHO WERE CHARACTERIZED AS FALSE BRETHREN. THAT IS, JUDIAZERS WHO FOLLOWED PAUL IN HIS MINISTRY IN ORDER TO HOUND HIM AND CAPTURE HIS CONVERTS AND DIVERT THEM BACK INTO LEGALISM AND AWAY FROM LIBERTY. THEY WERE NOT GENUINE BELIEVERS BUT WERE PREACHERS OF UNTRUTH SEEKING TO DESTROY THE NEW IN THE FAITH. THESE MEN WERE SLAVES TO RITUAL AND SLAVES TO THE LAW. THE "SOMEWHATS" OF THIS VERSE PROBABLY REFER TO SOME OF THE LEADERS OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH WHO TRIED TO PERSUADE PAUL TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE AND COMPROMISING ON THE SUBJECT OF LAW AND GRACE. EVEN THOUGH PAUL WAS NOT DISCOURTEOUS, HE WOULD NOT BOW TO THE WEIGHT OF POPULAR OR MAJORITY

OPINION. PAUL KNEW THAT THE MAJORITY IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT. PAUL HAD LEARNED LESSONS THAT GOD WILL STAND BY HIM IF HE WOULD STAND BY GOD'S TRUTH. HE ALSO KNEW THAT THERE ARE NO BIG SHOTS IN GOD'S WORK. PAUL WAS NOT UNDULY IMPRESSED OR INFLUENCED BY THE POSITION OTHERS HELD IN THE CHURCH. HE WAS NO ANARCHIST BUT HE KNEW THE MEANING OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY. HE WAS FAR TOO INTERESTED IN THE MESSAGE OF GRACE TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT PRESTIGE IN THE CHURCH. SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED IN AMERICA. WE ARE SUPPOSED TO GET ALONG WITH EVERYBODY ON EVERYTHING - INCLUDING THE DEVIL! A PERSON WHO CAUSES WAVES FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL IS OFTEN LOOKED UPON AS UNCOMPROMISING, INFLEXIBLE, A TROUBLE MAKER. THE ULTIMATE CRITICISM IS THAT THAT PERSON IS NOT EXHIBITING LOVE. NONSENSE! PAUL HELD FIRM THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF GRACE. THERE CAN BE NO CHRISTIAN LOVE IF THERE IS NO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE!

IV. THE COMMISSION AFTER THE CONFERENCE -

V. 7-10

① THE GOSPEL WAS TO JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE WITHOUT DISTINCTION. GOD HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO PETER AT THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE BIBLICAL APPROACH. (ACTS 10) THE GOSPEL IS NOT TWO DIFFERENT MESSAGES TO TWO DIFFERENT GROUPS. IT IS RATHER ONE GOSPEL INVOLVING ALL NATIONALITIES BECAUSE GOD HAS ONE WAY OF SAVING PEOPLE IN EVERY DISPENSATION. THE MESSAGE IS ONE, NAMELY, THE DEATH, BURIAL AND RESSURECTION OF JESUS CHRIST. THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP WAS A SYMBOL OF AGREEMENT IN DOCTRINE AND DUTY. (EXPLAIN CHURCH MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURE AND THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP. IT IS A DIFFERENT APPROACH. IT IS A DOCTRINAL APPROACH. IT IS A DEPORTMENT APPROACH. THE GOSPEL HAS SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS.

③

THE EARLY CHURCH DID NOT GO OUT INTO THE WORLD TO ESTABLISH PROGRAMS AND BEGIN TO WASTE MONEY. SOMETIMES FUNDAMENTAL CHURCHES ARE CRITICIZED FOR NOT HAVING A SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS. HOWEVER, IT IS VERY CLEAR IN THE BIBLE THAT THE CHURCH HAS A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BUT THAT IS NOT ITS PRIMARY BURDEN. THE BREAD OF LIFE AND THE BREADLINE GO TOGETHER. HOWEVER, SOCIAL AGENCIES OF EITHER CHURCHES OR GOVERNMENT HAVE NO GOSPEL MESSAGE. IT MAY BE AN OVER-SIMPLIFICATION BUT IT IS STILL TRUE THAT EVEN IF A HOMELESS, JOBLESS SICK PERSON RECEIVES ALL THE SOCIAL BENEFITS THAT HE NEEDS WITHOUT OR APART FROM THE GOSPEL, WE ARE SIMPLY MAKING EARTH A MORE COMFORTABLE PLACE FROM WHICH THE SINNER GOES TO HELL! BY THE WAY, THAT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS REFLECTED IN ACTS 6.

FACE TO FACE AND HEAD TO HEAD

GALATIANS 2:11-21

(COMMENT REGARDING STORY - "JESUS IS WATCHING YOU")

IT WAS NOT EASY FOR PAUL TO CONFRONT PETER ABOUT HIS ERROR. AFTER ALL, PETER WAS AN APOSTLE AND SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT HE WAS DOING WITH REFERENCE TO BIBLE DOCTRINE. IF NOT, WHO WOULD THINK HIMSELF ADEQUATE TO CORRECT PETER? ~~INSTEAD~~, WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES. SO LET PETER CORRECT THE MISTAKE NEXT TIME. OR PETER MAY HAVE HAD A REASON THAT OTHERS DID NOT KNOW FOR HIS ACTION SO WE GIVE HIM THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT. ANYWAY, TO AVOID A PAINFUL CONFRONTATION ONE WOULD BE PRONE TO SIDESTEP OR IGNORE THE THEOLOGICAL ISSUE. HOWEVER, PAUL COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT IGNORE PETER'S DUPLICITY. SO HERE WE HAVE A FACE TO FACE, EYE TO EYE, NOSE TO NOSE, HEAD TO HEAD CLASH OF TWO INFLUENTIAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS. PAUL FACED PETER AND DEALT WITH THIS ISSUE FULLY, OPENLY, HONESTLY, ~~AND TACTFULLY~~ ~~COURTEOUSLY AND TACTFULLY WITHOUT IGNORING OR SIDESTEPING THE ISSUE.~~

I. THE DAY THE APOSTLE PAUL CALLED THE APOSTLE PETER A HYPOCRITE - V. 11-15

AFTER THE JERUSALEM CONFERENCE, IT SEEMED THAT JEWS AND GENTILES BELIEVED AND PRACTICED EQUALITY. THERE WERE NO DISTINCTIONS, NO PREJUDICES, NO DIFFERENCES IN THEIR POSITION IN THE CHURCH, THEY WERE ONE IN CHRIST. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT SEEMED TO BE THE CASE, BUT IN FACT, IT WAS NOT. THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH WAS MADE UP MOSTLY OF GENTILE BELIEVERS.

THEY WERE DELIGHTED WHEN PETER VISITED THE CHURCH. THE LOVE FEAST OR AGAPE WAS PART OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM. (EXPLAIN) ONE COMMENTATOR HAS PICTURED THE SCENE AS FOLLOWS:

A LARGE TABLE OR SERIES OF TABLES WITH ALL KINDS OF FOOD PREPARED FOR A FELLOWSHIP MEETING IN THE "FELLOWSHIP HALL." THAT IS CERTAINLY TYPICAL OF CHURCH MEETINGS! ON ONE TABLE THERE ARE SEVERAL KINDS OF SOME KOSHER BUT THERE ARE ALSO PORK CHOPS AND HAM. PETER HAD NEVER EATEN EITHER OF THESE EVER. HE WATCHED AS PAUL ATE HEARTILY AND INVITED HIM TO TASTE THEM ALSO. TO HIS AMAZEMENT, PETER LOVED THE TASTE AND HE ALSO "DUG IN" WITH GUSTO. AT THEIR NEXT MEAL, JAMES AND SOME JEWISH BROTHERS FROM JERUSALEM CAME TO THE LOVE FEAST AND UNDER THEIR SCRUTINY AND PROTEST PETER REFUSED TO EAT AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY. PETER BUCKLED UNDER "PEER PRESSURE" TO AVOID LOSS OF ESTEEM, POPULARITY, REPUTATION AND TO AVOID CRITICISM BY THE BRETHREN BACK IN JERUSALEM. APPARENTLY PETER HAD FORGOTTEN THE LESSON OF ACTS 10 AND ACTS 15. HE WAS AFRAID OF WHAT OTHERS MIGHT SAY ABOUT HIS FREEDOM AND CONDUCT AT ANTIOCH.

(RELATE INCIDENT OF TWO 7TH GRADE GIRLS IN LORAIN, OHIO WHO PLOTTED TO KILL THEIR TEACHER - KNIFE WAS FOUND, TWO HUNDRED DOLLAR BETS MADE AND GIRLS HAD PLANNED TO CARRY OUT THE SCHEME SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID, NOT OF THE POLICE BUT OF THE PRESSURE OF THEIR SCHOOLMATES!) THE PETER IN THIS PASSAGE HAS BEEN CALLED BY SOME THE FIRST POPE - FALLIBLE IN THE EYES OF SOME - BUT HERE THERE IS NO ROCK-LIKE CHARACTER ABOUT HIM! IT WAS PAUL WHO RETAINED A CLEAR HEAD THEOLOGICALLY AND DID A DIFFICULT AND COURAGEOUS THING. HE OPPOSED PETER TO HIS FACE. BY THE WAY, IT'S EASY TO CONFRONT AND CONDEMN PEOPLE - TO THEIR BACK. THERE WAS SOMETHING VERY DISARMING

ABOUT HITTING AN ISSUE HEAD-ON. THE WORD BLAMED IS USED IN THE TEXT BECAUSE PETER WAS WRONG. ALSO, OTHERS INCLUDING BARNABAS HAD FOLLOWED PETER IN HIS DEFECTION. THIS PASSAGE SHOWS HOW SUBTLE AND INSIDIOUS THE NATURE OF LEGALISM. EVEN A VETERAN CHURCH LEADER COULD BE CARRIED AWAY IN ITS WAKE. THERE ARE NO INFALLIBLE CHURCH LEADERS. THEY CAN AND DO MAKE MISTAKES. LEGALISM THEN AND NOW WILL WRECK THE SPIRIT OF JOY AND LIBERTY IN A CHURCH. AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS! “BY THE WAY, I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO LOOK BACK ON LEGALISTIC MINISTRIES WHICH SEEMED TO BE MORE AUTHORITATIVE AND SPIRITUAL BUT HAVE WATCHED THEM GO TO PIECES ALONG WITH THEIR LEADERS BECAUSE THEY WERE RUNNING ON THE WRONG TRACK!”)

II. THE EMPHASIS ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND NOT BY WORKS - V. 16

WHEN MARTIN LUTHER, AN AUGUSTINIAN MONK, WENT TO ROME HE CLIMBED THE SCALA SANCTI TO GAIN MERIT AS AN ACT OF CONTRITION AND HUMILITY. AS HE MADE HIS WAY UP THOSE SACRED STAIRS ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES, HE SAID IT WAS AS IF A VOICE THUNDERED FROM HEAVEN - “THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH!” (COMMENT REGARDING MEXICO TRIP AND THE SHRINE OF GUADALUPE) QUESTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JUSTIFIED? IT IS SOMETHING WE MAY KNOW - SO SAYS THE TEXT. IT IS A PICTURE WORD AND THE PICTURE IS THAT OF A COURTROOM WITH THE JUDGE AND THE CONDEMNED. JUSTIFICATION IS A BIBLICAL WORD TO DESCRIBE OUR RIGHT RELATIONSHIP BEFORE GOD AS JUDGE. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH SHOULD ASK YOU AND ME WHY WE DESERVE HEAVEN, WHAT WOULD YOUR ANSWER BE? MANY PEOPLE HAVE VARIOUS ANSWERS SUCH AS “I’M NOT SUCH A BAD

PERSON OR AT LEAST I'M NOT AS BAD AS MANY OTHERS I CAN NAME," "I WORK HARD, DO THE RIGHT THINGS, DON'T DRINK, DO DRUGS, DON'T CHEAT AND DO GOOD THINGS WITH MY MONEY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I GIVE LARGE AMOUNTS TO HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, CHURCHES," HOWEVER, WHAT IF GOD ASKED HOW MUCH YOU KEPT AFTER YOU GAVE? WE MIGHT SAY TO GOD THE JUDGE THAT WE DID THE BEST WE COULD - WAIT NOW - DO YOU KNOW ANYBODY WHO HAS EVER DONE THE BEST HE COULD? ONE MIGHT EVEN PRESUME TO SAY "I NEVER LIED" UNTIL NOW! THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT MAN IS A REBEL AND RUINED IN HIS RELATIONSHIP BEFORE GOD. GOD REQUIRES HIM TO BE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE HE GOES TO HEAVEN. MAN SEEKS TO BECOME RIGHTEOUS BY DOING SOMETHING FOR GOD. HE CLAIMS TO KEEP THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND OBSERVE THE GOLDEN RULE BUT ALL OF THIS IS ACCORDING TO MAN'S STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND NOT GOD'S! (COMPARE ROMANS 3:10, 19FF) THERE ARE ONLY TWO RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD - (1) THE DOS AND THE DONES. EPHESIANS 2:8-9, TITUS 3:5, GALATIANS 3:26

III. THE CRUCIFIED LIFE - V. 20

THE TERMS CRUCIFIED AND LIFE SEEM TO BE CONTRADICTORY. CRUCIFIED REFERS TO DEATH SO HOW COULD ONE BE BOTH CRUCIFIED AND ALIVE AT THE SAME TIME? (SUPPOSE A PERSON CONDEMNED BY THE LAW TO DEATH WAS STRAPPED INTO A CHAIR IN A GAS CHAMBER. AFTER THE HORRIBLE PROCESS OF PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF THE LEGAL EDICT HAD BEEN PERFORMED, THE DOORS OPENED, THE PRISONER EXAMINED, UNSTRAPPED FROM THE CHAIR, SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD BUT SUDDENLY OPENS HIS EYES, STANDS UP AND BEGINS TO SPEAK. SEVERAL PEOPLE MIGHT FAINT BECAUSE THIS IS NOT SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN - AND NEVER DOES.

PAUL'S POINT IS THAT THE LAW HAS A CLAIM ON THE BELIEVER UNTIL DEATH. THE CLAIMS OF THE LAW ARE FULFILLED AT DEATH. HOWEVER, THE PENALTY OF THE LAW IS CANCELLED BY DEATH, RESURRECTION AND LIFE. A DEAD LAW IS NOT OUR GUIDE BUT A LIVING SAVIOR. THIS VERSE SPEAKS OF TWO KINDS OF LIFE - THE SELF-LIFE AND THE CHRIST-LIFE. HOW DOES THE BELIEVER LIVE HIS NEW LIFE IN CHRIST? BY RULES AND REGULATIONS OR BY A LIVING PRINCIPLE OR PERSON WITHIN THE BELIEVER. THE SELF-LIFE OR SOMETIMES CALLED IN THE BIBLE THE OLD MAN, THE OLD NATURE, OR THE FLESH RUINS EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES - EVENTUALLY. IT DEMANDS ITS OWN WAY, ADVANCES ITS OWN INTERESTS ABOVE ALL ELSE AND ALL OTHERS, IT PARADES ITS ATTAINMENTS AND IS OBSESSED WITH ITS OWN IMPORTANCE. IT TAKES ITS OWN PICTURE, DEVELOPS ITS OWN NEGATIVE, DIAGNOSES ITS OWN ILLNESS AND COMES UP WITH NO DISEASE. SELF IS NEVER WRONG BUT IS WILLING TO LET CHRIST BE THE KING OF ITS LIFE AS LONG AS IT CAN BE PRIME MINISTER - SO SAYS SANDERS. IF GALATIANS 2:20 HAS ANY MEANING FOR US IT IS SAYING THAT DEATH TO THE SELF-LIFE MEANS THE BEGINNING OF A SATISFYING LIFE OF SPIRITUAL BLESSING THROUGH CHRIST. THE STORY IS TOLD OF AN EASTERN MONARCH WHO OCCUPIED A CERTAIN CITY. THE PEOPLE IN GREAT FEAR PROSTRATED THEMSELVES BEFORE THE KING HOLDING THEIR IDOLS IN THEIR HANDS. HE DECIDED TO CRUSH THE IDOLS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE FOR ALL TO SEE. WHEN HE DID, THE GEMS THAT HAD BEEN HIDDEN THERE FELL AT HIS FEET. SO IT IS WITH THE IDOL OF SELF - SPARE IT AND LOSE THE WEALTH OF LIFE IN CHRIST. (LUKE 9:23 IS A HARD VERSE TO UNDERSTAND. IT MAY MEAN OTHER THINGS, BUT IT IS CERTAINLY SPEAKING OF CENTRAL AUTHORITY. THE WORD DENY IS IN THE AORIST TENSE AND SUGGESTS A CRISIS OR POINT ACTION. IN ORDER TO KNOW THE

Liberty of Holy Spirit - must be A Dictation -
SELF.

SPELLBOUND

GALATIANS 3:1-14

"Liberty"

Ch. 1-2
GospelCh. 3-4
Gospel

Ch. 5-6

THE GALATIANS WERE BOTH FICKLE AND FOOLISH ABOUT SPIRITUAL TRUTH. THEY DID NOT "USE THEIR HEADS" BUT FOLLOWED THEIR EMOTIONS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY. IN THE BIBLE HEAD AND HEART GO TOGETHER. THE WORD BEWITCHED IS TRANSLATED "CAST A SPELL OVER" IN THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION. IT MEANS TO BE FASCI-NATED BY SOMETHING. THE GALATIANS WERE "FASCINATED BY FOOLISHNESS" NOT FIRM ON BIBLE FACTS. (COMMENT REGARDING KENTUCKY NEIGHBOR IN NORTHVILLE "UNDER HIS SPELL") EVERY PASTOR HAS SEEN GALATIAN GULLIBILITY IN THE MINISTRY. THE STORIES ARE SIMILAR - A PERSON MAKES A PROFESSION OF FAITH AT CHURCH. HE BEGINS TO BLOSSOM BUT IN A FEW MONTHS OR EVEN A YEAR LATER HE BEGINS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING ELSE, SOMETHING EXCITING THAT CALLS UPON HIS HIGHEST POTENTIAL, HIS VERY BEST TO DO SOMETHING FOR GOD. WHEN ASKED ABOUT GRACE HIS ANSWER "GRACE WHO?" GRACE ABANDONED. HOW SAD. THE IMMATURITY AND INEXPERIENCE OF THE PERSON LED TO ERROR. FAILURE TO GET INTO THE WORD, PRAYER, WITNESSING MAKES EVERYONE VULNERABLE AND GULLIBLE TO ERROR. THE PROBLEM IS REFLECTED IN VERSE 1 IN THE PHRASE "OBEY THE TRUTH." WE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH, WE MUST KNEEL BEFORE IT! IN THIS PASSAGE, THERE ARE THREE KEY IDEAS THE FOOLISH GALATIANS HAD NOT CONSIDERED. LET ME SUGGEST THREE QUESTIONS TO QUELL THE SPELL!

I. QUESTION NO. 1: HAVING BEGUN IN THE SPIRIT, ARE YE NOT MADE PERFECT (MATURE) BY THE FLESH? VERSE 3

HOW DID THE GALATIANS GET SAVED? BY HEARING THE GOSPEL AND BY THE HOLY SPIRIT'S REGENERATING WORK. HOW WERE THE GALATIANS SANCTIFIED?

THROUGH SELF-EFFORT OR THE SPIRIT'S ENERGY?
THE INDWELLING SPIRIT PRODUCES HIGH LEVEL
LIVING NOT LOW LEVEL LAW-KEEPING! PAUL
APPEALED TO THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. HOW
COULD ANYONE KNOW THE SPIRIT'S POWER IN HIS
LIFE AND THEN TURN BACK TO THE RULES AND
REGULATIONS OF THE LAW FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOP-
MENT? THE "FLESH" CAN ONLY PRODUCE MORE
FLESH - THAT'S ALL! THE FLESH CANNOT SAVE,
IT CANNOT SANCTIFY. (BY FLESH WE ARE NOT
REFERRING TO THE BODY BUT TO THE OLD OR
ADAMIC NATURE.) IF YOU WERE SAVED BY THE
SPIRIT'S MINISTRY, HOW CAN YOU GROW UP
SPIRITUALLY BY RELYING ON THE FLESH?
ANSWER: YOU CAN'T! WHAT MUST I DO TO BE
SAVED? ANSWER: BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS
CHRIST. ACTS 16:31. WHAT MUST I DO TO STAY
SAVED? KEEP ON BELIEVING! (ACTS 2:42-44)
HOW ANYONE HAVING KNOWN THE FREEDOM OF NEW
LIFE AND LIBERTY IN THE SPIRIT COULD TURN TO
THE DEADNESS OF THE LAW WAS ABSOLUTELY
ASTONISHING TO PAUL - AND SHOULD BE TO US
ALSO!

11. QUESTION No. 2: SALVATION, IS IT BY THE
WORKS OF THE LAW OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH?

WAS ABRAHAM SAVED BY BELIVING GOD OR BY
WORKING FOR GOD? TO UNDERScore THE FACT THAT
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, PAUL SINGLED
ONE MAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TO DEFINE AND
ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH. ACCORDING
TO ROMANS 4 AND HEBREWS 11, ABRAHAM PLEASED
GOD BY FAITH ALONE. HE DID NOT PLEASE GOD BY
DOING THE WORKS OF THE LAW FOR THE LAW DID
NOT EXIST AT THAT TIME. HE PLEASED GOD BY
BELIEVING WHAT GOD SAID AND ACTING UPON THAT
PROMISE. IT WAS, IN FACT, GOOD NEWS TO
ABRAHAM. PAUL BROUGHT THE SAME KIND OF GOOD

Rom 4 = "Salvation By TRUSTING
Not TRYING" -3-

(Rom. 4:1 ff)

NEWS TO THE GALATIANS, THAT IS, SINNERS ARE JUSTIFIED THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST. IN OTHER WORDS, BELIEVING GOD'S WORD. ACCORDING TO VERSE 7, A VITAL RELATIONSHIP TO ABRAHAM DEPENDED UPON EMBRACING ABRAHAM'S FAITH, NOT BY BEING A PHYSICAL, BLOOD DESCENDENT OF HIS RACE! STRANGELY ENOUGH, ABRAHAM WAS A GENTILE WHEN HE BELIEVED GOD. (COMPARE ROMANS 4:20-21, EPHESIANS 2:8-9, TITUS 3:5, HEBREWS 11:6,8, 17, 19. "IF I HAD TO DO AS MUCH AS LIFT MY LITTLE FINGER TO SAVE MY SOUL, I COULD STRUT UP THE GOLDEN STREET SAYING: "GLORY BE TO THE LORD AND TO ME, FOR OUR COMBINED EFFORTS I AM SAVED..." (H. A. IRONSIDE) THE SONG WRITER MIGHT HAVE SAID, "JESUS PAID MOST OF IT, SOMETHING OR ~~SOMEONE~~ TO HIM I OWE. = ALL Key

111 QUESTION NO. 3: WHICH DO YOU CHOOSE, THE CURSE OF THE LAW OR THE CHRIST OF REDEMPTION? VERSE 13

WHAT DOES "CURSE OF THE LAW" MEAN? WASN'T THE LAW GOOD? WHAT COULD BE CALLED CURSED ABOUT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS? AFTER ALL, THEY WERE THE HIGHEST MORAL, ETHICAL STANDARDS EVER GIVEN TO MANKIND. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? WHEN GOD GAVE ISRAEL THE LAW IN ALL OF ITS ASPECTS AND DIMENSIONS, IT WAS A BLESSING TO ALL WHO KEPT THE LAW IN ITS ENTIRETY. HOWEVER DOING ONE'S BEST AND KEEPING ONLY PART OF THE LAW WAS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. (JAMES 2:10) THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, SOMEONE HAS SAID, WAS SOMEWHAT LIKE A 10-LINK CHAIN - BREAK ONE LINK AND THE CHAIN IS BROKEN. THE PERSON WHO BROKE ONE SINGLE LAW CAME UNDER ITS FULLY CONDEMNATION. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PERSON WHO CHOSE TO LIVE BY THE LAW OR CHOOSES TO LIVE BY THE LAW MUST DO SO FULLY. PROBLEM: NONE EVER DID. THE STANDARD, HOWEVER, WAS KEEP IT ALL OR COME UNDER ITS CURSE OR PENALTY! (DEUT. 27:26)

Zoe Baird -
a law-abiding citizen
but one who
made her a "law-bender"

UNDER SUCH IMPOSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHAT IS A PERSON TO DO? THIS TEXT REMINDS US OF A SIMPLE TRUTH THAT THE LAW BROUGHT A CURSE TO MAN BUT CHRIST BROUGHT THE CURE. THERE WAS ONE WHO NEVER VIOLATED GOD'S LAW, EVER, WHO BORE THE FULL PENALTY OF THAT BROKEN LAW BY HIS DEATH AT CALVARY. SINCE JESUS CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, THEN WHY DO PEOPLE DISHONOR HIS WORK BY PUTTING THEMSELVES BACK UNDER THE CURSE OF THE LAW WHICH HE DIED TO DELIVER THEM FROM? THE WORD REDEEM IN THE TEXT IS USED TO DESCRIBE THE MARKET PLACE AND OFTEN THE SALE OR PURCHASE OF SLAVES. CHRIST PURCHASED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW. WE WHO ARE UNDER THE LAW'S CURSE HAVE RECEIVED THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S WORK ON THE CROSS. HE, IN FACT, DIED ACCURSED HANGING ON THE CROSS FOR THE PENALTY OF THE LAW HAD BEEN BROKEN. THE PENALTY OF THE BROKEN LAW FELL ON HIM INSTEAD OF US. THE IDEA HERE IS THAT OF ONE PAYING THE PENALTY OF A BROKEN LAW FOR SOMEONE ELSE. PAUL WAS UTTERLY ASTONISHED THAT THE GALATIANS WOULD LISTEN TO FALSE TEACHERS, PROCLAIMING THE WAY OF THE LAW AS A BETTER WAY THAN THE BLESSINGS OF GRACE. LEGALISM THEN AND NOW APPEALS TO THE FLESH. IT SATISFIES THE SENSES NOT THE SPIRIT. IT APPEALS TO SIGHT, TOUCH, SMELL. IT BELIEVES IT CAN DO SOMETHING TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD. HOWEVER, THE BIBLE MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT WE CANNOT DELIVER OURSELVES FROM OUR SINS BUT CHRIST CAN.

THE ULTIMATE CONTRACT

GALATIANS 3:15-29

A CONTACT IS AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO OR MORE PARTIES TO DO OR NOT TO DO SOMETHING. UNDERSTANDABLY, THIS IS A VERY SIMPLE DEFINITION AND IT MAY BE AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION. SIMILAR TO WILLIAM JAMES WHO SAID THAT SOME COULD LIKEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VIOLIN MUSIC IN THE WORLD AS HORSES HAIR SCRAPING AGAINST CATS BOWELS! IN THE BIBLE, CONTRACTS ARE CALLED COVENANTS OR TESTAMENTS. THERE ARE TWO KINDS: (1) CONDITIONAL; (2) UNCONDITIONAL. THE SIGNS OF THE COVENANTS RANGE FROM A RAINBOW, A SABBATH, CIRCUMCISION. THE METHOD OR MANNER OF ESTABLISHING THE COVENANTS RANGE FROM SACRIFICE, SALT, SHOE. (EXPLAIN) THERE ARE SOME EIGHT OR SO MAJOR COVENANTS IN THE BIBLE, THE LAST IS CALLED THE NEW COVENANT. (HEB. 8:8) WE MAKE AND BREAK CONTRACTS REGULARLY. MARRIAGE, ADOPTION, MORTGAGES, EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS, LOANS, WILLS OR EVEN A HANDSHAKE IS A FORM OF CONTRACT. (FOR EXAMPLE, THIS WEEK THE MAN WHO INVENTED "THE CLUB" WON A LAWSUIT IN THE AMOUNT OF TEN MILLION DOLLARS ON THE STRENGTH OF A HANDSHAKE AGREEMENT.) MANY CONTRACTS ARE VERY COMPLEX, COMPLICATED INVOLVING BATTERIES OF EXPERTS TO ESTABLISH AND EXPLAIN SUCH AGREEMENTS. GOD MAKES CONTRACTS. THEY ARE CALLED COVENANTS. PAUL WAS A RABBI AND AN EXPERT IN OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS. IN THIS PASSAGE HE DEALS WITH THE SUBJECT AS FOLLOWS:

- I. GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM AND THE LAW HE GAVE TO MOSES ARE NOT TWO DIFFERENT WAYS OF SALVATION - V. 15-18

(Repeat)

PAUL OPENS HIS ARGUMENT IN THIS PORTION OF SCRIPTURE WITH A PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION OR

OR NULLIFY

HUMAN PARALLEL IN CONTRACT MAKING. IT IS GENERAL KNOWLEDGE WORLDWIDE THAT ONCE A CONTRACT HAS BEEN PROPERLY DRAWN UP AND SIGNED, BOTH PARTIES ARE LEGALLY BOUND TO HONOR IT. A THIRD PARTY CANNOT MODIFY THE AGREEMENT BY ADDING CLAUSES OR PARTS AFTER IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND SIGNED. (FOR EXAMPLE, TWO PARTIES AGREE CONCERNING THE SALE OF PROPERTY. THE AGREEMENT IS APPROVED BY BOTH SIDES AND IS SIGNED. THEN A THIRD PARTY, PERHAPS A RELATIVE, SHOWS UP AT THE CLOSING INSISTING THAT CERTAIN CHANGES BE MADE. HE HAS NO LEGAL RIGHT TO CHANGE THE DOCUMENT. THE ONLY ONES WHO MAY CHANGE THE DOCUMENT ARE THOSE WHO MADE THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT. PAUL REMINDS HIS READERS THAT GOD MADE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM WHICH GOD INTENDED TO KEEP FULLY. SOME OF THESE WERE MADE WHILE ABRAHAM WAS ASLEEP! THE OUTCOME OF THE AGREEMENT OR COVENANT RESTS UPON GOD, NOT ABRAHAM. THE PROMISE CENTERED AROUND THE FIRST MESSIANIC PROPHECY IN SCRIPTURE - GENESIS 3:15. CHRIST WAS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE "SEED" PROMISE. THE CONTRACT IS VALID ONLY IN HIM. POINT: WHAT MOSES RECEIVED FROM GOD SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AFTER GOD MADE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM DID NOT, COULD NOT NULLIFY WHAT GOD PROMISED TO ABRAHAM. THE LAW DID NOT CANCEL THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT. THE MOSAIC LAW WAS NOT A NEW OR ANOTHER WAY OF SALVATION! MEN ARE SAVED THE SAME WAY WHETHER IN THE OLD OR NEW TESTAMENT! THERE ARE NOT MANY WAYS TO HEAVEN. THOSE WHO SAY YOU GO YOUR WAY AND I'LL GO MINE, LET'S WALK ALONG TOGETHER SOUND VERY TOLERANT, BROAD-MINDED, BUT THEY ARE WRONG! THE WAY TO HEAVEN IS GOD'S WAY AND NO OTHER WAY! (ACTS 4:12)

II. IF THE LAW DID NOT SAVE ANYONE, WHY WAS IT GIVEN? - V. 19-22

(A) IT WAS TEMPORARY, NOT PERMANENT. IT WAS FOR JEWS PRIMARILY NOT GENTILES - VERSES 19-20. THE WORD "UNTIL" MEANS BETWEEN THE TIME OF MOSES AND CHRIST. (JOHN 1:17, ROMANS 2:14, ACTS 15:24) THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH THE MORAL LAW WAS WRITTEN IN THE HEARTS OF GENTILES BUT THE CEREMONIAL LAW WAS NEVER THEIRS TO KEEP.

(B) IT WAS GIVEN TO SHUT MAN'S MOUTH. THE LAW REVEALED SIN, BUT DID NOT REMOVE IT! JUST AS A MIRROR REVEALS A SPOT OR A SMUDGE ON A PERSON'S FACE BUT THE MIRROR DOES NOT CLEANSE THE SPOT! THE LAW SIMPLY POINTED OUT THE UGLINESS OR DIRTINESS OR SIN. MEN LIKE TO Brag OF THEIR MORALITY WHETHER IT IS REAL OR NON-EXISTENT. MOST WILL SAY: "I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN." AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN REALITY, MEN SELDOM DO THE BEST THEY CAN. (ROMANS 3:19-23) FOR EXAMPLE, TWO MEN WALK ⁽¹⁾ ALONG THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF A THEATER. THE PRICE OF ADMISSION IS \$7.50. ONE MAN HAS \$3.00, THE OTHER MAN HAS \$4.00. QUESTION: WHICH ONE WENT INTO THE THEATER FIRST? ANSWER: NEITHER FOR NEITHER HAD THE PRICE OF ADMISSION. AS A MATTER OF FACT, EVEN WHEN THEIR RESOURCES WERE POOLED, THEY CAME UP ⁽²⁾ SHORT! OR, PICTURE THREE MEN STANDING ON TOP OF A 25-STORY BUILDING. ONE MAN DECLARES THAT THE LAW OF GRAVITY IS A SILLY LAW. HE SAID THAT IF HE JUMPS FROM THE BUILDING HE WILL DISPROVE THAT LAW. HE JUMPS AND DOES THE OPPOSITE, HE PROVES THAT THE LAW OF GRAVITY IS STILL WORKING. THE SECOND MAN WALKS TEN STORIES DOWN, JUMPS FROM THE 15TH STORY DECLARING THAT HE HAS A BETTER CHANCE OF SURVIVAL BECAUSE HE IS TEN STORIES NEARER

THE GROUND. SORRY, HE DIDN'T MAKE IT. THE
③ THIRD MAN HAS SEEN ENOUGH, WALKS TO THE
ELEVATOR, OPENS THE DOOR STEPS INTO THE
ELEVATOR ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT IT HAS BEEN
REMOVED AND HE FALLS DOWN THE EMPTY ELEVATOR
SHAFT. THAT FIRST STEP WAS A LONG ONE!

QUESTION: WHICH OF THESE THREE MEN WHO DIED
UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES IS THE DEADDEST
OF THE THREE? THE ANSWER IS VERY OBVIOUS.
THEY ARE ALL DEAD. THE LAW COULD ONLY SHOW
HOW DEAD MEN ARE. IT COULD NOT GIVE LIFE.
THE LAW COULD HOLD UP HIGH STANDARDS OF ETHICS
AND MORALITY BUT IT COULD NOT SAVE ANYONE.
THE LAW SAVED ISRAEL FROM THE MORAL ERRORS
AND SINS OF ITS NEIGHBORS, THAT IS, IT COULD
SAVE PEOPLE FROM ALL KINDS OF WICKEDNESS IF
THEY OBSERVED ITS TEACHINGS BUT IT COULD NOT
CLEANSE FROM SIN! IT COULD TELL A PERSON
WHAT HE OUGHT TO DO BUT IT COULD NOT EMPOWER
HIM TO DO IT!

(C) IT WAS A SCHOOLMASTER NOT A SAVIOR -
VERSE 24 - THE WORD SCHOOLMASTER IN THE TEXT
DOES NOT MEAN SCHOOL TEACHER. IT IS COMPOUND
GREEK WORD - "CHILD" - PAIDA AND "LEADER" -
AGO. WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD PEDAGOGY OR
PEDIATRICS FROM THIS TERM. IN ROME AND GREECE,
AT AN EARLY AGE THE CARE OF A CHILD WAS TURNED
OVER TO A TRUSTED SLAVE, NURSE OR SOMEONE WE
WOULD CALL A NANNY. A KIND OF FULL-TIME "BABY-
SITTER" WHOSE DUTY HAD TO DO WITH A CHILD'S
PHYSICAL WELFARE AND MORAL BEING. TO BE SURE,
IT INVOLVED SOME SCHOOLING. THE PRIMARY
RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOLING WAS IN THE HANDS
OF THE SCHOOLTEACHER AND THIS PARTICULAR
PERSON HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADING THE
CHILD BACK AND FORTH TO SCHOOL. HE WAS
PRIMARILY A PROTECTOR KEEPING THE CHILD FROM
UNSAFE AND UNFIT THINGS IN LIFE. HIS JOB WAS
TO CLEAN, CLOTHE AND CARE FOR THE CHILD.
HE TOOK THE CHILD TO SCHOOL AND BROUGHT HIM
HOME BUT THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN A FORMAL

WAY BELONGED TO ANOTHER PARTY. THIS SLAVE'S RESPONSIBILITY CONTINUED UNTIL THE CHILD HAD GROWN UP TO BECOME A MATURE PERSON AND THEN HE NO LONGER NEEDED A GUARDIAN. CONCLUSION: THE LAW COULD MAKE MEN AWARE OF THEIR CONDITION BUT IT COULD NOT ALLEVIATE THE CONDITION. ONCE AGAIN, PAUL IS RESTATING A FACT HE HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED ABOUT THE LAW.

III. A SIMPLE STATEMENT ABOUT SONSHIP AND SALVATION - V. 26

THIS VERSE IS SO SIMPLE AND SUCCINCT, IT SHOULD BE MEMORIZED AND MEDITATED UPON. THE WORD "ALL" IN THE TEXT REFERS TO JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE. THE SUBJECT IS THAT OF PARENTAGE. THE WORD "ARE" IS PRESENT TENSE, NOT FUTURE. (1 JOHN 3:1-2) HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME PARENTS? USUALLY BY BIRTH! GOD'S CHILDREN ARE NO DIFFERENT. WE BECOME HIS SONS BY SPIRITUAL BIRTH. (JOHN 3:7, JAMES 1:18, TITUS 3:5, ROMANS 8:14-17, REVELATION 21:7) THE WORD SONS IN THE TEXT IS A REFERENCE TO FULL-GROWN, FREE SONS, NOT INFANTS NEEDING CARE. WHEN A ROMAN CHILD CAME OF AGE, HE TOOK OFF HIS CHILDHOOD GARB OR CLOTHING AND PUT ON THE DRESS OF AN ADULT. MATURE ADULTS DID NOT DRESS LIKE IMMATURE CHILDREN. IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE, DIAPERS AND KIDS' CLOTHES GAVE WAY TO ADULT APPAREL. (RELATE TO "KNICKERS" AND LONG PANTS.) HOW DO WE BECOME SONS OF GOD? BY FAITH. THIS IS A SIMPLE, SPECIFIC STATEMENT, IT IS NOT COMPLICATED OR CONFUSING. (JOHN 1:12) WE DO NOT USUALLY THINK OF SALVATION IN CONTRACTURAL TERMS, BUT IF WE DID, THERE IS NO WAY IT COULD BE IGNORED OR REFUSED. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE NO PAYMENTS, IT IS FREE. 100% GUARANTEED. IT HAS ETERNAL BENEFITS. IT HAS PRESENT AND FUTURE SATISFACTION. IT CARRIES THE FULL WEIGHT OF GOD'S PROMISE AND RESOURCES. WHAT ELSE COULD A PERSON ASK FOR AND WHAT ELSE COULD HE WANT?

"ALLEGORY TERRITORY"

GALATIANS 4:1-31

CAR RENTERS DRIVE IN "ALAMO TERRITORY." SMOKERS HAVE HACKED AND COUGHED THEIR WAY THROUGH MARLBORO COUNTRY BUT ALLEGORY TERRITORY IS NEW TURF TO MANY! THIS CHAPTER IS A "SKIP CHAPTER" FOR SOME BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT PAUL HAD IN MIND WHEN THEY GLANCED AT IT. THE CHAPTER CONCLUDES WITH AN ALLEGORY, THAT IS, A STORY WITH HIDDEN, DEEPER MEANING THAN APPEARS ON THE SURFACE. FOR EXAMPLE, PILGRIMS PROGRESS IS AN ALLEGORY. WHEN PILGRIM WENT THROUGH THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND OR BY-PASS MEADOW SOMETHING DEEPER WAS MEANT. THERE WAS A VEILED PRESENTATION OR A SYMBOLIC HIDDEN MEANING BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE STORY. HOWEVER, BEFORE WE ARRIVE AT "ALLEGORY TERRITORY," LET US EXAMINE THE VERSES LEADING UP TO THAT PART OF THE CHAPTER.

I. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SONS AND SERVANTS -

VERSES 1-11

PAUL CONTINUES TO DEAL WITH THE SUBJECT OF LEGALISM. HE CHARACTERIZED LEGALISM AS SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY. THIS IS DONE BY CONTRASTING SONS AND SLAVES. "THE LAW MAKES SLAVES, GRACE MAKES SONS!" THE POINT OF THE OPENING VERSES IS THAT UNLESS AND UNTIL A SON REACHES MATURITY, HE IS NO BETTER OFF THAN A SLAVE SO THE OBJECT OF A SON IS TO GROW UP! AN IMMATURE SON WILL BE CONTROLLED BY GUARDIANS AND MANAGERS UNTIL HE COMES OF AGE. THE POINT IS, IF A FATHER DIES AND LEAVES HIS ESTATE TO A SMALL SON WHO HAS NOT REACHED MATURITY THAT SON IS NOT MUCH BETTER OFF THAN A SLAVE UNTIL THE SON GROWS UP EVEN THOUGH TECHNICALLY HE IS OWNER OF THE ENTIRE ESTATE,

UNTIL THAT TIME, THE SON CONTINUES TO BE MANAGED BY MANAGERS AND GUIDED BY GUARDIANS. THE WORD ADOPTION IN VERSE 5 IS A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE PASSAGE. THE WORD LITERALLY MEANS "SON PLACING." IT HAS TO DO WITH A SON'S STANDING, POSITION OR PRIVILEGES IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. REGENERATION IS THE WAY WE ENTER THE FAMILY OF GOD, ADOPTION HAS TO DO WITH ENJOYING WHAT WE HAVE THERE. ADOPTION IS THE STANDING OF ADULTS, TO BE TREATED AS ADULT SONS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. LET ME REPEAT, THE BELIEVING SINNER DID NOT GET INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD THROUGH ADOPTION BUT RATHER BY REGENERATION, BUT ADOPTION HAS TO DO WITH HIS PLACE AS AN ADULT IN THE FAMILY OF GOD. THE SON'S STANDING BEFORE GOD IS THAT OF MATURITY. HE IS NOT TREATED OR CONSIDERED AS A LITTLE CHILD BUT RATHER AS AN ADULT SON WITH ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF SONSHIP. ADOPTION IN THE POPULAR SENSE REFERS TO TAKING A CHILD WHO IS NOT ONE'S OWN AND BRINGING HIM INTO THE FAMILY WITH ALL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES PERTAINING TO ADOPTION. IN THE BIBLE HOWEVER, GOD ONLY ADOPTS THOSE CHILDREN WHO ARE ALREADY CHILDREN BY BIRTH. SOMEONE HAS SAID, "WE NEVER ADOPT OUR OWN CHILDREN. GOD NEVER ADOPTS ANY OTHERS." SIMPLY STATED, ADOPTION DOES NOT MAKE ONE A CHILD OF GOD. IT HAS TO DO WITH HIS LEGAL POSITION AS A SON. ONE OF THE EVIDENCES OF SONSHIP IS THE TERM ABBA. IT IS A TERM OF INTIMACY AND ENDEARMENT. BECAUSE BELIEVERS ARE IN A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, HE HAS THE RIGHT AND PRIVILEGE TO COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD ON THE BASIS OF INTIMATE TERMS. PAUL'S POINT IS THAT SINCE WE ARE SONS, WHY WOULD WE RETURN TO THE CHILDHOOD THAT MEN HAD UNDER THE LAW?

THE CONTRAST IS THE FETTERS OF CHILDHOOD AND THE FREEDOM OF MANHOOD. THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SONS AND SLAVES!

II. THE DISTRESS OF BEING CONSIDERED AN ANGEL AND AN ENEMY BY THE SAME CHURCH - 4:11-18

A SICK PERSON SELDOM MAKES A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION. HOWEVER, THAT DID NOT MATTER TO THE GALATIANS WHEN THEY FIRST SAW PAUL. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS ILL THEY TREATED HIM ROYALLY. HE COULD DO NO WRONG IN THEIR EYES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, PAUL SAYS THEY WOULD HAVE PLUCKED OUT THEIR EYES FOR HIM BUT LATER THEY WERE READY TO GOUGE OUT HIS EYES! THEY TREATED HIM AT FIRST AS AN ANGEL OR MESSENGER OF GOD THEN THINGS CHANGED. HAVE YOU NOTICED IN SCRIPTURE, THAT TRUTH WILL EITHER TEMPER PEOPLE OR TURN THEM AWAY. MOST CHURCHES WOULD SAY THEY ARE INTERESTED IN TRUTH. HOWEVER THIS MEANS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN THINGS THAT ARE COMPLIMENTARY AND COMFORTABLE, PLATITUDES THAT FLATTER AND ARE FASHIONABLE. HOWEVER, TRUTH IS OFTEN RISKY. IT SOMETIMES HURTS BEFORE IT HELPS AND SOME WON'T TAKE THE HURT! LOOK AT THE TERM ANGEL. PAUL IN HIS FIRST CONTACT WITH THE GALATIAN CHURCH WAS REVERED, RESPECTED, THE CHURCH WAS RECEPTIVE TO WHAT HE HAD TO SAY. CHURCHES WITH "ANGEL ATTITUDES" ARE EASY TO PASTOR. THEY HANG ON EVERY WORD, THEY LOOK TO AND ACCEPT PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WITH JOY NOT CRITICISM. HOWEVER ALL OF THAT CHANGED AT GALATIA. THERE WAS NO REASON FOR THE FICKLE AND FOOLISH GALATIANS TO ABANDON WHAT THEY'D BEEN TAUGHT OTHER THAN THEY WERE MIS-LED BY JUDIASERS UNTIL THEY ACTUALLY MALIGNED THE VERY PERSON WHOSE LEADERSHIP THEY ONCE VALUED! HOWEVER, ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN IN A PLACE OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP KNOWS THAT THE VERY PEOPLE

2. ONE LEADS TO CHRIST MAY CONSIDER THEIR SPIRITUAL MENTOR AN ENEMY. PAUL WAS ONCE THEIR SPIRITUAL MENTOR AND NOW THEY CONSIDERED HIM A SPIRITUAL MENACE! OTHERS HAD CHANGED THEIR MIND ABOUT PAUL. PERHAPS THEY HAD SUBSTITUTED PSYCHOLOGY FOR THEOLOGY! THEY HAD ACCEPTED FALSEHOOD FOR FACTS. (LIES ARE PRESENTED FOR PERSONAL GAIN AND ADVANTAGE. PAUL SOUGHT NONE OF THESE FROM HIS CONVERTS. AS A MATTER OF FACT HE ACCEPTED VERY LITTLE FROM THEM AND GAVE A GREAT DEAL.) EVERY PASTOR KNOWS THAT WERE ONCE PEOPLE WHO WOULD SWEAR BY HIM BUT NOW THEY SWEAR AT HIM!

III. THE DIFFICULTY OF INTERPRETING THE ALLEGORY ABOUT ABRAHAM'S TWO SONS

VERSES 19-31

PAUL REACHES BACK INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT TO PICK UP AN OLD STORY WITH A NEW MEANING. WHAT SEEMS TO BE A VERY COMPLEX IDEA IS REALLY SIMPLE. ABRAHAM AND SARAH WERE ADVANCED IN YEARS AND HAD NO SON. SARAH DEVISED A PLAN WHEREBY ABRAHAM COULD MARRY A SECOND WIFE - HAGGAR A SLAVE GIRL AND SHE WOULD BEAR HIM A SON - ISHMAEL. HOWEVER IN THE COURSE OF TIME, ACCORDING TO GOD'S PROMISE SOME THIRTEEN YEARS LATER SARAH BORE ABRAHAM A SON - ISAAC. ISHMAEL WAS BORN UNDER ORDINARY, NORMAL, AVENUES OF THE FLESH. ISAAC'S BIRTH WAS A MIRACLE OF GOD'S GRACE AND ABRAHAM'S FAITH. HAGGAR WAS A SLAVE, SARAH A FREE WOMAN. THE ARRIVAL OF ISAAC MADE A RIVAL OF ISHMAEL! THE TWO WIVES AND TWO SONS COULD NOT CO-EXIST IN ABRAHAM'S TENT. PAUL TOOK THIS SIMPLE STORY AND GAVE IT A DEEPER MEANING. HAGGAR - REPRESENTS THE LAW. SARAH REPRESENTS GRACE. ISAAC REPRESENTS THE SPIRIT AND ISHMAEL REPRESENTS THE FLESH.

Symbols:

HAGGAR A SERVANT GIRL NOT GOD'S APPOINTED PERSON WAS CAST OUT AND NEVER MARRIED AGAIN AFTER ISHMAEL'S BIRTH. SARAH BY CONTRAST WAS A FREE WOMAN, GOD'S APPOINTED VESSEL THROUGH WHOM THE CHILD OF PROMISE OR FAITH WOULD BE BORN.

NOTE: SARAH SYMBOLIZED THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS NOT ALWAYS GRACIOUS IN HER BEHAVIOR - EXPLAIN. SHE WAS JEALOUS OF HAGGAR!

POINT: PAUL'S CONCLUSION IS THAT THE JUDIASERS WANTED TO TAKE THE GALATIANS BACK TO ISRAEL'S INFANCY THE TIME OF HAGGAR AND ISHMAEL REPRESENTING THE LAW AND THE FLESH BUT IN REALITY THESE COULD NOT CO-EXIST AND CANNOT CO-EXIST TODAY. THE CHURCH IS FACED WITH SIMILAR SITUATIONS. LEGALISTS WHO ARE FLESHLY LIKE HAGGAR AND ISHMAEL LOVE WHAT THE FLESH CAN DO AND SOMETIMES THAT'S A GREAT DEAL.

MEN ARE DELIGHTED WHEN THEY CAN DO THE THINGS OF GOD BUT HAVE FAILED TO MISS THE MEANING OF GRACE. WE, LIKE THE GALATIANS, MAKE SIMILAR MISTAKES. LEGALISM IS ONE OF THE CHURCH'S MAJOR PROBLEMS. LEGALISM IS NOT WRONG FOR WANTING HIGH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT - IT IS WRONG FOR BELIEVING THAT BY OBEYING CERTAIN STANDARDS *makes one* ~~IT IS~~ SPiritual, LEGALISM CONDEMNNS AND JUDGES ALL WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THEIR STANDARDS. A PERSON MUST DO WHAT THEY SAY, GO WHERE THEY SAY OR THEY ARE "WORLDLY." THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT A PERSON MAY BE BOTH WORLDLY AND UNSPIRITUAL AND DO NONE OF THE THINGS THEY SAY ONE CANNOT DO. THE FLESH SPEAKS OUT AND SNUGGLES UP TO LEGALISM. WIERSBE HAS MADE AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION: "IN THE CLOSING CHAPTERS OF THIS LETTER, PAUL WILL POINT OUT THE GREAT TRAGEDY OF LEGALISM: IT GIVES OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FLESH TO WORK. THE OLD NATURE CANNOT BE CONTROLLED BY LAW; EVENTUALLY IT HAS TO BREAK OUT - AND WHEN IT DOES, WATCH OUT! THIS EXPLAINS WHY LEGALISTIC

RELIGIOUS GROUPS OFTEN HAVE FIGHTS AND DIVISION, AND OFTEN ARE PLAGUED WITH THE DEFILING SINS OF THE FLESH. WHILE EVERY CHURCH HAS ITS SHARE OF THESE PROBLEMS, IT IS ESPECIALLY PROMINENT IN THOSE GROUPS WHERE THERE IS AN ATMOSPHERE OF LEGALISM. THANK GOD, THE CHRISTIAN IS SET FREE FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW AND THE CONTROL OF THE LAW. "...WHAT IS THE SECRET? THE HOLY SPIRIT...."

GRACE IS A HARD TRUTH TO GRASP. ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, ONE OF OUR LADIES WHO IS IN BUSINESS WITH HER HUSBAND SPOKE TO MRS. SPRADLING AND ME ABOUT A PHONE CALL SHE RECEIVED IN WHICH THE PERSON STATED: "HOW MUCH DO YOU CHARGE FOR YOUR FREE EXAMINATION?" THINK ABOUT THAT. IF AN EXAMINATION IS FREE - HOW CAN THERE BE A CHARGE? IF THERE IS A CHARGE - THEN THE EXAMINATION ISN'T FREE. MANY VIEW GRACE THAT WAY - IT IS FREE BUT THEY WANT TO DO SOMETHING TO EARN IT. SUCH IS THE CONDUCT OF LEGALISM.

modern allegory?
A dozen years ago, P. Gandy, Huston -
Cooley. - 10,000 Rent ~~operations~~ -
- Karp -

"The heart is deceitful above
all (things) and 'hopelessly diseased' -
who can know it? (iniquity)
(Jer. 17:9)
Knowing its own
condition)

"FALLEN FROM GRACE"

GALATIANS 5:1-15

THERE ARE TWO PHRASES ABOUT GRACE OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD.

- (1) "ONCE IN GRACE ALWAYS IN GRACE" IS THE IDEA THAT ONCE A PERSON IS SAVED IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HE DOES. HE IS SAVED NO MATTER WHAT.
- (2) "FALLEN FROM GRACE" - SOME THINK THIS PHRASE TEACHES THAT A PERSON MAY LOSE HIS SALVATION, THAT IS FALL FROM A SAVED STATE.

NEITHER OF THESE IDEAS IS SCRIPTURAL. (EXPLAIN)

THE PHRASE "FALLEN FROM GRACE" IS RELATED TO THE KEY IDEA IN GALATIANS, THAT IS, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE - THEY SIMPLY DO NOT MIX! A PERSON WHO TURNS BACK TO THE LAW FOR SALVATION FALLS FROM GRACE, THAT IS, LAW AND GRACE CANNOT COEXIST. THE WAY OF SALVATION IS NOT A MIXTURE OF LAW AND GRACE, IT IS BY GRACE OR NOTHING! PEOPLE WHO LEAVE THE REALM OR SPHERE OF GRACE AS THE BASIS OF SALVATION ARE SUBSTITUTING THE LAW FOR CHRIST AS THE AGENT OR MEANS OF SALVATION. (BY THE WAY, CONCERNING SIN, WE DO NOT FALL FROM GRACE WHEN WE SIN, WE FALL INTO GRACE WHEN WE SIN!) (I JOHN 1:9)

LET US EXAMINE THIS CHAPTER AND ITS KEY IDEAS BEARING ON THE SUBJECT OF GRACE.

I. CHRISTIAN: STAND FIRM AND BE FREE -

VERSES 1-6

LIBERTY IS THE THEME OF GALATIANS. STRONG FOOTING OR UNDERPINNING FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN GRACE IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BE FREE. THE BELIEVER IS ENCOURAGED TO STAND UP, STAND BY, STAND STILL AND HEAR STAND FIRM IN THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE. THE WORD STAND REFERS TO A SETTLED STATE OR FRAME OF MIND. THE CHRISTIAN IS ENCOURAGED NOT TO WAVER OR BE SWALLOWED UP IN ERROR - DON'T "FALL" FOR LEGALISM, DON'T GIVE IN TO THE PRESSURE TO SET EXTERNAL MAN MADE RULES INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING THE INTERNAL RULER - NAMELY THE HOLY SPIRIT AS GUIDE TO SPIRITUALITY. IN OTHER WORDS, THE RULE OF LAW IS NOT THE RULE OF LIFE FOR THE BELIEVER! THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE FREEDOM ONE HAS IN CHRIST AND THE SHACKLES OF SLAVERY IS HEIGHTENED BY THE WORD "ENTANGLED". THIS TERM PICTURES A TRAP OR SNARE. THE LAW FOR THE BELIEVER IS A YOKE, BURDEN, SOMETHING TOO HEAVY FOR HIM TO BEAR.

TEXT

5:2 IF A RELIGIOUS RITUAL LIKE CIRCUMCISION COULD SAVE THE SOUL, THEN CHRIST AND HIS FINISHED WORK ON THE CROSS MEANS NOTHING. SIMPLY, CIRCUMCISION WAS A BADGE TO THE JEW, A SIGN OF A COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND IDENTIFYING MARK - NOTHING ELSE. IT IS NOT CHRIST AND A CEREMONIAL RITUAL, IT IS CHRIST PERIOD. HE SAVES, NOT IT SAVES! THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN A RELATIONSHIP AND A RITUAL.

5:3 THE LAW IS NOT A SPIRITUAL CAFETERIA OR BUFFET TO WHICH THE BELIEVER TAKES A LITTLE OR A LOT DEPENDING ON HIS TASTE. WHEN IT COMES TO

THE LAW, MEN DO NOT DO AS THEY CHOOSE. IT IS ALL OR NOTHING. THE PERSON WHO ACCEPTS ANY PART OF THE LAW IS OBLIGATED TO DO IT ALL - NO DELETIONS AND NO EXCEPTIONS. PAUL SAYS IF A PERSON ACCEPTS CIRCUMCISION AS A MUST, THEN HE MUST ACCEPT THE WHOLE LAW WITH IT. (IT'S KINDA LIKE MARRYING A GIRL WHO BRINGS HER WHOLE FAMILY TO LIVE IN THE HOUSE AND SAYS IT'S ALL OF US OR NONE OF US!) WARREN WIERSBE ILLUSTRATES THIS POINT BY CITING THE ILLUSTRATION OF A MOTORIST WHO UNCONSCIOUSLY DRIVES THROUGH A STOP SIGN. WHEN THE POLICEMAN PULLS HIM OVER AND ASKS TO SEE HIS LICENSE AND BEGINS TO WRITE OUT THE TICKET, THE OFFENDING DRIVER BEGINS TO DEFEND HIMSELF. HE STATES THAT HE HAS NEVER ROBBED ANYONE, CHEATED ON HIS INCOME TAX, COMMITTED ADULTERY, OR A WHOLE LIST OF OTHER SINS. THE POLICEMAN SMILES AND CONTINUES TO WRITE THE TICKET BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT NO AMOUNT OF OBEDIENCE COULD MAKE UP FOR ONE ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE. THE LEGALIST DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE LAW. IF A MAN OFFENDS IN ONE POINT HE IS A LAW BREAKER. TWO MEN MAY BE IN JAIL FOR TWO DIFFERENT CRIMES EACH LIVING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE PRISON DEPENDING UPON VARYING DEGREES OF GUILT, BUT THE POINT IS THEY ARE BOTH IN JAIL! MICHAEL MILTON AND CHARLES MANSON WERE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CRIMINALS BUT THEY MIGHT THEORETICALLY BE LODGED IN THE SAME PRISON, THEY ARE BOTH PRISONERS!

5:4 IF ONE TRIES TO BE SAVED BY KEEPING THE LAW, HE MOVES OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE OF GRACE. THERE CANNOT BE TWO WAYS OF SALVATION LAW AND GRACE - THAT IS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE. THE PERSON WHO TRUSTS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ELSE FOR SALVATION OTHER THAN CHRIST CANNOT BE SAVED.

5:5 BY FAITH IS THE PREVAILING PRINCIPLE OF SALVATION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. PAUL SEEMS TO REPEAT THIS PHRASE FOR THOSE WHO MAY HAVE MISSED IT THE FIRST TIME SO HE WILL SAY IT AGAIN UNTIL

IT SINKS IN. "TRYING IS VAIN FOR SALVATION, TRUSTING IS VITAL."

5:6 RITUAL IS COLD, IMPERSONAL, INEFFECTIVE - IT DOESN'T WORK. TRUE SALVATION FINDS ITS EXPRESSION IN CHRISTIAN LOVE.

II. CHRISTIAN: RUN THE GOOD RACE - VERSES 7-8

APPARENTLY, PAUL WAS A SPORTS FAN. UNDOUBTEDLY HE HAD WATCHED RACES IN ROME OR OTHER CITIES. HE LIKENED THE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE TO A FOOT RACE. (COMPARE I CORINTHIANS 9:24-27, HEBREWS 12:1) HE SAYS TO THE GALATIANS, YOU STARTED, THAT IS YOU CAME OUT OF THE BLOCKS WELL, EVERYTHING LOOKED GOOD, YOU WERE MAKING GOOD PROGRESS AND THEN SOMETHING WENT WRONG. SOMEONE CUT YOU OFF, MESSED UP YOUR TIMING, STRIDE, PACE. THE PICTURE IS NOT THAT OF STOPPING THE RUNNER BUT OF CAUSING HIM TO STUMBLE OR GET OFF COURSE. SOME WERE DISQUALIFIED. IN ORDER TO BE PROGRESSIVE AND SPIRITUALLY MATURE THE BELIEVER MUST LEARN TO OBEY THE TRUTH. (JOHN 14:21)

IN VERSE 8, PAUL SAYS THAT WHAT THEY DID AND WERE CONTINUING TO DO DID NOT COME FROM GOD BUT RATHER THEY HAD BEEN PERSUADED BY "PSEUDO-PERSUADERS" - NOT GOD. PRAYER: "LORD LET ME FINISH WELL!"

III. CHRISTIAN: WATCH OUT FOR LEAVEN - Vs. 9-11

SOME COMMENTATORS BELIEVE LEAVEN IS THE INFLUENCE THE GOSPEL HAS ON SOCIETY. THAT IS, THE GOSPEL SLOWLY PERMEATES THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF THE WORLD UNTIL ALL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR. IN SCRIPTURE, LEAVEN IS NOT SPOKEN OF AS GOOD BUT EVIL. (MATTHEW 16:11-12)

POINT: LEGALISM LIKE LEAVEN SPREADS SLOWLY, SECRETLY AND SURELY UNTIL IT HAS AFFECTED THE WHOLE CHURCH. A LITTLE YEAST DOES THE JOB. IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH. GIVE IT TIME AND ALL WILL BE AFFECTED. LEGALISM DOES NOT COME IN A DOWNPOUR IT USUALLY STARTS AS A TRICKLE AND THEN AS A TORRENT! EVEN A LITTLE LEGALISM IS DANGEROUS. JUST AS ONE "INFECTED" PERSON MAY HARM MANY SO DOCTRINAL ERROR DOES THE SAME.

IV. CHRISTIAN: DON'T LET YOUR LIBERTY TURN TO LICENSE - VERSES 13-15

BALANCE IS THE SECRET OF A WELL ORDERED CHRISTIAN LIFE OR CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. DON'T LET YOUR LIBERTY DESCEND OR DEGENERATE INTO LICENSE. THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE LEVELS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING.

- (1) LEGALISM
- (2) LICENSE
- (3) LIBERTY

IF ONE IS GENUINELY SAVED, HE CANNOT CONTINUE TO LIVE IN SIN AND STILL CALL HIMSELF A SON!

(ROMANS 6:1) THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PIGS AND SHEEP AS IT RELATES TO MUD HAS TO DO WITH NATURE. GOD DOES NOT SAVE US SO WE ARE FREE TO SIN AS WE PLEASE BUT HE SAVED US TO DELIVER US FROM OUR SINS. "THE CHRISTIAN IS NOT THE MAN WHO IS FREE TO SIN ... BUT FREE NOT TO SIN!" DR. MCGHEE USES TWO TERMS TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE OF LEGALISM AND GRACE AS IT RELATES TO GOODNESS. HE SPEAKS OF "NEGATIVE GOODNESS" AND "POSITIVE GOODNESS". THE FIRST HAS TO DO WITH THE DOS, DON'TS AND RULES IMPOSED UPON CHRISTIAN LIVING. THE SECOND HAS TO DO WITH GRACE AND LOVE GENERATED BY THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT IN A SPIRIT FILLED BELIEVER. SOMEONE PREACHED A

SERMON ON VERSE 15 CALLED "CANNIBAL CHRISTIANS" THAT IS, THOSE WHO BITE AND CHEW ON ONE ANOTHER AND TURN CHURCH LIFE INTO LITTLE MORE THAN A VERBAL CAT AND DOG FIGHT. LEGALISTS SPECIALIZE IN SUCH ACTIVITY, ESPECIALLY TOWARD THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ACCEPTED OR ADOPTED THEIR RULES FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS! A. T. ROBERTSON TELLS THE STORY ABOUT TWO SNAKES WHO MET ONE DAY, GRABBED EACH OTHER BY THE TAIL AND SWALLOWED EACH OTHER! THE BELIEVER IS NOT FREE TO FIGHT ON EVERY ISSUE IN THE CHURCH. HE IS FREE TO HELP NOT HURT OTHER BELIEVERS.

LIFESTYLES OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT

GALATIANS 5:16-26

A WIFE'S DESCRIPTION OF HER HUSBAND: "HE IS TWO PEOPLE - SAINT AND SINNER AND I NEVER KNOW WHICH ONE HE IS GOING TO BE ON A GIVEN DAY. THIS KEEPS ME GUESSING AND UPSET." SHE DESCRIBED HER HUSBAND AS A COMPLEX PERSON WITH DEEP INNER EMOTIONAL CONFLICTS - A KIND OF WAR RAGING IN THE SOUL. HIS LIFESTYLE WAS A STYLE OF LIFE SHE DID NOT LIKE. HER HUSBAND WAS NOT JUST UP AND DOWN EMOTIONALLY HE WAS BOTH GOOD AND BAD! INSIDE EVERY BELIEVER, THERE ARE TWO OPPOSING POWERS OR FORCES. ONE IS CALLED THE FLESH, THE OTHER IS CALLED THE SPIRIT. THESE TWO FORCES HAVE DIFFERENT INTERESTS AND APPETITES, HENCE THE CONFLICT. THAT DIFFERENCE IS REFLECTED IN THE ANIMALS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE. SHEEP IS USED TO SPEAK OF BELIEVERS, THAT IS, CLEAN ANIMALS WHO AVOID FILTH AND GARBAGE. PIGS - UNCLEAN ANIMALS WHO LOVE FILTH, ARE USED TO DESCRIBE UNBELIEVERS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE FLESH IS LIKE THE PIG, ALWAYS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UNCLEAN TO FEED UPON. THE SPIRIT, LIKE SHEEP, YEARS FOR THAT WHICH IS CLEAN AND HOLY. DEFINITION:

(1) THE FLESH - MAN'S OLD NATURE, HIS HUMAN NATURE OR DISPOSITION WITH WHICH HE IS BORN AND WHICH NEVER GETS BETTER. IT MAY BE EDUCATED, CULTURED OR REFINED BUT ITS NATURE NEVER CHANGES. IT LIVES ON THE NATURAL LEVEL, SELF-CENTERED AND IN SOME WAYS IS ANIMAL-LIKE. IT IS THE ENEMY OF THE GOOD AND THE GODLY THINGS IN LIFE. IT PRODUCES "A LOW LEVEL LIFESTYLE" THAT CATERS TO MAN'S LOWER NATURE OR DISPOSITION. IT IS THE FLESH THAT PERMITS SIN TO ENTER MAN'S HEART AND MIND AND OPENS THE DOOR OF LIFE TO ALL

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KINDS OF SIN. THE FLESH IS WHAT MEN BECOME WHEN LEFT TO THEIR OWN INSTINCTS.

(2) THE SPIRIT - THE BELIEVER'S NEW NATURE CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH LOOKS FOR THE HIGH AND HOLY SIDE OF LIFE. THE SECRET OF CHRISTIAN VICTORY HAS TO DO WITH YIELDING AND CONTROL. IF THE FLESH PREVAILS, ~~THE FEET~~ WILL FOLLOW. IF THE SPIRIT PREVAILS VICTORY FOLLOWS. IT IS AS SIMPLE AND AS COMPLEX AS THAT. *(2 Pt. 1:4)*

POINT: IF A PERSON IS SAVED HOW CAN HIS CHRISTIANITY BE CREDIBLE UNLESS HE BECOMES A BETTER PERSON? *Debate*

I. NOW THE WORKS (DEEDS) OF THE FLESH ARE MANIFEST ("ARE EVIDENT") - V. 19-21

THIS "LOATHSOME" LIST OF SINS REMINDS ME OF A PAST EXPERIENCE. *(Deal to "Linger"!* (MENTION GRS - TAVERN - CARS IN DRIVEWAY - DISLIKE BUT NECESSARY. EXPLAIN) THE LIST IS DIVIDED INTO THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES:

(A) SEXUAL OR SENSUAL SINS

THE TERMS IN VERSE 19 DESCRIBE SEXUAL VICES. ADULTRY DOES NOT APPEAR IN SOME OF THE MAJOR MANUSCRIPTS BUT THE TERM FORNICATION IS A FAR-REACHING TERM TO DESCRIBE ALL KINDS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INVOLVING BOTH MARRIED AND UNMARRIED PEOPLE. IN THE GREEK, FORNICATION IS THE WORD PORNEA - HARLOT OR PROSTITUTE. THE WORD PROSTITUTE MEANS TO SELL, THAT IS, AFFECTION THAT IS BOUGHT. PROSTITUTES ARE PEOPLE WHO TREAT HUMAN BEINGS AS THINGS - INSTRUMENTS OF LUST AND SATISFACTION, NOTHING MORE. CHRISTIANITY BROUGHT CHASTITY INTO THE WORLD. SOMEONE HAS DESCRIBED CHRISTIANITY IN

→ ARE treated

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AS AN ISLAND OF MORALITY IN A SEA OF IMMORALITY. UNCLEANNES - "DIRTY MINDED". A MEDICAL TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE CORRUPTION OF A FESTERING SORE. THE DIRTY MINDED THINK THEY ARE CUTE WHEN IN FACT THEY ARE CORRUPT. THE FILTHY-MINDED, FOUL-MOUTHED ~~PERSON~~ IS DISGUSTING TO ALL WHO HAVE A SENSE OF MORAL VALUES. LASCIVIOUSNESS - THIS SOUNDS LIKE A HORRIBLE DISEASE AND IN A WAY IT IS. THE TERM REFERS TO WHAT IS COMMONLY CALLED "INDECENT EXPOSURE". A CARELESS, WRECKLESS ATTITUDE TOWARD SEXUAL SINS. A DON'T CARE ATTITUDE, THAT IS NOT CARING WHAT GOD OR MEN THINK. IT IS SIMPLY STATED SIN THAT HAS LOST ITS SHAME. PEOPLE WHO BEHAVE LIKE ANIMALS REGARDING SEX WHO HAVE LOST OR CAST AWAY ALL SENSE OF MORAL RESTRAINT. IT IS A TERM THAT DESCRIBES THE BRUTAL AND BESTIAL ATTITUDE AND ACTIVITY REGARDING SEXUAL ACTIVITY.

(B) RELIGIOUS SINS - VERSE 20

IDOLATRY - AN IDOL REFERS TO ANYTHING MAN WORSHIPS THAT IS MAN-MADE. IN SHORT, IT IS THE WORSHIPPING OF THE MATERIAL IN PLACE OF GOD. WIERSBE SAID IT WELL WHEN HE SAID: "WE ARE TO WORSHIP GOD, LOVE PEOPLE AND USE THINGS, TOO OFTEN WE USE PEOPLE, LOVE SELF AND WORSHIP THINGS, LEAVING GOD OUT OF THE PICTURE COMPLETELY." BARCLAY SUGGESTS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR MODERN MAN TO UNDERSTAND THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS. IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW ANY ANCIENT PERSON COULD REVERE A PIECE OF WOOD, STONE OR METAL NO MATTER HOW BEAUTIFULLY IT WAS CARVED OR ADORNED. IT IS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHEN MANY ANCIENT IDOLS WERE FAR FROM BEAUTIFUL. BARCLAY CONTINUES THAT THE FACT IS THAT IN THE BEGINNING NO ONE WORSHIPPED THE IDOLS. IT WAS USED TO LOCALIZE AND VISUALIZE THE GOD IT REPRESENTED.

ORIGINALLY THE IDOL WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE WORSHIPPED. IT WAS SIMPLY MEANT TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR MAN TO WORSHIP A GOD IN A DEFINITE PLACE. BUT, HE SUGGESTS, ONCE THIS WAS DONE IT WAS ALMOST INEVITABLE THAT A MAN SHOULD GO ON AND WORSHIP THE IDOL RATHER THAN THE GOD IT REPRESENTED. MEN ARE EAGER TO SEE SOMETHING, ESPECIALLY IN THE REALM OF WORSHIP. IDOLS ARE OFTEN REFLECTED IN STATUS SYMBOLS. FOR ONE A STATUS SYMBOL MAY BE A CAR, A HOUSE, FURNITURE OR HOUSEHOLD GOODS OR SOMETHING HE POSSESSES THAT IS COVETED BY MANY AND POSSESSED BY FEW. "WHENEVER ANYTHING IN THE WORLD BEGINS TO HOLD THE PRINCIPAL PLACE IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS AND AIMS, THEN THAT THING HAS BECOME AN IDOL, FOR THAT THING HAS USURPED THE PLACE WHICH BELONGS TO GOD." SIMPLY STATED, IDOLATRY IS THE WORSHIP OF THE CREATURE INSTEAD OF THE CREATOR. (Rom 1:25)

*no ref
to
witches
or
crafts!
Drugs*

WITCHCRAFT - THE GREEK WORD IS PHARMAKEIA WHICH IS A REFERENCE TO DRUGS. DRUGS MAY BE USED AS MEDICINE TO CURE OR AS A POISON TO CORRUPT. IN ANCIENT TIMES, DRUGS WERE USED TO BRING ABOUT EVIL EFFECTS UPON PEOPLE AND WAS PRACTICED IN SORCERY. DRUGS WERE USED TO FIND EUPHORIC STATE OF MIND AND SATISFACTION TO THE FLESH. THE DRUG CULTURE MOVEMENT IN AMERICA HAS BEEN AND IS BASICALLY A CULT OF PAGAN RELIGION. IT IS A SUBSTITUTE FOR GOD WHERE PEOPLE USE DRUGS SEEKING TO FIND STIMULATION AND SATISFACTION IN LIFE. THE USAGE OF DRUGS FOR THIS PURPOSE HAS FILTERED INTO EVERY ASPECT OF AMERICAN CULTURE, EVEN INTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. SOMEONE POINTED OUT YEARS AGO THAT OUR COUNTRY WILL BE IN TROUBLE WHEN THOSE COLLEGE KIDS WHO USED DRUGS BECOME ATTORNEYS, DOCTORS, TEACHERS, POLITICIANS AND LEADERS IN OUR SOCIETY IN YEARS TO COME. THAT TIME HAS ARRIVED! MANY DO NOT WISH TO LUMP ALCOHOL

INTO A DRUG LADEN SOCIETY BUT IT IS THAT IN FACT AND IN DEED - AN ADDICTIVE DRUG, ONE OUT OF EVERY TWENTY FIVE PEOPLE IN AMERICA IS AN ALCOHOLIC. THE RISE OF THE DRUG CULTURE AS MUCH AS ANY MOVEMENT I CAN THINK OF SPEAKS OF THE RAPID MOVEMENT OF OUR TIME TOWARD THE END OF THE AGE.

(C) SOCIAL SINS

MANY OF THESE SINS INVOLVE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

HATRED - HOSTILITY TOWARD OTHER PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY PEOPLE OF OTHER RACES. *(R.K.K.)* *(Anti-Semitism)* *(Neo-)*

VARIANCE - "TO ARGUE OR QUARREL" A QUARRELSOME PERSON WHO GENERATES ANIMOSITY AND ILL WILL.

EMULATIONS - JEALOUSY

WRATH - THIS A REFERENCE TO TEMPER PROBLEMS THAT BREAK OUT IN RAGE. IT REFERS TO A LOW BOILING POINT AS FAR AS TEMPER IS CONCERNED AND A TEMPER OUT OF CONTROL. (COMPARE SINATRA)

STRIFE - ONE WHO SEEKS HIS OWN ENDS - NAMELY, SELFISH AMBITION.

SEDITIONS - "THOSE WHO CAUSE TROUBLE."

HERESIES - THOSE WHO DIVIDE A GROUP, CAUSE SPLITS FOR THE WRONG REASONS.

ENVYINGS - MURDER, DRUNKENNESS, REVELING - IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE WHO CARRY ON IN WILD ORGIES AND RESULT IN HOMICIDE. THE WORD REVELINGS SUGGESTS PEOPLE WHO CAROUSE AND CARRY ON AND WAS USED TO DESCRIBE ACTIVITIES AFTER MILITARY VICTORIES. THEY DANCED, LAUGHED AND SANG THE

PRAISES OF THE HEROES IN DRUNKEN DEBAUCHERY. IT REFERS TO ENJOYMENT AND LICENSE IN UN-RESTRAINED AND UNCONTROLLED SINS. SOUNDS LIKE A CITY THAT HAS JUST WON THE SUPER BOWL OR THE WORLD SERIES! ACCORDING TO VERSE 21 THE PRACTICE OF THESE SINS IS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT A PERSON IS NOT SERIOUS ABOUT HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. THE HABIT REVEALS THE HEART AND THE FUTURE HABITATION. DO MEANS PRACTICE. THOSE WHOSE HABIT OF LIFE IS TO PRACTICE SINS MENTIONED HERE PROVE THEIR NATURE. JUST AS ONE WASHES EVERY DAY, EATS EVERY DAY, SLEEPS EVERY DAY AND IN SO DOING REVEALS THE HABITS OF HIS LIFE, SO THE HABITS OF A CHRISTIAN ARE TO OBEY GOD AND THE HABITS OF THE UNSAVED TO DISOBEY HIM.

II. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - VERSES 22-23

AFTER EXAMINING THE PREVIOUS VERSES, ONE MAY FEEL LIKE HE NEEDS A "SPIRITUAL BATH OR SHOWER." LET US NOW EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE. THE TERM FRUIT SUGGESTS A VITAL, LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THERE IS NOTHING MECHANICAL OR LEGALISTIC ABOUT FRUIT - IT IS THE RESULT OF NATURE. THE NINE-FOLD FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS SPOKEN OF IN A SINGULAR FASHION, THAT IS, ALL WILL BE MANIFESTED IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE. LET US LOOK AT THEM QUICKLY.

LOVE - IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE THERE ARE AT LEAST FOUR DIFFERENT WORDS FOR LOVE. THIS PARTICULAR WORD IS THE HIGHEST FORM, THE WORD AGAPE WHICH SPEAK OF A KIND OF LOVE THAT LOVES NO MATTER HOW IT IS TREATED OR EVEN INSULTED. IT SEEKS ONLY THE HIGHEST GOOD OF OTHERS. ONLY THE HOLY SPIRIT COULD PRODUCE THIS KIND OF EMOTION IN THE HUMAN SOUL. LOVE IS ONE OF THE

Works - love, effort, toil - (leaf works)

works not fruit!

Fruit - natural, quiet - (life)
"Living fruit."

High, true
-7-
"Love ye?" — do ye?
there!

MOST ABUSED WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. EVEN IN CHURCH, IT IS POSSIBLE TO KNOW BIBLE VERSES ON LOVE, SING SONGS OF LOVE, TALK ABOUT LOVE IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, AND STILL LIVE A LOVELESS LIFE!

JOY - WIERSBE CALLS JOY A KIND OF HOLY OPTIMISM WHICH GIVES THE RIGHT KIND OF REACTION TOWARD CIRCUMSTANCES. JOY COMES NOT FROM WHAT WE HAVE BUT BECAUSE OUR ROOTS ARE IN GOD. THE BIBLE IS A BOOK OF JOY. JOY IS A BADGE THAT CANNOT BE MISSED OR MIMICKED IN ITS TRUEST FORM.

PEACE - THE PEACE OF GOD IS BOTH JUDICIAL AND PRACTICAL. (ROMANS 5:1, PHILIPPIANS 4:7) THE SEARCH FOR PEACE IS DESIRED BY ALL. SERENITY, TRANQUILITY AND PEACE OF MIND IS A VERY DESIRED COMMODITY. *@GURUS TO GANGS*

LONG-SUFFERING - LONG-SUFFERING IS PATIENCE WHICH ENABLES A PERSON TO ENDURE COURAGEOUSLY BOTH PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS WITHOUT QUITTING.

GENTLENESS - THIS PARTICULAR WORD REFERS TO KINDNESS. SOMEONE HAS SAID AFTER YOU AND I ARE GONE THE ONE THING THEY WILL REMEMBER ABOUT US IS WE WERE KIND TO OTHERS.

GOODNESS - SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT GOODNESS IS LOVE IN ACTION. THE GOOD PERSON IS BOTH OPEN-HEARTED AND OPEN-HANDED.

FAITH
~~SAFE~~ - THIS WORD REFERS TO FAITHFULNESS. THE TENDENCY OF THE FLESH IS TO BE UNFAITHFUL. THE SPIRIT OF GOD WILL MAKE MEN FAITHFUL. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BE BOTH SPIRITUAL AND LACKADASIACAL IN CHRISTIAN VIRTUE AND WORK. THE PERSON WHO NEVER KEEPS APPOINTMENTS ON TIME, WHO IS SLIPSHOD IN HIS CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT A SPIRITUAL PERSON NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT HIMSELF!

MEEKNESS - MEEKNESS IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH WEAKNESS. MEEKNESS IS STRENGTH COUPLED TO GENTLENESS. GENTLE PEOPLE DEAL WITH ERROR IN A WAY THAT FORCE NEVER DOES. MEEKNESS OR GENTLENESS MELTS ICE, NOT CHIPS OR HAMMERS AWAY AT IT! *crush it*

TEMPERANCE - SELF-CONTROL.

CONCLUSION: THERE ARE TWO "GUIDANCE SYSTEMS" FOR THE PROFESSING CHRISTIAN. WE ARE BY NATURE DRAWN TO THE MATERIAL AND NOT TO THE SPIRITUAL. WE NATURALLY FOLLOW A SELFISH LIFE. WE UNNATURALLY FOLLOW A SELFLESS LIFE. (ROMANS 8:14)

QUESTION: WITH REFERENCE TO A LIFE GUIDANCE SYSTEM, WHO IS IN CONTROL? WHOSE LIFESTYLE DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND DESIRE? A SINGER? A SUPER-STAR? A SPORTS CELEBRITY? WHERE DOES JESUS FIT INTO THIS PROGRAM, OR DOES HE FIT AT ALL? LORDSHIP NEVER FITS INTO A LIST - HE IS EITHER NO. 1 OR NOTHING.

*this conflict is going on now...
Today ... Tomorrow —*

or what

OVERTAKEN BUT NOT OVERCOME

GALATIANS 6:1-18

IN THIS PRACTICAL, CLOSING CHAPTER OF GALATIANS, PAUL TALKS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAVE "FAULTS". A MAN SPEAKING TO AN ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS SAID: "WE ALL HAVE FAULTS, DON'T WE?" "IS THERE ANYONE HERE OR DO YOU KNOW OF ANYONE WHO HAS NO FAULTS?" THERE WAS NO RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION SO HE REPEATED IT AGAIN. SLOWLY, EVEN TIMIDLY, A MAN IN THE BACK OF THE CLASS RAISED HIS HAND AND SAID, "I KNOW SOMEONE WHO ~~IS~~ FAULTLESS." "ARE YOU SAYING THAT OF YOURSELF SIR, THAT IS, YOU HAVE NO FAULTS OR SINS?" "NO" WAS THE REPLY. "I NEVER MET THIS MAN - IT WAS MY WIFE'S FIRST HUSBAND - HAD NO FAULTS TO HEAR HER TELL IT!" THIS CHAPTER IS DIVIDED INTO THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS:

I. BEARING OURS AND OTHERS BURDENS -
V. 1-5 (THE IDEA OF SHARING)

THE WORD "OVERTAKEN" CARRIES THE IDEA OF SUDDENNESS AND SURPRISE. IT IS THE PICTURE OF SOMEONE LOSING FOOTING, LIKE STEPPING INTO A HOLE, AND FALLING DOWN QUICKLY. SIN IS PICTURED THAT WAY - A SUDDEN SLIP OR MISSTEP. "FAULT" REFER TO A TRESPASS OR OFFENSE. TO BE OVERTAKEN IS TO BE TAKEN OVER BY A SUDDEN SIN. HOW DOES THE LEGALIST TREAT SUCH SINNING BRETHREN? TOO OFTEN HE ADDS TO THE PROBLEM RATHER THAN ASSISTING HIS BROTHER IN THE RECOVERY PROCESS. THE LEGALIST IS OFTEN HARD-NOSED, HARD-HEADED, HARD-HEARTED AND HEAVY-HANDED IN HIS APPROACH. (CLASSIC EXAMPLE - JOHN 8) LEGALISTS HAVE LITTLE TIME FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FAILED IN SOME SINFUL WAY. WIERSBE

REMINDS HIS READERS THAT THE CHRISTIAN ARMY IS THE ONLY ARMY IN THE WORLD THAT TURNS ON ITS CASUALTIES - BEATS UP ON ITS WOUNDED! (RELATE TO HENHOUSE SICK) IN MOST SITUATIONS WHERE THERE ARE SPIRITUAL CASUALTIES WISDOM AND GENTLENESS IS REQUIRED. HELPING COMES FROM THOSE WHO ARE CLASSIFIED AS "SPIRITUAL" THAT IS THOSE WHO HAVE LIFE FROM AND ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. NOT ALL CHURCH PEOPLE ARE SO CLASSIFIED. (COMPARE 1 COR. 3:1) EVEN IN THE NATURAL REALM THERE ARE SOME JOBS BABIES CANNOT DO. I AM GLAD THAT DOCTORS, PILOTS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS REQUIRE BOTH TRAINING AND MATURITY TO DO THEIR JOBS. THE SPIRITUAL "RESTORE" THE WOUNDED. THIS WORD IS USED AS A MEDICAL TERM TO DESCRIBE SETTING OF A BROKEN BONE AND ALSO MENDING OF BROKEN NETS - (MATTHEW 4:21) THE SPIRITUAL BELIEVER IS INTERESTED IN BRINGING BACK THE SINNING BROTHER NOT SHOVING HIM OUT IN THE COLD. THE SPIRITUAL MAN RESTORES AND NOT REPELS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO WIN THE SAVED AS WELL AS THE LOST. LEGALISTS OFTEN ENJOY BRAGGING ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR GOD EVEN IN THIS AREA. (RELATE A PHONE CONVERATION SOME YEARS AGO WITH THE "NO. 1 SOUL WINNER" IN A CHURCH!) WATCH OUT FOR FOLK WHO ARE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT THE BIGGEST, BEST, OUTSTANDING, NONE LIKE IT MENTALITY. SUCH JUDGEMENTS ARE BY WHOSE STANDARDS? GOD DOES NOT MEASURE OUR MINISTRY, HE WEIGHS IT! THE "SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS" SUGGESTS QUIETLY AND HUMBLY NOT LOUDLY AND BOISTEROUSLY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE BROTHER IS TO CONSIDER HIMSELF BECAUSE SIN IS SO SUBTLE THAT WE COULD BE THE NEXT IN NEED! (HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO A ROUGH, HEAVY-HANDED DOCTOR, WHO WHEN HE ASKED "DOES THAT HURT" YOU FELT LIKE HITTING HIM BACK - HARD! BY CONTRAST REMEMBER THE GENTLE TOUCH OF THE DIAGNOSTIC DOCTOR WHO

COULD DETERMINE SENSITIVITY WITHOUT DRILLING TO THE BONE! CONTRAST VERSES 2 AND 5 WHERE OTHERS AND OURS IS MENTIONED. THE WORD BURDEN IN VERSE 2 REFERS TO A HEAVY, CUMBERSOME LOAD. THE WORD IS DIFFERENT IN VERSE 5 AND REFERS TO A SOLDIER'S PACK OR GEAR - IN OTHER WORDS SHOULDERING ONE'S OWN GEAR. THERE ARE SOME BURDENS WE CARRY IN LIFE - THE EMERGENCIES IN LIFE WHICH COME ALONG UNFORESEEN IN WHICH WE NEED THE HELP OF OTHERS BADLY. THERE ARE OTHER BURDENS IN LIFE WHICH WE ALONE MUST SHOULDER - NO ONE ELSE CAN HELP US NO MATTER HOW WILLING WE ARE TO LET THEM OR HOW WANTING THEY MAY BE - IT IS OURS TO CARRY. FOR EXAMPLE IN THE HISTORY OF AN ALCOHOLIC THERE COMES A TIME WHEN HE NEEDS THE HELP OF OTHERS BUT THERE ARE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES HE ALONE MUST BEAR. IF ONE'S FAMILY IS WITHOUT FOOD ON A TEMPORARY BASIS BECAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT HELP MAY BE GIVEN FOR A LIMITED TIME BUT NOT INDEFINITELY. THERE COMES A TIME WHEN WE MUST SHOULDER OUR BURDENS. (EXPLAIN WITH THE SLEEMING ILLUSTRATION.) BY THE WAY, THE WORD COMMUNICATE IN VERSE 6 CARRIES THE IDEA OF SHARING. THOSE SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTORS IN A LOCAL CHURCH ARE ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR THEIR EFFORTS. THIS IS ONE OF THE CLEAR VERSES IN THE BIBLE TO INDICATE THAT THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE LORD'S PEOPLE. THIS IS ONE OF THE NEGLECTED TRUTHS OF MANY SMALL CHURCHES. PASTORS ARE REQUIRED TO WORK ON THE SIDE AND YET ARE EXPECTED TO CARRY FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR A LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY. THEIR CONSTITUENTS OFTEN FLEE TO THE FACT THAT PAUL MADE TENTS TO SUSTAIN HIMSELF AND USE THAT AS THEIR EXAMPLE. HOWEVER, THEY NEGLECT THOSE MULTIPLE VERSES IN WHICH PAUL DOES NOT HOLD HIMSELF UP AS THE CLASSIC EXAMPLE FOR ALL TIME BUT RATHER AS A UNIQUE CASE. PHILLIPS TRANSLATES

THE VERSE AS FOLLOWS: "THE MAN UNDER CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARD THE LIVELIHOOD OF HIS TEACHER." THE WORD COMMUNICATE IN THE TEXT IS OFTEN TRANSLATED FELLOWSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND REFERS TO HAVING SOMETHING IN COMMON, MATERIAL AS WELL AS SPIRITUAL.

II. SOWING AND REAPING IS AN INESCAPABLE PRINCIPLE - VERSES 7-10

ONE SUNDAY A MIDDLE-AGE MAN CAME FORWARD IN THE SERVICES OF A LOCAL CHURCH. FOR A YEAR OR MORE HE SEEMED TO BE ON FIRE FOR GOD, STUDYING, WITNESSING, PRAYING. THEN SUDDENLY HE DIED OF MULTIPLE COMPLICATIONS BETWEEN CIRRHOSIS OF THE LIVER AND LUNG CANCER. GOD GAVE THIS DEAR MAN A NEW HEART BUT NOT NEW LUNGS AND NEW LIVER THAT HAD BEEN DEVoured BY ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO. EVEN WHEN A PERSON IS SAVED BY GOD'S WONDERFUL GRACE, SOMETIMES THE SCARS OF SIN REMAIN EVEN WHEN THE WOUNDS HAVE BEEN HEALED. SOWING WILD OATS IS NOT INEVITABLE FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN BUT WHERE THIS PROCESS HAS TAKEN PLACE, THE HARVEST IS ALWAYS THE SAME. OUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND DEEDS ARE LIKE SEED - THE HARVEST MAY NOT COME SOON BUT IT IS SURE. THERE IS A BASIC PRINCIPLE IN THE BIBLE OF SOWING AND REAPING. WHAT ONE SOWS, HE MUST REAP. FOR THAT REASON, WE ARE TOLD TO BE CAREFUL WHERE AND WHAT WE SOW. IT IS AN INFLEXIBLE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE THAT WHEN SEEDS HAVE BEEN SOWN THE HARVEST WILL BE IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY. THE WORD MOCKED CARRIES THE IDEA OF TURNING UP ONE'S NOSE AT SOMETHING, HENCE A SMEAR. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT MEN WOULD TURN UP THEIR NOSE AT GOD BUT THEY DO. OUR HARVEST AT THE END OF THIS LIFE WILL DEPEND ENTIRELY ON WHAT

WE HAVE SOWED. THE PERSON WHO TAKES LITTLE TIME OR INTEREST IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD WILL COME UP SHORT AT HARVEST TIME. IN THAT DAY, THOSE WHO HAVE SOWED IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY WILL REAP RICH REWARDS. THE ADMONITION OF VERSE 9 IN THIS REGARD IS THAT ONE SHOULD NOT RELAX HIS HOLD ON GOOD WORKS. THE FARMER WHO SLACKS IN HIS WORK IN THE SPRINGTIME WILL BE DISAPPOINTED IN THE FALL WHEN IT IS TIME TO HARVEST. THERE WILL BE AMPLE TIME TO REST WHEN THE HARVEST IS IN THE BARN. (RELATE OBSERVATION CONCERNING MINISTRY IN INDIANA. IN THE EARLY SPRING AND SUMMER THERE WERE TRACTORS EVERYWHERE EVEN RUNNING AT NIGHT WITH LIGHTS. THE BELIEVER SHOULD BE A PERSON WHO PRACTICES GOOD THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE. WILLIAM TAYLOR SAYS OF VERSE 9 "THERE IS NO REAPING ASSURED TO ISOLATED EFFORTS, OR TO FITFUL SPASMODIC LABOR, BUT ONLY TO THE SUSTAINED COURSE OF PERSEVERANCE IN WELL DOING."

III. THE GLORY OF THE CROSS IS THE ONLY GLORY THAT COUNTS - VERSES 12-18

MAN'S GLORY IS A FADING GLORY. ASK JIMMY CARTER, RICHARD NIXON, GERALD FORD, RONALD REAGAN AND GEORGE BUSH - THEIR "GLORY" HAS FADED FROM THE EVENING NEWS - IT IS GONE. MEN GLORY IN BUILDINGS, BRIDGES, BUSINESS. THEY GLORY IN WHAT THEY ARE AND DO - THE FLESH LOVES IT. PAUL SAID HIS PRIMARY GLORY WAS AND SHOULD BE IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST. ACCORDING TO VERSE 17, CHRIST IS NOT LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO WEAR MEDALS ON THEIR PARADE UNIFORMS BUT RATHER THOSE WHO BEAR SCARS FOR THEIR WORK. THE WORD MARK IS THE GREEK WORD STIGMATI. PAUL WAS A MARKED MAN BUT HE WAS MARKED BY SCARS OF SUFFERING. THE WORD STIGMATI WAS USED TO DESCRIBE SLAVES WHO HAD BEEN BRANDED

"Int. gaze"

OR MARKED BY THEIR SLAVE OWNER. WE ALL UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO BEAR THE SCARS OF SIN THAT LEAVE MARKS ON MIND AND BODY FOR A LIFETIME. I HAVE SELDOM MET ANYONE WHO WAS PROUD OF THE SCARS OF SIN. BY CONTRAST, PAUL WAS PROUD OF THE MARKS HIS MINISTRY HAD LEFT ON HIS BODY. EVERY GRADE SCHOOL STUDENT IS AWARE OF THE COMMON PRACTICE OF STUDENTS DRAWING THE INITIALS OF A "TRUE LOVE" INSIDE A HEART ON THE ARM. IT IS A KID'S WAY OF EXPRESSING AFFECTION. LATER ON IN LIFE, YOUNG PEOPLE EXCHANGE PINS OR RINGS AS A MATTER OF EXPRESSING IN AN OUTWARD WAY INWARD AFFECTION. SLAVES WERE ATTACHED TO PAGAN TEMPLES AND WERE BRANDED FOR LIFE WITH THE NAMES OF DEITIES THEY PROFESSED TO SERVE. OTHER SLAVES AND EVEN SOLDIERS WORE THESE BRANDS ON THEIR BODIES AS MARKS OF OWNERSHIP AND DEDICATION. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HEBREW SERVANTS WERE BRANDED IN AN INTERESTING WAY. (EXODUS 21:1-6) PAUL REMINDED THE GALATIANS THAT HE WAS THE SLAVE OF CHRIST AND HE BORE ON HIS BODY MARKS SUCH AS THE STONING AT LYSTRA, THE BEATING AT PHILLIPI AS EVIDENCES OF HIS DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE GLORY OF THE CROSS. "IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY, TOWRING O'ER THE WRECKS OF TIME; ALL THE LIGHT OF SACRED STORY GATHERS ROUND ITS HEAD SUBLIME. SO WROTE JOHN BOWRING. STRANGE WORDS FOR A LIFE-LONG UNITARIAN WHO SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY! THE TUNE TO THIS SONG WAS WRITTEN IN 1849 BY A CHURCH ORGANIST AT CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH OF NORWICH, CONN. A PASTOR WAS PREACHING A SERIES OF SERMONS ON THE SUBJECT OF ATONEMENT. ON ONE PARTICULAR SNOWY MORNING THE CHOIR FAILED TO COME TO SERVICE, THAT IS ALL EXCEPT ONE SOPRANO. IN DISGUST, THE CHOIR LEADER SLIPPED OUT THE SIDE DOOR AND WENT HOME WITHOUT LISTENING TO THE SERMON! THAT AFTERNOON, IN CONTRITION

Composed a musical ~~song~~ for the hymn.
(arranged) to

a "contrition composition"